

Housing news for
tenants & leaseholders



NORTHAMPTON
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

voice

ISSUE 9: WINTER 2017

*Season's Greetings
and a Happy New
Year from NPH*



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OUR NEW
TRAINING
PROGRAMME
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Welcome

Winter is here and the festive season is upon us! In this edition of NPH Voice, read about Just Ask - the new contractor that is providing estate cleaning services for NPH. We also introduce Dave Pickard who has recently joined NPH as Director of Operations.

Coming up, we share the results of a survey of tenants and residents from earlier in the year. You can nominate someone who deserves to be recognised for a Community Hero Award. And for fun, complete my Christmas Wordsearch for a chance to win £20 in shopping vouchers.

We hope to see many of you at NPH's Tenant and Leaseholder

Conference in April 2018 (details of this can be found on page 11).

Season's greetings and best wishes for the New Year!

Thanks, Oscar

Tenant Chair of NPH's
Communications Service
Improvement Panel.



NPH's Christmas opening hours:

Friday 22nd December -
Open 9am to 4pm

Saturday 23rd December to
Tuesday 26th December - Closed

Wednesday 27th December to
Thursday 28th December -
Open as normal

Friday 29th December -
Open 9am to 4pm

Saturday 30th December to
Monday 1 January 2018 - Closed

Tuesday 2 January 2018 -
Open as normal



NORTHAMPTON
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

Voice Editor, Northampton Partnership Homes,
Westbridge Depot, St James Mill Road, Northampton, NN5 5JW

T: 0300 330 7003

E: voiceditor@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk



@NPH_news



www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk

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NPH Voice Issue 9 Winter 2017

At a glance...

In your Neighbourhood

Meet tenants' Shirley and Swifty – Shirley runs a befriending group, and Swifty is a break-dancer.

Just Ask – NPH's estate cleaners

Read about Just Ask and how tenants got involved in the decision making.

Whole home, whole neighbourhood

Spring Boroughs recently opened a new community hub.

Tenant and Leaseholder Conference 2018

Book your free place at next year's conference.

Community Hero Awards

Vote for your great neighbour and community champion.

Large print?

If you would like a version of this magazine in large print, or another language, please call

0300 330 7003



Reader Friendly

In your Neighbourhood

Meet Shirley Dexter, organiser of Blackthorn's Wellbeing and Friendship Group.



The Blackthorn Wellbeing and Friendship Group meet every Thursday between 11 and 3pm at NPH's Arlbury Road Community Hub. Shirley has been running the club for 14 years and told us "I love organising events, and always have done. Seeing someone

come along who would have otherwise stayed indoors or someone who is looking to meet new people, makes me so happy!".

Everyone is welcome to come along. The group takes place every week on Thursday and it costs £2. The money

goes toward cooking a fresh meal with lots of fun and games on the day.

You can find out more about the group and Arlbury Road Community Hub by calling Shirley on 01604 411484.

Community Award for Breakdancing Swifty

NPH tenant Swifty is a professional breakdancer and has just won the Best Newcomer Award at the Northants Community Foundation Awards.



Swifty has a breakdancing group called "Old to tha New Productions" and runs workshops for all ages who want to learn to break dance.

"It's our motto to build and teach people of all backgrounds and to show the positive influence of hip-hop in the community."

Swifty has taught over 100 students from 8 primary schools across Northampton and got them dancing for a competition 8 months later.

Interested to know more? – see facebook.com/bboyswifty.

We are looking for digitally savvy tenants to share their IT skills with others. We will provide the equipment and training you need to help friends and neighbours get online.

If you think you could be one of our digital champions, email: **participation@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk**

Meet NPH's new estate cleaners: Just Ask



We've listened to tenants' views on estate cleaning and how we can improve cleaning facilities. We'd like to introduce Just Ask who are our new estate cleaners.

Just Ask were chosen by a panel of tenants and NPH's staff earlier this year. They started in December. Look out for them in your block!

About Just Ask

Just Ask are providing estate cleaning for all blocks of flats. Just Ask work with many social housing organisations already and are experienced in providing estate cleaning services. Their team drive grey vehicles with two logos on – Just Ask and NPH. Their staff wear purple polo shirts and carry ID so you know who they are.

Just Ask will be cleaning all the communal areas. This includes pathways leading to blocks, communal doors and light fittings, hallways, stairs and bannisters, lifts, bin rooms, litter picking and window cleaning (every 3 months).



Yakubu

Tenants involved in the decision making

Tenants Yakubu and Keith were part of the selection panel for choosing Just Ask. They looked at all the companies who applied for the contract and interviewed each one before making a final decision.

Yakubu:

"I liked in Just Ask's application that they said they had tenants in mind. They ticked lots of boxes and they had experience in this area. They seem to understand what tenants want and I like the fact they are trying to recruit people from the local area."

Keith:

"I've never been invited to do this before [help NPH with the interviews] so it was good training for me to learn a bit more about how NPH hire external companies.

We want quality and value for money and I think Just Ask are realistic about that. I feel confident in their ability but we won't know 100% until they're on the ground working!"

Contact Just Ask on
0844 736 5956 or email
nph@justaskservices.co.uk.



Keith

Coming in 2018 - A new grounds maintenance provider...

NPH have just agreed a contract with a new grounds maintenance provider. They will be mowing the lawns and maintaining the grounds of all blocks of flats.

More about who they are in the next issue of NPH Voice.



Meet our new Executive Director of Operations...

Dave Pickard

Tell us a little bit about yourself?

I'm originally from Leeds but have lived in the North East all my working life. I am still a frequent visitor to Leeds as my dad lives there but the city has changed beyond recognition last few years. I still enjoy the odd night out in the city, it's very lively, and the shopping is good as well (so they tell me).

I have 3 daughters. The youngest Annie is still at school, my eldest Jessica is a mum of 2, and Eleanor works in IT and lives in York.

What is the responsibility of the Executive Director of Operations?

I cover NPH's repairs & maintenance, planned investment; new build housing and housing management services – so quite a broad range. All the areas are focused on making sure that residents get the best service possible from NPH, and also that communities and neighbourhoods see positive change through our new build homes, and the investments we are making to homes and the environment.

What do you think to NPH so far?

You have to remind yourself that NPH has only been around for just under 3 years.

This year we are investing £24m into refurbishing homes including many new homes across Spring Boroughs and Lakeview (with more on the way!). We provide a broad range of services which we are improving too. Recent surveys show that we are making improvements but we have a clear plan and ambition to do more.

What do you like about working in housing?

Working in housing I have the opportunity to make an impact on people's lives and their neighbourhoods. I really enjoy having the opportunity to meet and listen to so many different people.

When you're not at work, what do you enjoy?

I'm in Northampton during the week and I spend my time either at work or I try and get to the gym.

Weekends are full-on family time with my daughter, partner and other family and friends.

I do like to be busy and enjoy live music. I saw Clean Bandit and the Killers over the last couple of weeks. I enjoy a nice meal and the odd glass of wine (hence the need to go to the gym during the week!).



Whole home, whole neighbourhood

At NPH, we believe in improving neighbourhoods, not just homes. The first areas to benefit from major improvement works are Spring Boroughs and Kings Heath. Here are a few of the highlights.

Spring Boroughs Community hub

We recently opened a brand new community hub in Spring Boroughs. The hub can be used by community groups from 8am – 10pm every day of the week.

Brand new Council homes

We are building 35 new Council homes across Spring Boroughs. Check out the progress at Scarletwell Street where families will be moving into their new homes early next year!

Improving existing homes and green spaces in Spring Boroughs and Kings Heath

Our flat blocks in both areas are being updated with new windows, doors, roofing repairs and balconies. We are looking at the outdoor spaces and how we can improve them.

New play and fitness equipment

When talking to Spring Boroughs residents door to door, they told us that there were not enough activities in the area. By providing this we hope to give residents of all ages the

opportunity to exercise and live healthy lifestyles. There are community gardens close by and we are working with volunteers to develop these for budding gardeners from the blocks who'd like to grow their own fruit and veg.



■ New family homes on the way in Spring Boroughs



■ Winter gardens at Kingsheath

“ I can only thank those that worked so hard in getting the hub together for our local communities. It's a brilliant idea and it works. ”

Muna Cali



■ Cllr Muna Cali opens the Spring Boroughs Community Hub

We can now reveal that Thorplands will be next area for whole home, whole neighbourhood works!

We are already talking to residents in the area and are excited to start work in summer 2018. Head to the planned investment page on our website for the latest updates.

A photograph of two men, Keith and Bill, standing in a workshop. Keith, on the left, has a long white beard and is wearing a dark beanie and a blue apron over a dark shirt. Bill, on the right, is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and a lanyard with a badge. They are both smiling. The background shows various workshop tools and equipment.

Men work together, shoulder to shoulder.

NPH tenants Keith and Bill are members of Northampton Men's Sheds - a group who meet up weekly to make, create and catch up over crafts.

Keith and Bill have been involved in Men's Sheds for well over a year, an activity originally set up in Australia to help men get more involved in the community.

National studies have shown that older men in particular don't talk enough about problems, which can be bad for mental health.

Keith told us "Men's Sheds is a great place for men of all ages to meet up. Older men are not always so open when it comes to talking to groups of people, and so what we do is get men involved in craft making together.

We find that when men are doing something creative together, they begin to talk about other things with each other, like their life at home and any concerns they may have."

Keith told us that he joined Men's Sheds after retiring from work as a market trader and PC technician: "I live in a flat, and there's not a lot of space so coming to Men's Sheds gives me all the materials I need and a great place to meet others and create."

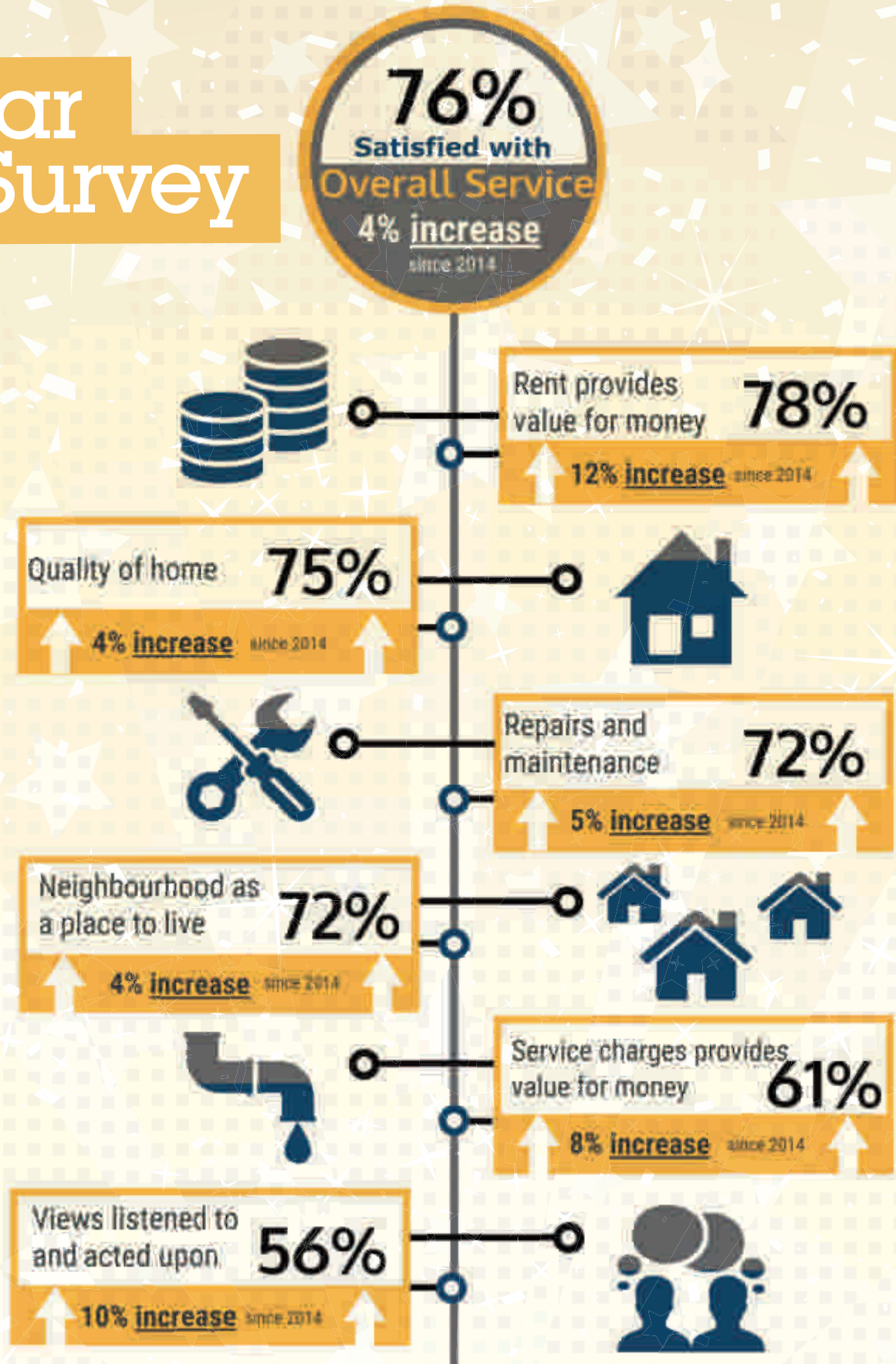
The group, based at Gladstone Industrial Estate at Kings Heath, works closely with local charity Spencer Contact and Northampton Borough Council.

The popularity of the shed is growing and they are looking to open another shed soon. Men's Sheds are also very keen to hear if you know of a creative space big enough for them to use.



To join Northampton Men's Sheds, simply show up at Spencer Contact in Gladstone Close Kings Heath on Tuesday or Friday mornings, or speak to Keith who is the secretary on 01604 585821.

Star Survey



We ran a survey this summer to find out what residents think to NPH's housing services. We invited 5,000 tenants and 1,200 people took the chance to comment on seven key areas (see above).

There has been an improvement in each area since the last survey in 2014, which is great news. We do know that there is still work to do and we will be working with tenants to make improvements.



Just Enough Café

NPH tenant Emma and her volunteers at Just Enough Café are rescuing food from supermarkets and turning it into delicious, home cooked food for everyone to enjoy.

Open Mondays 10am - 2pm at

James Lewis Court Community Hub.

Visit [facebook.com/JustEnoughPAYF](https://www.facebook.com/JustEnoughPAYF)

Or contact Emma on: 07781328152.

Since April this year, the café has been bringing local people together with delicious home cooked food. The café is part of the Real Junk Food Project. This is a global campaign to stop food waste by saving tonnes of food going in the bin too early by the supermarkets.

Emma, who runs Just Enough café said:

"It's a common misunderstanding that food in a Real Junk Food Café is out of date. It's not! We save the food before the use by date and cook it in time for our customers to

eat in our café. We've got a lovely group of volunteers who save food and serve local people. You can pay as you feel for the food so donations are always welcome."

What do customers say?

Sally, a regular customer of Just Enough said:

"I love coming here. I get a delicious meal, I'm contributing to a great cause, it's run by volunteers and it's a chance for local people to get together and socialise."

The café has a real sense of community. People meet to catch up with friends, have coffee, grab a bite to eat. The volunteers make sure that people feel welcome and take good care of you when you are there. A table top food counter is on show for people to take food away at the end. For those who live nearby but find it hard to get out of the house, Emma also offers a meals on wheels service but please tell her first. "As long as I know the numbers, we can arrange to come and visit to drop food off."

NPH win national award

We recently won an award for our contract with Keepmoat Regeneration.

Keepmoat are NPH's Major Project contractors and are refurbishing homes and estates on behalf of NPH.

NPH's Procurement Team collected the Best Procurement Consultancy Project in September at the Chartered Institute of Procurement Supply Management Awards.

The judges said they were pleased to see the focus placed on a contractor who will support the community, with



social opportunities and funding for people locally. Keepmoat have offered a £10,000 fund to local community groups in Spring Boroughs and Kingsheath. They are also working with Northampton Saints on tag rugby sessions in primary schools.

CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH

Win £20 Love 2 Shop Voucher

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- ☐ SANTA CLAUS
- ☐ CHRISTMAS
- ☐ SLEIGH BELLS
- ☐ CRACKERS
- ☐ SNOWFLAKES
- ☐ DECORATIONS
- ☐ TINSEL
- ☐ MISTLETOE
- ☐ TREE
- ☐ PLUM PUDDING
- ☐ TURKEY
- ☐ PRESENTS
- ☐ WRAPPING PAPER
- ☐ REINDEER
- ☐ RUDOLPH

We hope you enjoy the challenge of this Christmas themed wordsearch put together by Oscar. Congratulations to the lucky winner of our summer wordsearch, **Rita Bland**.

*To be in with a chance of winning, send your completed wordsearch to NPH By Monday 15 January 2018. You can post your wordsearch to our address, email a photo of your wordsearch to the Voice Editors, or drop the wordsearch off when you next visit the Guildhall One Stop Shop.



Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact telephone: _____

Voice Editor, Northampton Partnership Homes, Westbridge Depot, St James Mill Road, Northampton, NN5 5JW. My Christmas wordsearch is enclosed.
Email: voiceeditor@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk



Join us at our

Tenant and Leaseholder

Conference 2018

Good Neighbours, Great Neighbourhoods



**Tuesday 24th April
2018 at the Royal and
Derngate Theatre,
Guildhall Road,
Northampton,
NN1 1DP.**

**Join us from 10am
until 2pm.**

This event is all about you!

Join us in 2018 at our Tenant and Leaseholder Conference. We want to hear from you and your neighbours about what makes a great neighbourhood, as well as the things you think we can improve on.

At the event you will meet NPH's housing staff and hear about plans to invest in Northampton's neighbourhoods. You'll have a say on how we can make our plans more focussed around you.

Reserve your place at this event by calling NPH on 01604 837836. You can also email participation@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk.



The Royal and Derngate is within walking distance of the North Gate Bus Station.

Lunch and refreshments are provided. If there is anything we can do to help you get to the event, please tell us when you book.

Community Hero Awards

New for 2018 - Voting is open for NPH's Community Hero Awards.

We want to recognise residents who go the extra mile and who make their community a better place to live. This is why we've set up NPH's Community Hero Awards.

There are two categories you can choose from:

Great Neighbour

Have you got the best neighbours in the world?
Is there a person who provides support and companionship?
Who is it that regularly makes your day?

Community Champion

Who helps the community?
Community Champions may run a community group,
volunteer in the area or give up time to improve things
for everyone.



How to Nominate

There's loads of different ways to vote. Send your nomination and the reasons why you've voted either:

- Online at www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/get-involved
- Email us at participation@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk
- Over the phone by calling 01604 837836

We will be announcing the winners at the Tenant and Leaseholder Conference in April 2018.

The closing date for nominations is Wednesday 28th February 2018.

We will be contacting you to find out more information about your nomination after this date so please provide a telephone number or email address.

Your vote must be for a an NPH tenant or leaseholder.

Your name:

.....

Your address:

.....

Your telephone number:

.....

Nominee name:

.....

Category: (tick below)

☐

Great neighbour

☐

Community champion

Tell us why they deserve the award?

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My nomination for NPH's Community Hero Awards is enclosed. Voice Editor, Northampton Partnership Homes, Westbridge Depot, St James Mill Road, Northampton, NN5 5JW. Email: voiceeditor@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk

We can't wait to meet your community heroes! For full terms and conditions head to www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk