

YOUR VOICE

HOUSING NEWS FOR
TENANTS & LEASEHOLDERS



NORTHAMPTON
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

Here comes the sun!

Libby's marathon
challenge

Issue 19
Spring 2021

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Welcome

to the spring issue of Your Voice



elcome to the latest issue of Your Voice. We always enjoy putting this

newsletter together, especially when we get the opportunity to share your stories. If you have something you would like to share with other NPH residents, we would love to hear from you.

Keep reading to find out how you can tell us what you think of NPH services, how we're investing in your homes and neighbourhoods and much more.

Special thanks go to Libby and Alex for being Your Voice cover stars. We'll be cheering you on as you run the marathon Libby, we can't wait to share a photo of you crossing the finish line!



Dale Robertson,
Assistant Director: corporate services and IT.



**NORTHAMPTON
PARTNERSHIP HOMES**

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www.nph.org.uk

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

**0300 330
7003**



Reader Friendly

Notice board

Flytipping

This is a huge issue locally and nationally and we know how much it upsets you. It's not fair that the minority of people who don't dispose of their rubbish legally can have such a negative impact on your neighbourhood.


If you have any information to share about those responsible for flytipping in your area, please share it with us by calling **01604 838320** or by email **flytipping@nph.org.uk**



Paint shop

If everything goes according to plan with the Government's "roadmap", we'll be opening the Paint Shop doors again on Wednesday 14th April. We've already made sure that the shop is Covid-secure and we would ask customers to wear a face covering (unless exempt) and to follow social distancing instructions on arrival.

And on a much more fun note, we would love it if you shared before and after photos of your decorating project with us on social media:

 **NPH connect**

 **@NPH_news**

Opening hours will be Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 – 14:00.

We can't wait to see you there!

Healthy start

If you're pregnant or have children under four and in receipt of benefits, you could qualify for free vouchers to help you stay healthy. The vouchers can be spent on milk, vegetables, pulses, infant formula milk and vitamins.

To find out more, head to **www.healthystart.nhs.uk**



Our Support team have been assessed as outstanding once again

Unitary

NPH is now owned by West Northamptonshire Council. We would like to reassure you that your housing services will not be affected and NPH will continue to look after your homes and communities. You can find out more about the unitary local authority at **www.futurenorthantswest.org**



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Your community

At the start of lockdown in March 2020 Libby was worried about what the future may look like for her family.

Libby's son Alex suffers from several life limiting conditions, which means he needs a lot of care and support. She told us how children's hospice, Helen and Douglas House has been a lifeline over lockdown: "We would have been completely lost without them. It's like having an extended family, they are always there for us. There have been lots of battles and some we can't take on by ourselves, so they're there to help take the pressure off."

To show her appreciation for the help Libby and her family have received from the hospice, Libby's friend persuaded her to take up, in her words a "crazy challenge". She's secured a place to run the London Marathon, having never run long-distance before the first lockdown.

Libby, like many other novice runners, started the brilliant 'Couch to 5k' programme and is doing really well with training. The marathon will take place in October, and Libby said she will

crawl over the line if it means she completes it!

You can find out more about Alex's condition, the hospice and Libby's marathon effort on their JustGiving page: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/alexandaneedsyou

"Alex recently received a brand new electric wheelchair so he can get around easily. He will now be able to join his mum on her training runs."



Living Well OT

Living Well OT launched at the beginning of 2020, to provide support to people living with chronic or long-term health conditions in Northamptonshire. Their services are designed to help you take control of your health and wellbeing and ease the other issues that can come with health conditions such as feelings of isolation, reduced emotional and physical wellbeing, disadvantage, and possible changes to family and life plans.

While the pandemic has put face to face services on hold, the team have found creative ways to support people who may have needed to shield or reduce contact over the past year.

They've run online exercise classes and have delivered activity packs aimed at keeping minds busy and improving wellbeing. The packs have included puzzle books, colouring packs, arts and crafts activities, jigsaws and keeping active at home tips.



Spread love not hate

It's not okay to be targeted because of who you are, and you have the right to live your life free from abuse or violence.

What are hate crimes?

Hate crimes and incidents are motivated by prejudice or hate. They hurt and can be both confusing and frightening. Hate crime can be based on a person's real or perceived religion, faith or belief, race, sexual orientation, disability or learning difficulty or gender identity.

A victim does not have to be a member of the group at which the hostility is directed, anyone can be a victim of hate crime.

Types of hate crime

There are many definitions of what is a hate crime, but if someone makes you feel scared, embarrassed, ashamed or upset because of the way you look, your faith or religion, your ethnicity, gender, sexuality or disability, it could be a hate crime.

Examples can include:

- Physical assault, such as hitting, punching, pushing and spitting;
- Verbal assault, such as threats, name calling and offensive jokes;
- Verbal or written threats;
- Abusive or threatening phone calls, texts and messages on social media;

- Damage to your home, car, or other property you own;
- Offensive graffiti or posters; and
- Offensive or dangerous items posted through your letterbox.

Reporting hate crimes

Hate crime is a criminal offence that needs to be reported to the police immediately, and you must let them know if you are concerned about your safety. If you are in immediate danger and need support straight away, call 999. If there is no immediate danger, you can report hate crime by calling 101.

By reporting hate crime, you may be able to stop this happening again to you or someone else. You can report incidents to the police even if it wasn't directed

at you, for example you could be a friend, neighbour, family member or a passer-by.

We support our residents who experience hate crime and encourage you to report incidents to us, once they have been reported to the police. You can do this online at www.nph.org.uk/hate-crime or by calling **0300 330 7003**.

Our specialist team will support you and can work with the police to agree next steps to keep you safe.

If you need support or advice on reporting hate crime, Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council can help. Contact them on **01604 400808** or go to www.northantsrec.org.



Many of our residents across the town have received these packs, including residents at Lakeview House and Eleonore House, and the feedback has been wonderful.

A NPH resident said:

"I'm so grateful that someone was thinking of us, particularly during the lockdown. There are lots of great activities in the packs, and I've found them really useful for keeping my mind busy."

Dawn from Living Well OT says:

"We want to provide those with long term health conditions with the support they need to live well with their condition. We focus on the whole

person, not just the condition, and so can help with all aspects of people's lives; including wellbeing, work, finances, relationships, and mental health. We're really looking forward to our groups being able to meet safely when restrictions are lifted, and people are able to re-engage with their communities so that we can support them fully."

Living Well OT's services are free of charge and accessible to anyone living with a chronic or long-term health condition in Northamptonshire. To find out more, go to www.livingwelloccupationaltherapy.co.uk or email dawn@livingwellot.co.uk

Get the job done right!

"I would like to say how pleased I was with my garden job that Joshua did so well. He is a true gem. It's so nice to have someone like Joshua do a job and know you will never be ripped off. Well done NPH who started this Happy to Help scheme."

"He was particularly helpful with advice on where best to plant the tree and was very pleasant."

In January, we launched our new Handyperson service, and we couldn't have hoped for a better start! The service is for residents who need jobs to be done around the home at a low cost, from someone they can trust.

We knew we needed someone brilliant to deliver this service, who would do a great job and make residents smile at the same time. Luckily, we found Josh and you can meet him over the page. These are just some of the jobs he can help you with:

- Putting up shelves;
- Building flat-pack furniture;
- Decorating;
- Attaching curtain poles;

- Changing tricky lightbulbs;
- Getting on top of the garden; or
- Anything else that would help maintain your home.

If this is a service that could help you right now, just get in touch. Charges are based on the job you need, and we also take your individual circumstances into account.



You can complete our online form here:
www.nph.org.uk/handyperson-gardening-services



Or you can give us a call on **01604 837836**



Or email **happytohelp@nph.org.uk**

Meet the team



Meet Josh, the Happy to Help Handyperson!

Hi Josh, tell us a bit about your role.

I'm here to help people who need jobs doing around their home who may not have the capacity, capability or the tools to complete them themselves. I can help with lots of general DIY jobs – anything from putting up shelves to installing cat flaps. And the list of things I'll be able to help with will only increase with time.

Have you always enjoyed DIY?

I started helping with DIY jobs at my last workplace and realised it was something I enjoyed doing. I really enjoy doing hands-on work and I've always wanted to work with my hands in a more physical role. I'm looking forward to being able to expand on what I can do here.

What are you most excited for about the job?

I'm really looking forward to being able to help people. It's really satisfying being able to make a difference to people with the work I do, especially for those who may have needed a job

doing for a while. I've already met a lot of residents and you'd be surprised how many people have small jobs that need doing.

What have you been up to so far?

My first job was delivering trees to residents from the nature giveaways and it was really nice getting out and meeting people! And now the Handyperson service is well underway, I've been doing things like helping with gardens and putting up blinds and everyone's been really happy!

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Normally I enjoy indoor rock-climbing and bouldering, but the centres are closed at the moment. It's lots of fun but it does get scary when you're up high and you've got to let go! During lockdown, I've got into playing chess and I've been watching Netflix a lot more like everyone else. I've also got three guinea pigs who keep me busy!



#InvestingInYourNeighbourhood



Completed regeneration works in Thorplands

W

e have been working across Golding and Southfields improving doors and windows for our tenants.

We've received great feedback about the works.

As you can see from the pictures, they look great and will benefit residents to save on their bills each month.

We are continuing regeneration works across the town all for the benefit of our tenants.



Regeneration and Refurbishment works in Southfields

Maureen was delighted with the work completed by our contractor Engie:

"Just want to say thanks to both of you for being there while the refurbishment work carried out.

I have to say the window guys were brilliant at their job never leaving any mess, always polite and cheerful. Thanks for all your help."



Great Gull Crescent

#MoreNewHomes

We've recently finished work on new homes built on former garage sites in Blackthorn.

Back in 2017, we reviewed our garages and found that many were empty and in poor condition. Residents living around these sites told us they felt unsafe because the garages attracted anti-social behaviour.

So, we upgraded some garages to improve their condition, added lighting and opened the areas up to make them safer. Others were demolished to make way for new homes, and this is the result! We've built a mix of adapted bungalows, small apartment blocks, and family homes.

We got creative when designing these new properties, and built

a completely new type of home for us; one-bedroom houses built for over-55's. We know we have residents who want to downsize from their large family homes, but don't want to move into bungalows or older persons' schemes. These new homes are perfect for their needs, and it means larger family homes are freed up for those who need them.

Our works in Thorplands have been well received and we are delighted with how they are looking.

The garage programme has had a huge impact, meaning that communities across Northampton have benefited from new community hubs, new shops, takeaways and community cafes, and good quality outdoor spaces. And of course, it's given

"I am really happy with my new home. It was all organised very quickly so I could get settled in.

It is really lovely to have some outside space."

Miss Strus – new resident

us the opportunity to build **#MoreNewHomes!**

We wish our new residents lots of happiness in their homes!

If you would like to find out more on our investment works, please visit, www.nph.org.uk/new-build-and-neighbourhood-investment



2 x 2 bed houses in Swansea Crescent



2 x 2 bed houses in Blackthorn



2 x 2 bed houses in St David's



2 x 3 bed houses in Nursery Lane



Scrutiny update

Our involved residents have been outstanding over the past 12 months, with the scrutiny and resident advisory panels meeting on Zoom. Between them, they've made 44 recommendations to our executive management team in the last 8 months and all of them were approved!

The scrutiny panel recently conducted an in-depth review of our financial inclusion and welfare reform service. Following the review, they made 16 recommendations for positive change and we've agreed to action all of them.

NPH's financial inclusion and welfare reform officers work with residents who are experiencing financial hardship. They offer advice and support on budgeting, applying for benefits, maximising income and reducing outgoings. In the past year the team has secured financial awards for

residents in excess of £160,000, at a time when many people have had their finances impacted by the pandemic. Service users gave great feedback on the team members and the support they offered. They even rated the service 10/10!

In making the recommendations, the panel wanted to support the excellent work that's already being carried out by the officers. The key suggestions for the service are:

- Increasing the visibility of the service by improving information on the website and producing a leaflet;
- Enabling residents to refer themselves to the service;
- Having a dedicated email address for ease of access; and
- Introducing a specialist management system to reduce the burden on staff and improve the recording and reporting of activity and outcomes.

Our huge thanks go out to the scrutiny panel for their ongoing dedication to improving services for all. We would also like to thank the colleagues and residents who gave up their time to make this review such a success.

Our groups, panels and socials are open to all residents. Whether you want something low key with no regular commitment or you'd like to join one of our panels so you can get your teeth into something more substantial, there are ways for everyone to get involved. Don't miss out, get in touch with our Resident Involvement team and have your say!

If you're in need of some support or advice from the financial inclusion and welfare reform service, please contact your rent income officer by calling **0300 330 7003** or by emailing rentincome@nph.org.uk.

Virtual cuppas



we've not been able to run our usual involvement groups since the pandemic, so we recently started hosting monthly get togethers for residents using Zoom!

Checking in and staying connected with each other can really help our mental health and wellbeing, especially

in such challenging times. It's also a great chance to meet other residents and keep up to date with what's going on at NPH right now.

The next virtual get together will be in May. If you'd like to join us, just get in touch and we'll share the Zoom details with you. We hope to see you there!



"It has been absolutely fabulous having resident social gatherings on Zoom. It's been a difficult year and being able to keep in touch and meet new people this way has been marvellous"

Pauline Riley

 **NPH Connect**

 **@NPH_news**

 **getinvolved@nph.org.uk**

 **01604 837836**

Communities Fund update



to Help under their Christmas trees! Both schemes have gardens that are looked after by residents, and this equipment should make their jobs a little easier!

The Communities Fund helps NPH residents and community groups to do great things to make a positive difference in the community. If you know a group doing amazing things in Northampton, or you have an idea for a project but need some help with funding, this fund could be just what you need to get started.

It's a simple application process and our friends at Happy to Help can guide you through it from start to finish. Go to www.nph.org.uk/happy-help-cic to find out more.



Here's how the Communities Fund has helped local groups since our last issue:

- Family Support Link received £250 to produce wellbeing resource packs for the young people they support. Many of the young people they work with are living with the impact of substance abuse, and have been isolated from family, friends and peers throughout the pandemic. These packs have helped keep them occupied throughout the past few months.
- Residents at Lakeview House and Eleonore House found grass mowers and trimmers from Happy

- The Friends of Victoria Park received funding to help print their newsletters for the next year, which will be sent to around 300 local residents.
- Gardening groups at Ekins Close, Spring Boroughs, Cardigan Close and Camborne Close have received gift vouchers to buy garden plants, bulbs and other equipment to get the gardens in full bloom for Spring.



Nature project

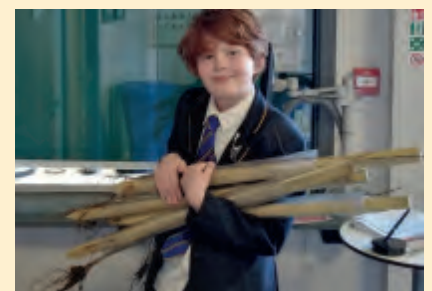
Our new Handyperson, Joshua, has been out delivering trees as part of our most recent nature project giveaway. Around 120 trees have been snapped up and residents have been delighted to

receive them, we can't wait to see how they grow.

We donated other trees to local schools, as not all children have access to a garden at home. We've loved seeing the photos shared with us. Here's Kester with trees delivered to Malcom Arnold Prep School, and photos of trees planted by St James CE School.

If you've ever fancied trying to grow your own vegetables, then our Spring giveaway is for you! You will receive a fully constructed

planter, compost, seeds and a hand tool – everything you need to get you started. We have limited amounts of these kits to give away, so you need to get in touch quickly to get your hands on one of these freebies! Send us a message on Facebook (NPH Connect), email getinvolved@nph.org.uk or call us on **01604 837836**.



Getting to know....

Shakil Ahmed

Shak and his family have been living in one of our newest developments for 4 months now and feel like they've been there forever.

Thanks for talking to us Shakil – tell us how you've settled into Toms Close.

We feel lucky to have such a lovely place. We were living with family members before and it was a bit of a squeeze. We're already talking about it as home, we never call it our 'house'. The boys are really happy to have their own space to chill out.

What have you been up to since you moved in?

I've been working with the boys to get the garden ready for summer and we can't wait to see how it turns out.

It's a lovely quiet area, so recently I've taken up astro-photography as we don't have any light pollution round here. It's been a lovely way to make the most of how peaceful the area is.

Are you getting to know your neighbours?

We've definitely made friends with the neighbours and had loads of fun when the snow covered Northampton recently!

And what do you get up to in your spare time?

I run my own kickboxing club with the help of friends and sometimes even my sons. Since Covid put a stop to face-to-face training sessions, I've made the most of technology and been running classed via Zoom!

I've got lots of plans for the club once restrictions ease, but right now I'm just enjoying my new home, building things up at the club and looking forward to what the next year brings.

If you'd like to find out more about Shak's kickboxing club, find them on Facebook

www.facebook.com/endfitma



Whole House Retrofit Project

Did you know that houses in the UK currently contribute around 27% of the overall UK carbon emissions? As 80% of today's houses will still be here in 2050, we need to find solutions now to make them kinder to the environment and cut their carbon emissions.

That's why we are delighted to have been awarded Government funding to carry out improvement works to homes in Kingsthorpe.

The Whole House Retrofit Project is targeting homes which are expensive to heat and energy efficient due to the way they are built. We have written to those living in eligible homes to encourage them to take part in this scheme, and many have already signed up!

The project is completely free of charge to residents, who will benefit from:

- Added or improved insulation;
- Improved windows and doors;
- Solar panels;
- Upgraded central heating systems; and
- Improved ventilation.

These improvements mean residents will see a significant reduction in their energy bills, find their homes easier to heat,



and issues with ventilation, damp and condensation will be improved. Once the work is complete, these homes will be some of the most energy efficient properties we manage.

We have partnered with energy and regeneration specialists ENGIE to carry out these works, as they have a vast amount of experience in this type of project. The work will take around 6 weeks on each property and is due to begin in May.

Although the project is beginning in Kingsthorpe, we aim to be able to expand the project out to all areas of Northampton in the future, so that we can have an even bigger impact!

Keep an eye on our social media channels and our website for updates as work begins. If you'd like to read more about the project, head to www.nph.org.uk/whole-house-retrofit-project



TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Ever wondered which repairs you are responsible for?

1



Lost keys or fobs

Lost keys or fobs will need to be paid up-front before the work is completed

2



Damage to home

Standard or emergency work required to repair damage (accidental or deliberate) caused by either a tenant or visitor to the property

You will not be responsible for the above, if a crime number is provided

3



Legal costs

Legal costs incurred for gas servicing if a tenant refuses access

4



Property condition

Unauthorised alterations

Moving out of or exchanging the property and leaving it in an unacceptable condition

Make sure the condition of the garden and communal areas are also acceptable

5



Misreporting a repair

Misreporting a repair to get the work completed earlier

We need your feedback

Your views really do make a difference, and we are always grateful for the opportunity to listen and respond to your feedback.

We want to hear the good, the not so good, and suggestions for what we could do better. It helps us to make sure we're providing great service and means that we can put things right if we haven't met our usual standards.

Don't forget, if you're happy with the service we've provided, we love to hear when our colleagues have done a great job! Compliments help us to understand the things that matter to you. We always share your compliments with the team, and we know how much it means to them to know that they've made someone's day!

We know that we don't always get things right, and that's why we encourage you to let us know if you're not happy with our services. This could be about services you've received directly from us, or someone who works on our behalf.

Your feedback could be about:

- Repairs and maintenance issues;
- Issues with communal areas;
- Health and safety; or
- Customer service.

If you're telling us about something we can put right quickly and easily, we'll get in touch to talk this through. We'll then try to resolve the issue within 5 working days as a 'Quick Win'.

If it needs more investigation, then it'll go through our formal three stage complaints process, which is set out fully in our Complaints and Feedback Policy which can be found on: **www.nph.org.uk/customer-feedback**

If you need to make a complaint, you must let us know within 3 months of the issue arising. We will do our best to resolve your complaint, but if you're not happy with the outcome, you can go to the Housing Ombudsman. The

Housing Ombudsman will only review complaints that have been through our complaints process, so it's important you speak to us first.

The Housing Ombudsman website has some useful tips on writing complaints: **www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk** or you can call them on **0300 111 3000**.

You can share your compliments, comments and complaints with us on our website: **www.nph.org.uk/customer-feedback**, email **nphcustomerfeedback@nph.org.uk**, or give us a call on **0300 330 7003**.



Wordsearch

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | L | O | S | S | P | R | N | G | B | L | U | E | B | E |
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| O | M | R | E | L | A | N | R | E | V | C | T | E | C | R |
| P | E | G | R | L | E | L | S | T | A | E | M | S | O | N |
| Y | T | A | N | V | E | R | O | R | V | I | R | D | B | A |
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| E | T | A | L | I | D | F | F | A | T | H | E | M | U | M |



Thank you again to NPH resident Oscar Woodcock for putting together this issue's Spring wordsearch. We've been getting more and more entries, so please keep sending them in!

For your chance to win £20 in Love2Shop vouchers, can you find all the words that remind us of Spring.

- ☐ BLOSSOM
- ☐ BLUEBELL
- ☐ CARNATION
- ☐ CELEBRATION
- ☐ CHOCOLATE
- ☐ CHRYSANTHEMUM
- ☐ DAFFODIL
- ☐ EASTER
- ☐ MARIGOLD
- ☐ MAYPOLE
- ☐ REFRESHING
- ☐ SEASON
- ☐ SPRINGTIME
- ☐ VERNAL

What you've been up to in lockdown



Find us on Facebook and send in your entries to NPH Connect!

To enter, just email us a snap of your completed grid to voiceeditor@nph.org.uk or our Facebook page: **NPH Connect** or send it the traditional way to the address on page 2.

Congratulations to our resident in Spring Boroughs who won our Winter wordsearch!

