

The newsletter for tenants of Spire Homes

# inspire

SPECIAL EDITION

in this issue:

- Welcome to your new landlord
- Delivering promises from day one
- More ways to pay



for tenants and leaseholders of Rutland

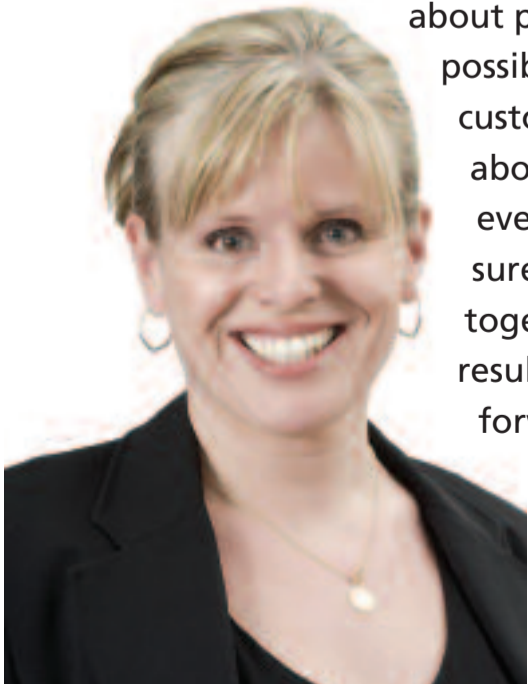
# Welcome to Spire Homes

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all Rutland tenants and leaseholders. The transfer of your homes from the Council to Spire Homes took place on 9th November. This means that Spire Homes is now your landlord.

As you know, we made lots of promises about improving your homes and housing service before you voted in the ballot last summer, and we can't wait to start delivering them. Our priority will be to make sure we do exactly that in the years ahead. We will be spending around £21 million over the next five years to carry out the improvements to your homes that are so important to you. I'm delighted to let you know that we've got off to a great start as this work has started already.

Everyone at Spire Homes is passionate about providing the highest possible level of service to our customers. We're also passionate about involving residents in everything that we do to make sure that we develop services together and achieve fantastic results. We're really looking forward to working with you to achieve the brighter future that you voted for.

*Julie Doyle, Managing Director, Spire Homes*



*Roger Begy, Leader of Rutland County Council and John Farrar, Chairman of Spire Homes*

**Spire Homes is delivering its promises to Rutland tenants. Improvements have started from day one.**

a handy fridge magnet is enclosed so you know who to contact

# Introducing the Rutland Management Board

The Rutland Management Board are an important group that has been set up to oversee the housing service in Rutland. One of their biggest priorities will be to make sure that all of the promises made to tenants and leaseholders are kept and delivered to a high standard. The Board will also make sure that tenant and leaseholder views are taken account of in all key decisions that affect them. The Board will have 3 Rutland tenants, 3 Rutland County Councillors, 2 independent people and a representative from Spire Homes' Board. So that you can get to know a little more about the current members of the Rutland Management Board, their details are below:

## Tenant Members



**Tom Coggan**

Tom has been a tenant in the Cottesmore area for more than 60 years. He is currently Chairman of the Rutland Tenants and Leaseholders Partnership and is also a member of the Quality Assurance Group, the Editorial Group and part of the Transfer Steering Group. Tom was a manager in the Department for Employment. Since retiring from

the Civil Service, he has worked at the Oakham Museum. Tom was a Special Constable for 28 years so he got to know the whole Rutland area very well.



**Mervin Waldapfel**

Mervin lives in Oakham and has been a tenant of Rutland County Council for around 18 years. He is a member of the Rutland Tenants and Leaseholders Partnership and has been part of the Transfer Steering Group. Mervin also sits on the Quality Assurance Group that is advising on the programme of improvements to tenants' homes.

Mervin has experience in health and safety and has previously assisted with the Air Training Corp in Oakham.



**Gail Kerr**

Gail first moved to the area when she was two years old. She currently lives in Ketton. Gail was a Parish Councillor for Ketton Parish Council until last year. She joined the Transfer Steering Group to help agree the details of the housing transfer. Gail was a nurse for more than 20 years, then worked

for a construction company. Gail is now enjoying her retirement.

## Council Members



**Cllr Peter Golden**

Peter is the longest-serving Councillor on Rutland County Council, having been first elected in 1991. He represents the rural ward of Normanton which includes the villages of Empingham, Edith Weston and North & South Luffenham. He is currently chairman of Adult Social Services, Health & Housing Scrutiny Panel and previously Cabinet

Member for Housing. Peter has been a member of the Executive Committee of Voluntary Action Rutland for many years and is Chairman of the Cory Trust.

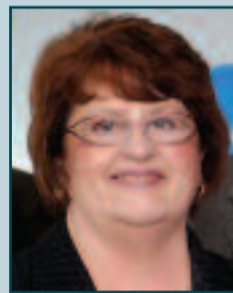


**Cllr Peter Ind**

Peter is a County Councillor for Uppingham and Beaumont Chase Wards. He has been a Town and County Councillor for around ten years and was Mayor of Uppingham in 2001/02. He is immediate past Chairman of Rutland County Council. Peter is on the Committee of Knight School Rutland which helps young people to develop confidence and

become good citizens. Before taking early retirement, Peter had 35 years commercial and insurance experience.

## Independent Members



**Barbara Whitfield**

Barbara spent 25 years working for Housing Associations in the West Midlands working at Director and Chief Executive level. Following retirement, Barbara became a Board Member of a new housing association that was formed when around 8,000 homes transferred from a

Staffordshire Council. She was a member of the Rutland Partnership Board which oversaw the contract awarded to Spire Homes to manage the housing service in Rutland.



**Lesley Owen-Jones**

Lesley is currently Development Manager for the Heritage Lottery Fund. Previously, she spent many years working in various aspects of social housing. This included nine years at the Housing Corporation (now the Tenant Services Authority) where she allocated grants for projects that

promoted good practice amongst social landlords. Lesley is the Chair of the Rutland Management Board and has an interest in making sure that tenants receive a quality housing service and excellent value for money.

## Spire Homes Board Representative



**John Farrar**

John is Chairman of Spire Homes' Management Board. He has lived in Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire, all of his life and has been an Irthlingborough Town Councillor for the past 11 years. John is also a director of Keystone Developments, a not-for-profit member of Longhurst Group that develops private retirement housing.

# Improvements have started from day one



*It's transfer day!  
Tenants celebrate and  
improvement works start*



## 'Meet the Builder' Roadshows draw big crowds

More than 150 tenants from across Rutland attended three 'Meet the Builder' Roadshows at Oakham, Uppingham and Ryhall. These events gave tenants the chance to find out more about the works programmes for homes across Rutland. The roadshows included sample kitchens, bathrooms and colour choices from which tenants will be able to choose.

Staff from Spire Homes and our contractor FWA West were on hand to discuss the planned improvements and to answer any questions. Mervin Waldapfel, who is a tenant member on the Rutland Management Board and a member of the Quality Assurance Group, said 'There has been a fantastic response to the roadshows. Everyone seems to be very happy with the kitchens and bathrooms selected by the Quality Assurance Group. Being able to choose your own kitchen units, tiles, worktops, flooring and even paint colours means that everyone's home can look different. After nearly a year of talking about how Spire Homes could improve our homes, it seems that there will be real progress now that the housing has finally transferred from the Council. That's great news for tenants'.



## Major improvements to Sheltered Housing

Over the next few months, tenants of all sheltered housing schemes will be invited to coffee mornings so they can find out more about the works planned for their homes and sheltered schemes.

During the first year the communal areas of schemes will be decorated and tenants will have lots of choice when it comes to selecting paint colours, carpets and new curtains. During the first

three years sheltered housing tenants will be offered new kitchens, bathrooms and new front doors and communal facilities on schemes will also be improved.

A dedicated Tenant Liaison Officer will be on hand every step of the way to provide support to tenants and make sure the work goes smoothly.

# Getting in touch

As you know the Spire Homes' team have been delivering the housing service in Rutland for many years now, so you'll still see the same familiar faces you're used to. There are lots of ways that you can get in touch with our team. You can:



**Phone us on:**  
**01572 755465**



**Email us at:**  
**spirehomes@longhurst-group.org.uk**

Following feedback from Rutland tenants we have now introduced a text service.



**Text us on:**  
**447797800062**

For those people who like to use more traditional means of communication you can also write to us at:



**Spire Homes, Pinewood,**  
**1 Cold Overton Road,**  
**Oakham, Rutland LE15 6NT**

Of course, you are welcome to visit our office on weekdays.

Don't forget that you should continue to contact Rutland County Council about any Housing Benefit claims as well as any other Council matters. Their phone number is 01572 722577. There's a handy fridge magnet enclosed with this newsletter as a reminder of who deals with which services.



## More ways to pay

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to pay your rent. Spire Homes will continue to offer the same payment methods used by Rutland County Council and we're introducing some new ways to give you greater choice.



This is the easiest way for most people with a bank or building society account to pay their rent. You are given advanced warning of changes in the amount collected from your account but you don't need to contact your bank.

### Standing Order

A Standing Order is similar to Direct Debit. But unlike a Direct Debit, you need to create a new Standing Order each time the amount you need to pay changes.



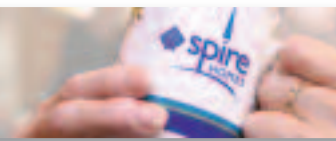
A new way to pay. All Rutland tenants will soon be able to pay their rent by cheque, debit card or with cash at thousands of shops across the country as well as at any UK post office. The Allpay Service will also let you pay your rent by phone or online. We'll let you know all the places in your area where you could use this new service.

### Other ways to pay

For the next few months tenants will still be able to pay their rent at the Council's cash office, but we expect that this will be phased out once everyone has their Allpay card. Allpay will give lots more choice of paying your rent closer to your home.

You can also send cheques to us if you prefer too.

## inbrief



### Inspire formats

Your Inspire newsletter is now available in different formats. If you require a version on tape, in braille, in a different language or large print, please contact us on 01572 755465 and we will be happy to help you.



### Getting in touch

You can now contact us by email at :  
[spirehomes@longhurst-group.org.uk](mailto:spirehomes@longhurst-group.org.uk)

Our main office number is:

**01572 755465**

Our text number is:

**447797 800 062**

Log onto: [www.spirehomes.org.uk](http://www.spirehomes.org.uk)

### Office Opening Hours

Our office is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.30pm, Friday.

## Your new tenancy agreement

Now that you are a tenant of Spire Homes you will need to sign your new tenancy agreement.

This will be sent to you soon. Please sign it straight away and return it to us in the pre-paid envelope provided.

The new tenancy agreement will be in the form that was set out in the Offer Document and will preserve the rights that you had with the Council.

