

inspire

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for tenants and leaseholders of Rutland

£21 million of improvements on the way

Over the next five years we'll be investing £21 million in improvements!

We staged a series of events called 'Meet your builder' in October to make sure as many of our tenants were aware of these exciting plans. We showed off some fantastic new-look kitchens and bathrooms and had plenty of staff on hand to answer your questions.

Over 200 of you came out to see us and everyone was really pleased and excited about the changes we're going to be making.

Our improvements programme started on the very day that the transfer of homes from Rutland County Council to Spire Homes took place – 9th November. Our contractors, FWA West were in Oakham, Ryhall and Uppingham making improvements to outside areas, from replacement windows in Finkey Street, Oakham through to fencing in Ryhall.

In January 2010 we will be focusing on kitchens and bathrooms and will be out and about with our contractors surveying and designing for a couple of months to ensure you have plenty of colours and fittings to choose from.

We're also looking at security to make sure the entrance doors of our flat blocks are as good as they should be, and we'll also be busy replacing individual flat entrance doors with high spec fire check doors.

Our insulation programme will also continue over the coming months, to ensure that all of our homes are as energy efficient as possible.

We've been in touch with lots of our tenants already to ensure they're fully aware of when we will be working in their area or improving their home. If we've not contacted you yet, don't worry – we haven't forgotten you!

So, as you can see, there are lots of improvements planned across Rutland and we're committed to hitting our Year One Promises programme.

Your new Newsletter!

Hello and welcome to your new newsletter especially for Rutland tenants.

Through our Inspire newsletter we will continue to keep you up to date on the latest news and developments from within Rutland.

We hope you enjoy reading this first edition. We always welcome ideas for future articles, please let us know if you have any suggestions or would like to join our editorial panel.



Allpay – A new way to pay your rent

Paying your rent should be easy and with four ways to pay it is!

Direct Debit

This is the easiest way for people with a bank or building society account. You can pay on the first, seventh or fifteenth day of the month. We will notify you at least ten working days before the first payment is collected or if we have to change the amount we collect. This means you'll know just how much is coming out of your account and when.

Everyone who used Direct Debit to pay their rent to Rutland County Council must complete a new Direct Debit form so their rent can be paid to Spire Homes. If you haven't yet returned your form please do so as soon as possible.

Standing Order

Similar to Direct Debit but you ask your bank or building society to pay a fixed amount on the same day each month. Unlike a Direct Debit, you need to create a new Standing Order each time the amount you need to pay changes.

Only you can cancel a standing order, so if you used this method to pay Rutland County Council then you need to call your bank to stop the old one and start a new one payable to Spire Homes.

"Allpay" A new way to pay

You can also pay your 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.



You should have received your own unique Allpay card that will let you pay your rent anywhere that has a Paypoint Station.

Cheque

You can still pay by cheque but you must remember to post it to us!

New text service

Got a mobile phone? Love to text? Then why not use our new text service for tenants.

You can now text your requests or enquiries to us on **447797 800 062**. We just ask that you include your name and address so we can get to back to you.

DON'T BE IN THE DARK WHEN IT COMES TO HOME SAFETY

Keeping your house secure is important all year round but there's something about the winter and these long, dark nights that makes people even more aware of the need to be safe at home.

There are some really simple things you can do to make sure you are as safe as possible at home, for example:

- Never answer the door to someone you do not know.
- If you have a door chain always ensure that this is used.
- Do not leave your door keys in the door.
- If you are approached by an energy company or salesman at your door, they do not need to enter your property and they do not need to see any financial or personal information. If unsure do not let them in.



Putting our customers first

We're committed to delivering fantastic customer service and in October we celebrated National Customer Services Week.

We seized the opportunity and used the week to promote our services and ask tenants how we can improve what we do even more. Some great feedback was given and we have a few more ideas to be working on. Thank you to everyone who took the time to talk to us.

We also thanked members of our team, who had all gone the extra mile to support tenants and colleagues.



Still here, still working for you

Since tenants voted "yes" to the transfer to Spire Homes there has been a lot to do for the Rutland Tenant and Leaseholder Partnership.

1. **First we did a quick survey of 300 tenants and leaseholders - just to check that we are on the right track.**

Those who sent the forms back told us they want the **RTLTP** to focus on:

- Delivering on the promises and improvements in the Offer Document
- Protecting our rights as tenants and leaseholders
- Working with Spire Homes to improve services

Our survey also said.....that people felt well informed about the **RTLTP** but quite a few people were less clear about the job of the new **Rutland Management Board** that Spire Homes has set up for us.

2. **Next we held a special "Awayday" to discuss the survey findings.** We spent a whole day with other active tenants mapping out a 9-point Action Plan for the New Year.
3. **Then we got up to speed about Housing Associations.** **DWA** ran some training sessions for us on how Housing Associations work. So far we have had 4 sessions to help us work out "what's what" now that we are no longer council tenants.
4. **Then we checked out how Spire works with tenants in East Northants.** We asked Colin Woods, the chair of the 30-strong **Tenants' Forum** in East Northants, to come and tell us how Spire Homes works with tenants and leaseholders there. Colin was very helpful and we hope to see more of him in 2010.
5. **We met with members of the Rutland Management Board.** We held a meeting with the Rutland Management Board in November. We are all committed to working together to make sure Rutland's tenants and leaseholders get only the very best services.
6. **Finally, in November we held our Annual General Meeting.** Where we brought everyone up to date with what the RTLTP is doing.

My congratulations to Margaret Bourn, the winner of our Survey Prize Draw. And my thanks to everyone who has helped the RTLTP over the last few very busy months.

Tom Coggan, Chair RTLTP

Swap Your Home

Looking for a new home? Then swap it!

We've replaced the Mutual Exchange register with a new on-line service, which means your new home is just a few clicks away.

You can log onto www.spirehomes.houseexchange.org.uk and register. Your current accommodation will appear on the House Exchange database and then you're free to search for a new home. It's quick, easy and lots of people have already found their new home this way.

Don't worry if you don't have Internet access at home - you can ask for an application form and we will post you one.



Blooming Marvellous

Community warden Teresa Mclean and gardener Mike Brown have transformed two run down garden plots at Carver Court.

Once a real mess, the area is now a marvellous sensory garden with sweet-smelling plants and rippling water, which sparkles in a solar powered urn. Another bed has been planted with topiary bushes, bulbs and perennial plants.

Tenants of nearby flats are already saying it's a huge improvement and love looking out on it.

"Mike has done a fantastic job," said Teresa. "I am sure the garden will be a place for all the residents, including those that are visually impaired, to relax and enjoy."



New faces

There's more than just a new tenant newsletter at Spire Homes in Rutland. There are also two new people to say hello to.



Neil Brunning has joined the Property Services Team as the new Property Surveyor. He is responsible for inspecting repairs; ensuring empty properties are repaired quickly and dealing with any technical issues that arise.



Peter Billson is the new Property Surveyor for the improvement work and will be co-ordinating and managing the planned improvements works to tenants' homes.

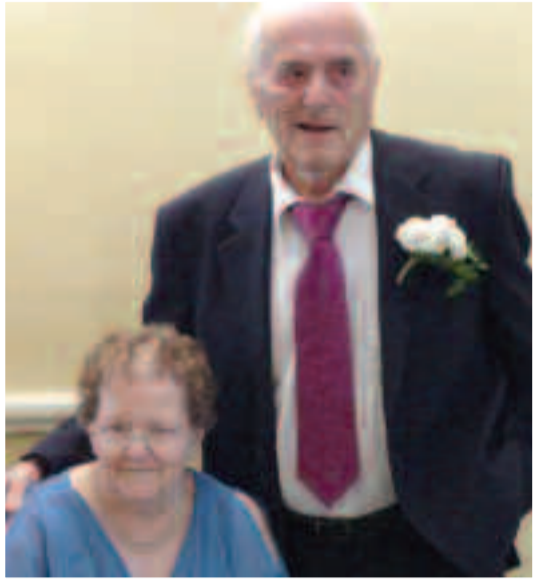
It's never too late to tie the knot!

Congratulations to Jean (74) and Jim (77) from Gainsborough Court in Cottesmore who tied the knot on 5th September.

The couple, who met six months before, enjoyed a buffet lunch and a game of bingo

with friends and family after their wedding before honeymooning in Malta.

Congratulations also to Josie McShane and Fred Andrews who got married on 6th June at Oakham registry office.



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

Our main office number is:

01572 755465

Our text number is:

447797 800 062

Log onto: www.spirehomes.org.uk

Getting in touch is easy

There's lots of ways to get in touch with us.



By phone **01572 755465**



By email spirehomes@longhurst-group.org.uk



By text **447797 800 062** but please include your name and address in the message so we can get back to you.



You can also visit us at 1 Cold Overton Road in Oakham.

The winner for Autumn issue of Streets Ahead is: Mr. Clements from Ryhall. The answer was Scarecrow.

Send entry to **Inspire, Spire Homes, 1 Cold Overton Road, Oakham LE15 6NT** for a chance to win a £20 Argos voucher by 31st December 2009.

All the fun of the fair

This year's Samuel Court Autumn Fair was the most successful ever!

Our thanks go to Spire Homes and Samuel Court resident Bill Balodis who provided the refreshments, and The Silver Fish Bar, The Crown Hotel and the market fruit and vegetable stall for donating raffle prizes.

It's a shame no one guessed the name of our doll was Dorothy, but it did mean the great granddaughter of one of the residents received an early Christmas present!

The Autumn Fair is only staged due to the commitment of our tenants and their families, who give up their time to make it such a success. Thank you for your support and we hope you enjoy your free Christmas lunch and entertainment, which will be paid for by the £140 raised on the day.

Bah Bah Rutland tenants have you any wool?

Can you help a local knitting group? They desperately need double knitting and 4-ply wool so that they can knit jumpers and blankets for children and families in the developing world.

If you can help, please pop your rolls of wool or oddments into our special box in the reception area of our Pinewood office in Oakham.



Xmas Opening Hours

24th & 31st Dec we will close at 3pm
25th & 28th Dec and **1st Jan** the office will be closed all day
29th & 30th Dec we will close at 4pm

Normal office hours will be in place from 4th January.

COMPETITION Winter Wordsearch

Find the hidden words running forward, backward, upward, downward or diagonally.

Which one is missing?

A	R	P	R	E	S	E	N	T
K	F	A	I	P	X	Q	R	H
P	A	R	T	Y	E	S	T	M
M	I	S	T	L	E	T	O	E
L	R	P	B	V	Y	T	N	J
P	Y	U	Z	F	A	I	B	L
H	A	Q	S	N	K	N	U	C
B	D	A	N	P	O	S	M	I
G	M	C	O	A	S	E	P	V
X	Z	I	W	H	O	L	L	Y

- | | | |
|---------|---------|-----------|
| HOLLY | GLITTER | TINSEL |
| IVY | BAUBLE | MISTLETOE |
| XMAS | FAIRY | NOEL |
| PRESENT | PARTY | SNOW |

Name:

Address:

Age:

The missing word is:

