

inspire

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- New look for Cordwainers
- Our new 'Madge Standard'
- Gardens in Bloom winners

providing homes, improving lives

Celebrating people and pride in our community

We know that there are a lot of unsung heroes out there who are too modest to talk about the outstanding contributions they make. That's why we've launched our new **People, Pride & Community Awards** to give a very big thank you for everything they've done.

We'd also like to thank everyone who took the time to nominate people.

We had a really difficult time deciding who should win, but eventually we chose:

- Jean Freeman from Thrapston as **Best Neighbour**, with Bob Brooker of Irthlingborough a close second.
- Kate Bristow from Ketton received our **Senior Achievement Award**, with Kate James of Irthlingborough coming second.
- Joanne Cleaver from Uppingham is our **Community Hero**, with George Clements of Ryhall coming second.
- 14 year old Philip Roper Jnr from Woodford won the **Youth Award**, with Mark Jolley from Kingscliffe coming in second.
- Kath Emtage from Rushden received the **Shining Star award**, with Malcolm Taylor from Irthlingborough getting the second spot.

All of the nominees were invited to our Annual General Meeting where the winners received their trophy and a £50 prize, and a £25 voucher and a certificate being given to the runner ups.

"Our People, Pride and Community Awards have proved very successful and we were overwhelmed with both the number of people nominated and also with the amazing acts of kindness." said Julie Doyle, Managing Director of Spire Homes.
 "Thank you to everyone who got involved and nominated, and congratulations to our winners and runner ups."

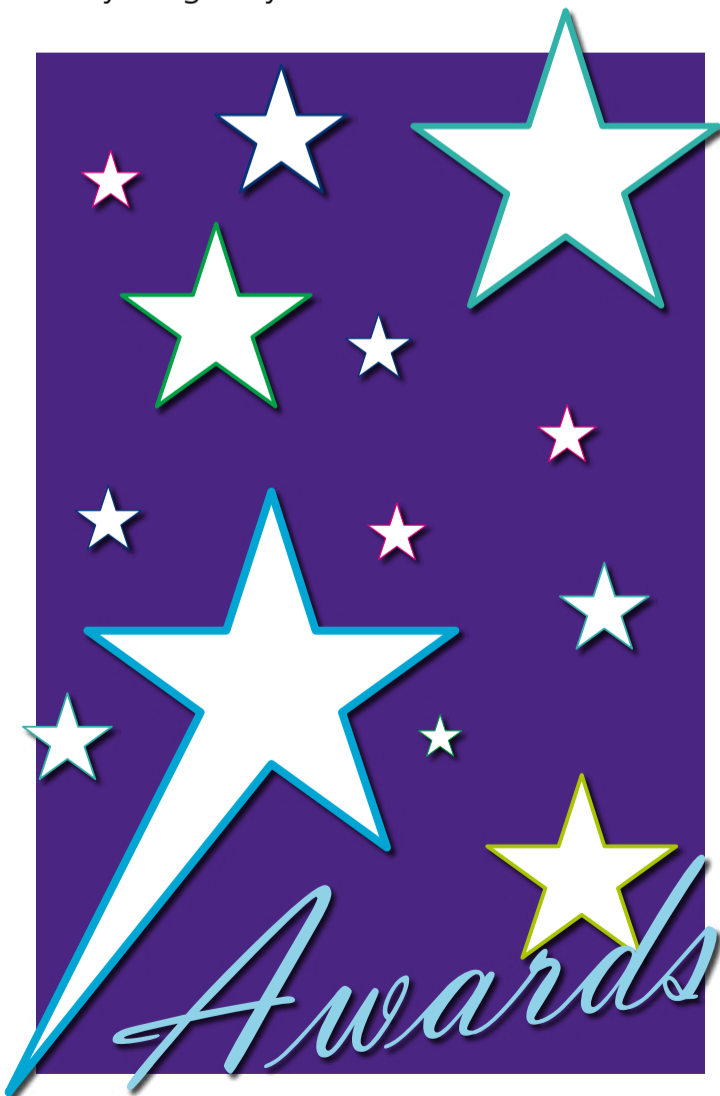
✓ **100%**
and 9 months early!

We're delighted to be able to say that we've met the Government's 'Decent Homes Standard' a full nine months before the deadline (31st December 2010).

Thank you to everyone who allowed us to undertake the improvements to meet the 100% we needed.

Every one of your homes is now warm, safe and comfortable. They have an extra benefit of lower fuel bills, thanks to: better insulation, improved windows, doors and roofs, and more efficient central heating.

This isn't the end of the story though, as we'll continue to look at our homes and see where further improvements can be made.



Help us show anti-social behaviour the door



Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a small but real problem and we're doing everything we can to make sure it doesn't happen around our homes.

Thankfully, it's not a major issue for us, but when we do come across it we move incredibly quickly to resolve any situations.

In two recent situations, when two tenants were threatening people and their property, we applied to the courts for injunctions; which were granted. This meant that neither of the individuals could enter certain areas nor could they threaten people again. If they did, the Court's inclusion of a power of arrest would mean both people would be arrested.

Stories like this show that we're really committed to cutting out ASB, but we're sure there's more we could be doing. That's why we've signed up for the national ASB accreditation. This means an independent assessor will investigate, rate us and then give us ideas to improve.

Before they visit we'd like to hear from you. We want to know if you have any ideas to make our service better and what else could be done.

If you'd like to share your experiences or help shape the way we deal with this issue then please get in touch.

Don't be alarmed by digital changes

If you don't know already the United Kingdom is in the process of going digital.

This means that by 2012 you will need a new television or a digital box to receive television programmes. It will also mean that we have been updating our emergency alarm equipment.

If you have an emergency alarm in your home then we need you to press the alarm and go through to the call centre so that we make sure your alarm has been updated. This will mean that when the digital switchover takes place you will be able to summon emergency assistance as usual.

It really is an easy process and there's nothing to worry about, but if you do need any help then just give us a call on 0845 603 5399 and we'll guide you through the process.

Cromwell Court gets a spring clean!

A 6 week improvement plan

has really cleaned up Cromwell Court in Rushden much to the delight of tenants living there.

After talking to tenants, it was clear that some things needed changing, especially the outside communal area.

So that's what we did. We put a plan in place to make sure tenants had everything they really wanted including an adequate washing and drying area. We also resurfaced the main area and improved the bin store.

These changes, plus the introduction of heavy duty rotary washing lines, have made a real difference to the people who live in Cromwell Court, as tenant Colin Woods explains: "The washing line area is now well used, with people regularly hanging out washing. The improvements have made the area easier on the eye and a more pleasant place to live."



Doreen loves the new-look Cordwainers

The £260,000 transformation of our Cordwainers sheltered scheme in Rushden took centre stage during Supported Housing month in June.

Our Chairman, John Farrar, was joined by the Mayor of Rushden and Doreen Love, a tenant of Cordwainers for the last 27 years – at the official opening, which celebrated the new and improved Cordwainers.

"The improvements are lovely," said Doreen (aged 87). "The new facilities and activity room is a great way to socialise with other tenants."

As well as improving the activities room where tenants can meet and enjoy creative activities, we've spent a lot of money on: new carpets, decorating, new chairs and lift, updating the laundry room and fitting a new communal kitchen.

Immediate vacancies within Spire Homes

Role – to join our new Housing Services Group and Asset Management Group

Rewards – Expenses, training and learning new skills

Hours – Meetings will be for 2 hours at a time, with around 6 meetings a year

Start date – October 2010

Description – We're looking for people who are particularly keen to learn and work with us to improve the repairs and housing service. You don't need any previous experience, but need to be willing to take an active part in decisions, show commitment and enthusiasm.

How to apply – If you feel this is the role for you then please get in touch with Sharon Boot on 0845 603 5399.

Our 'Madge Standard': Making everything as clear as A,B,C



We work hard to keep you up to date so it's important that the information we send to you is easy to understand, with no housing jargon!

One tenant, Madge Carpenter, was passionate about this and wanted to make sure

every tenant could understand the information we send out. After Madge mentioned this, we were straight on the case and this is when the 'Madge Standard' was born.

We've now introduced the 'Madge Standard', which promises that we only use plain English when we send information to you so it's easier to read and understand. We would like to thank everyone who got involved for all their hard work and in particular Madge.

41 affordable new homes

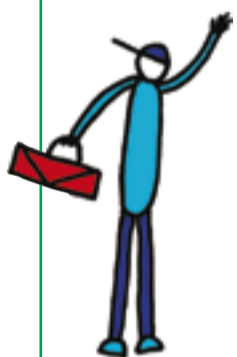
We're committed to providing attractive, affordable and environmentally-sound homes; as the release of our 41 new homes shows perfectly.

Once a derelict and decaying building, the former home of Arthur Nutt's boot factory in Finedon has been transformed into 31 new homes.

The multi-million development was officially opened in June, by our Chairman John Farrar. John was joined by The Mayor of the Borough Council of Wellingborough, Councillor Lora Lawman, and former factory worker Ann Goddard. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) East Midlands gave £1.6m towards the exciting development.

We worked closely with the Council and the building company, Westleigh, to make sure the renovated building maintained not only Finedon's heritage and history, but also includes cutting-edge environmental features.

Meanwhile, in Easton-on-the-Hill, thanks to support from the HCA and East Northamptonshire Council, we have built 10 much needed 2 and 3 bedroom houses. Like the boot factory, the homes feature air source heat pumps for heating and hot water. The builders, Deejak have turned an unwanted, overgrown plot of land into high quality, affordable family homes.



FWA are changing their name to Apollo Services

You'll still receive the same great service from the same great people – it's only the name that's different!

Need a Repair – Call: 0845 603 5399

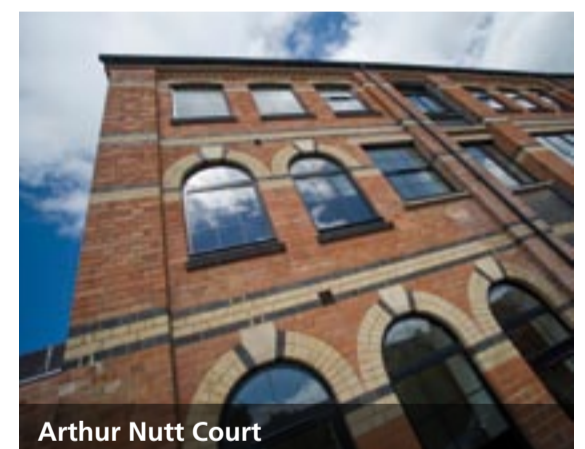


Pleased to be making a difference

Meet Natalie Morton, the latest person to join our Housing Team. As our new Estate Officer, Natalie is focused on two key areas: dealing with communal issues whilst monitoring the cleaning and the grounds maintenance contracts and also being involved in local community based initiatives.

"I am really pleased to be joining a team that makes a positive difference to people's lives," said Natalie.

Natalie has certainly been busy since starting in the spring, having taken part in several Estate Walkabouts, and starting work on projects in Raunds, Ringstead and Rushden – with many more on the horizon!



Arthur Nutt Court



Easton-on-the-Hill

Flower power's back!

Everything in the garden really is rosy for three Spire Homes' tenants – John Griffin, Val Dalby, and Sheltered Scheme Home Court in Thrapston – the winners in this year's Gardens In Bloom competition.

John Griffin from Ringstead won first place in the Best Individual Garden Display, with Arthur Farden from Great Addington coming second, and John Bentley from Oakham in third.

In the Best Hanging Basket Award first place went to Val Dalby from Uppingham. Mandy Tysoe from Higham Ferrers came second and Cissie Schulz from Uppingham finished third.

Home Court in Thrapston won the Best Sheltered Scheme Display, with Gerard Court in Uppingham coming second and Manor Close in Thrapston coming third.

"The standard gets higher every year and deciding who should win each category is really difficult," said Charlotte Holley. "But it's not just about the £30, £25 and £15 gardening vouchers on offer to first, second and third in each category, this competition encourages people to get active in their gardens and brighten up their communities by having lovely looking gardens."



Best Individual Garden Display: John Griffin



Best Sheltered Scheme Display: Home Court



Best Hanging Basket Award: Val Dalby



Coffee, chat and competition raises £520

A coffee morning, raffle and cake stall helped to raise £520 for the A-Team. Oh! And Emu was there too!

No – you don't need to read that again. It's our Supported Housing Coffee Morning to help raise funds for the Activities Team (A-Team).

Thank you to everyone who got involved with raffles, baking and selling cakes, and to the Police who also lent their support.

"It was a fantastic day and everyone really enjoyed themselves," says Julia Feazey. "The staff did a great job and it was fun whilst raising money to help our sheltered housing tenants."

The money raised from the day will be used to fund activities for you. The event was so successful that another coffee morning is already being planned for 2011!

Help us to help you



We need your help! Three of our most important policies need to be reviewed and improved.

Can you spare half an hour to look at our policies on Repairs and Maintenance, Empty Property Management, and Aids and Adaptations?

All you have to do is download the policies from our website:

www.spirehomes.org.uk

read them and then fill in a short form. It really is as easy as that but if you need more information give us a call on:

0845 603 5399

The winner of the Fun Fair Wordsearch from the last issue is – Mrs P Hartill

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 0845 603 5399 and we will be happy to help you.



Get in touch

You can now contact us by email at : spirehomes@longhurst-group.org.uk

Our main office number is:

0845 603 5399

Our text number is:

447797 800 062

www.spirehomes.org.uk

Opening hours

Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm

COMPE+ITION HALLOWEEN WORDSEARCH

Find the hidden words running forward, backward, upward, downward or diagonally. Which one is missing?

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

- | | | | |
|---------|----------|--------|----------|
| Pumpkin | Ghost | Horror | Cauldron |
| Witch | Spider | Creep | Gory |
| Broom | Gargoyle | Mask | Monster |
| Vampire | Fog | Mist | |

Name:.....
 Address:.....
 Age:.....
 The missing word is:.....

Send your entry to Spire Homes, 1 Crown Court, Crown Way, Rushden, Northamptonshire, NN10 6BS for a chance to win a £20.00 Argos voucher by 31st October.