

in this issue:

- Talk direct to our contractors
- 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."

Day was so much fun!



Dave and Susan Stewart with children Lewis and Oliver

Over 200 people came to meet members of staff, our contractors and other local agencies, such as the Police, Guide Dogs for the Blind and the council.

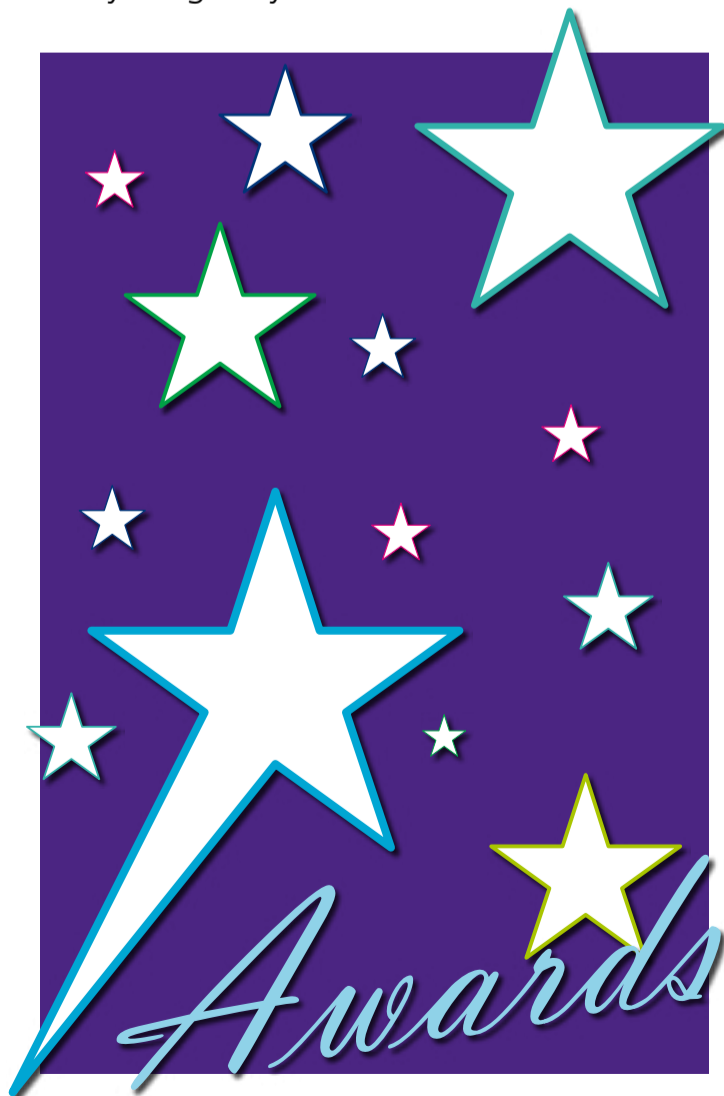
As well as offering some fun activities, such as face painting, bouncy castle and t-shirt printing, the day also gave people an opportunity to talk to us about the improvement programme we've planned for the next five years.

We also started to talk to you about how we can spend the money put aside for improving neighbourhoods.

Two of the many people attending were Mr and Mrs Hassell from Uppingham. "The fun day was absolutely brilliant. It was friendly, informative and fun. We really enjoyed it!" said Mr Hassell.



Sophie Bangs gets to know a new friend



700 homes improved and still going!

Since becoming your new landlord we've made great progress and are pleased to say we've improved over 700 homes.

As promised, we've been busy modernising kitchens and bathrooms – installing over 400 new ones! We've improved the heating in over 100 homes and fitted new gutters and fascias to 300 properties. We've also given the outside of 30 homes a new lick of paint and even replaced their roofs!

We're busy working on sheltered schemes too, making sure they are redecorated and brought up to the Disability Discrimination Act requirements within three years. Most of our properties will have their heating systems changed and our commitment to green technologies are on show at Gainsborough Court in Cottesmore where we're busy installing a solar powered system to provide hot water!



Maureen Wilmer from Oakham



Woolly Wonder!



You may remember reading our yarn about the Uppingham knitters helping people in the developing world. Well, thanks to your generosity and their hard work they've sent 30 blankets and 56 jumpers to countries in need of help.

The group was set up by Janet Christian after her feedback revealed some residents would like to take up knitting and then donate the results to a worthwhile cause.

This isn't the first time tenants have been involved. Last year, another group of tenants sent a drum full of baby clothes and blankets to St Luke's Mission in North West Zimbabwe. The 250 bed hospital is just one of a handful still operating in the country and its patients are in desperate need of warm clothing for the winter. That's why the double bed blankets and jumpers that Janet and her five friends have knitted are so important.

We've already received a thank you letter from St Luke's Mission. We really would like to thank everyone who donated wool for the project – without your generosity none of this would have been possible.

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.

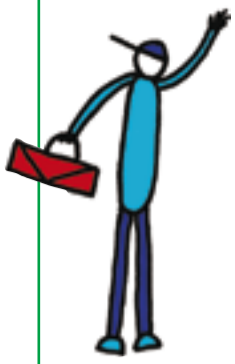
Thankfully, it's not a major issue for us, but when we do come across it we move incredibly quickly to resolve any situations.

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.



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!



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



The RTLP with the 'Madge Standard'

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.

Immediate vacancies within Spire Homes

Role – to join our new Housing Services 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 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.

We're here to help!

All of us need a little bit of help from time to time, so hopefully you will be pleased to know that we're here to help.

If you ever need someone to talk to – maybe about looking after your home, making ends meet or the benefits you could be claiming – then please give Sabina, our Tenancy Support Officer, a call.

After a chat, either at your home or in our Oakham office, Sabina can help you for up to six months with a variety of things, from:

- Helping you settle into your new home and looking after it
- How to manage and budget your money
- Helping you to claim welfare benefits you may be entitled to
- Pointing you to local support services that could help you.

If you still feel you need support after 6 months, then the Bridge Tenancy Support Service will be able to help you.



You can get in touch with Sabina by phoning **01572 755465.**

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

Direct talking

As you know the way you report your repairs has changed so you speak direct to our contractors – Kinetics and Jeakins Weir.

Don't worry, we'll still be keeping an eye on things and making sure the repair service continues to run smoothly.

You still ring **01572 755 465**. Then **press 1** to report a repair with Jeakins Weir or **press 2** to report your heating repairs or to book gas servicing with Kinetics.

Just to reassure you, our Customer Services Team is still on hand to answer any other enquiries you have – just hold to speak to someone.



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 – **Mabel Jenkins**

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.



Get 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**

www.spirehomes.org.uk

Opening hours

Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm
Friday 9am - 4.30pm

COMPETITION 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, Pinewood, 1 Cold Overton Road, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6NT** for a chance to win a £20.00 Argos voucher by 31st October.