

# Northamptonshire Rural Life

The residents' newsletter for  
**Northamptonshire Rural Housing  
Association**  
SPRING 2019

[www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk](http://www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk)

  
Northamptonshire  
**Rural Housing**  
Association

Win a  
**£50**  
**VOUCHER!**  
See page 3



## A Growing Family

**Kevin Boulton and his partner, Latesha, are looking forward to bringing up their children in the village they love, close to their family and friends.**

The couple were keen to move to a bigger property after their third child was born, but they were afraid they wouldn't be able to afford to stay in Walgrave.

Now they're settling into a brand new three bedroom house on our recently completed development with their two boys, aged 6 and 4, and their 13-month-old baby daughter. Kevin says: "It's just perfect. We absolutely love it here!"

Find out more at [www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk](http://www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk)

  
**facebook**  
Remember to like  
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and see all our  
latest news.

# FOR YOUR BENEFIT

### LATEST

- Families with 3 or more children are no longer to be prevented from claiming Universal Credit.
- A new 'offline' system has been made available for claimants who will never be able to manage an online claim. This involves making the claim over the phone and reporting changes by phone or letter.

## MATERNITY PAY INCREASES

Maternity Pay, which is paid for up to 39 weeks, increased to £145.18 per week on 7th April. If you're not eligible, you can claim Maternity Allowance, which has also increased to the same rate. This is the amount you can claim once you've been pregnant for 26 weeks.



## BLUE BADGES

You can now apply online for a Blue Badge and can upload proof of identity documents instead of having to send them in the post. A Blue Badge costs £10 and helps you park closer to your destination if you're disabled. Visit [www.gov.uk/get-blue-badge](http://www.gov.uk/get-blue-badge)



## MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

On 1st April, the National Living Wage increased to **£8.21 per hour**. This is the minimum pay most workers aged 25 and over are entitled to by law. The National Minimum Wage also increased to:  
**£7.70 per hour for 21-25 year olds**  
**£6.15 per hour for 18-21 year olds**  
**£4.35 per hour for under 18s**



## RENT NEWS

You should have received a letter detailing your rent and service charges from 1st April. Please adjust the amount you pay to match the amount shown on the letter, so you don't fall behind with payments. If you pay by direct debit, your payments will automatically change to the new amount.

Visit our website for more information plus Frequently Asked Questions.

### How to pay your rent...

- The quickest and easiest way to pay your rent is online through  allpay. Visit the 'Living in your home' section of our website and click 'pay your rent'.
- Register with **myhomeonline** to set up a direct debit, check your rent balance or print a statement - any time, any day!
- Call the Customer Care Team on **0300 1234 009** and pay by debit card.

## CARERS ALLOWANCE

The amount you can earn while claiming Carer's Allowance has now increased to **£123 per week**. If you care for someone for at least 35 hours a week and they receive certain benefits, you could claim Carer's Allowance of **£64.60 per week**.

## PENSION CREDIT

From 15th May, mixed-age couples will not be able to claim Pension Credit if one has reached state pension age and the other is of working age. Couples who are already receiving Pension Credit will not be affected.

## PIP INTRODUCED

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) has replaced Disability Living Allowance for new claimants. If you were under 65 on 8th April 2013, you'll be reassessed for PIP. If you were over 65 on 8th April 2013, you'll continue to receive it.

Win a  
**£50  
VOUCHER!**

It's time to get your homes and gardens blooming! We've a **£50 voucher** to give away for the best hanging basket, planter, or pot of plants. Simply



email [sue.haywood@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:sue.haywood@midlandsrural.org.uk) by 31st May if you'd like to enter. We'll come out and judge all entries in June. You can be as colourful and creative as you like!

#### Top 5 gardening jobs for Spring:

1. Clear up flower beds and borders and keep on top of weeding
2. Sow grass seed to repair lawns
3. Plant hardy herbs outdoors, as well as potatoes and broad beans
4. Keep pots and containers well watered and top up with multipurpose compost
5. Remove dead flower heads from daffodils and tulips

## AVOID BLOCKAGES

Please think before putting anything down the sink, toilet or drain. If we have to keep coming out to unblock your drains, the service charge for your scheme could rise as all costs are divided between properties at the end of the year.

#### Don't...

- Put sanitary towels, tampons, cotton wool or disposable nappies down the toilet.
- Throw baby wipes – including those that say 'flushable' – down the toilet.
- Pour cooking fat or grease down the sink or drains.
- Pour garden chemicals, car engine oil or paint down the drains.

## PARK POLITELY!

When you're parking near your property, please be respectful of your neighbours – and ask any visitors to your home to do the same.



- Don't block the entrance to anyone's property.
- Don't park on a footpath or pavement.
- Don't park causing an obstruction to pedestrians or road users.
- Let your neighbours know if you're having a party and expecting a lot of cars.

## BENEFITS HELP

Are you claiming all the benefits you're entitled to? If you'd like your Tenancy Services Officer to come and do a benefits check either at your home or over the phone, or to help you apply for Universal Credit, call **0300 1234 009**.

## Ask us ...

Have you got a question about your home or the services we provide? If so, ask away! We'll be answering one of your questions in every newsletter. Simply email them to [sue.haywood@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:sue.haywood@midlandsrural.org.uk)

*John asked: Can I put CCTV up at my house?*

David Krause, Development and Maintenance Manager says:

Residents can put up CCTV but they need to get our permission first. You need to make sure that any system only captures images within the boundary of your property (including your garden). Other less expensive ways to protect your property could be better security lighting and locks or an alarm system.



## SCHEME SURGERIES

If you have any tenancy queries, your Tenancy Services Officer can hold a Scheme Surgery where residents can drop in and ask any questions they have. If you're interested in arranging a surgery in your area, call **0300 1234 009** or contact us through [myhomeonline](http://myhomeonline).

## AGE LIMIT

Remember - when one of our contractors visit, there must be someone aged at least 18 at your home or our contractor cannot enter the property.

## FREE ADVICE

Free, independent, confidential advice is available from Northampton's Community Law Service. The charity offers specialist legal advice and help and support on welfare benefits, immigration, debt, employment and housing. A range of drop in sessions are held at various locations or you can make an appointment.

Visit [www.communitylawservice.org.uk](http://www.communitylawservice.org.uk)

## EMERGENCY CHANGES

From 1st April until 31st October, if you experience a total loss of heating, this will not be classed as an emergency repair.

## DO IT YOURSELF!

It's your responsibility to get items fixed in your home such as toilet seats, door bells, internal door handles, cookers, light bulbs, broken windows, washing machine fittings and floor coverings.

- Click on the 'Living in your home' tab on our website and look under 'The property' where you'll find a How to... section with handy tips on how to carry out general repairs to your home.

## MEET ASHLEIGH

Ashleigh Waldron has joined the team as Maintenance Surveyor. He'll be dealing with everyday repairs and maintenance and dealing with any problems relating to your properties.

## NEW HOMES

- 6 homes are due to start imminently in Little Addington.
- Planning applications have been made for 8 properties in Nassington and 7 properties in Brigstock.
- Plans should be submitted for 8 homes in Norton this Summer.

To register your interest, click on the 'Find a home' tab on our website, then 'Finding a home to rent' where you'll find a register of interest form.

## APOLOGY

We changed our gas contractor on 1st January to Liberty Gas. We are sorry you may have experienced some issues regarding communication and appointment times. We are working closely with Liberty to improve this service.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

If you've recently updated your phone number or email address, remember to let us know. It's important that we have correct contact information for you so we can get in touch. Log on to [myhomeonline](http://myhomeonline) to change your details.

## WANT TO MOVE?

If you're looking to move, why not consider swapping homes? Mutual exchange is available to all residents through the Homeswapper website. Simply register at [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk), giving details of the home you have and the home you want. Then browse all the homes available to find your perfect match.

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