

Northamptonshire Rural Life

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

SUMMER 2019

www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk



Celebration time!



Youngsters led a traditional Spring celebration to mark the completion of our new development in Walgrave.

The year 6 pupils from Walgrave Primary School treated residents and representatives from our key partners to a colourful display of maypole dancing, followed by coffee

and cakes and an opportunity to view one of the brand new properties.

Families moved in to the new affordable homes at Gamekeepers Way and Pheasant Drive earlier this year.

Read the full story at
www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk

WORK ALLOWANCES

Work allowances are being increased by £1000 for the year. These are the amount that people with children and people with disabilities can earn before it is taken into account as income for Universal Credit.

EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARDS (EHIC)

Anyone travelling abroad should have an EHIC to get free or discounted medical care in all 28 EU countries. Millions of these cards are due to expire in 2019 so check yours is still valid before you head on holiday. Call **0300 330 1350** to get a free card or visit www.ehic.org.uk



PAYSLIP RIGHTS

All workers, not just employees, are now entitled to an itemised pay statement. If your pay varies according to the time worked eg if you're paid hourly or do overtime, your payslip will have to show the hours you've worked so you can check you've been paid the right amount.

BOOTS OVER 60s

If you're over 60, have you joined Boots' free 'More Treats For Over 60s' club? It gives members 10 Advantage points for every £1 spent in store on Boots' own brand products and you get 25% off glasses. Ask in your local Boots store.



PREPAY PRESCRIPTIONS

If you need prescriptions regularly – at least once a month - you might save money with a prepayment certificate (PPC). This lets you get as many prescriptions as you need for either three or 12 months for a set price. You can buy a PPC online at apps.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc-online/patient.do or by calling **0300 330 1341**.

MINOR AILMENT SCHEME

If your child has a minor health complaint and you're already entitled to a free prescription, you may also be able to get free non-prescription medicines and treatments through the minor ailment scheme. Ailments include coughs, colds, stomach upsets and hayfever. It's only available in some areas, so ask your local pharmacy.



BANK FRAUD

Banks are now required to refund customers who've been scammed into transferring money to fraudsters. To avoid being scammed, don't send money to someone you've never met in person. If you feel you have to, avoid sending a large sum in one go and only use a reputable and secure money transfer service.

IN YOUR OWN WORDS ...

We asked you what you think of your housing association?

"Your polite helpful staff are quick to sort out problems."

PESTS!

Summer can often bring unwanted pests into your home and garden.

- *Getting rid of wasps nests is your responsibility but your local council can help. Some offer free pest control services but others may charge. We'll make good any damage to your home.*
- *If you have birds nesting, wait until the birds leave and then get in touch with us.*
- *For pests such as slugs and ants, have a look at the products available in your local supermarket or garden centre.*



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

Carol asked: How can I find out when the area of grass on our street will be cut?

David Krause, Development and Maintenance Manager says:

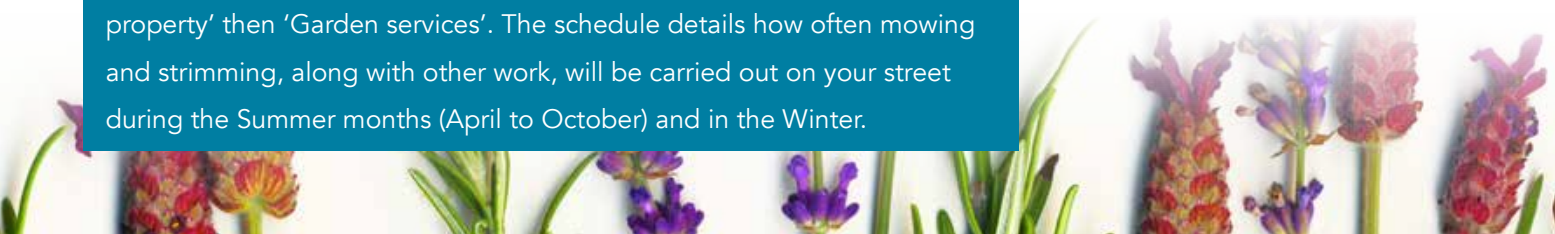
There's a communal gardening and grounds maintenance schedule on our website. Look at the Living in your home section and click on 'The property' then 'Garden services'. The schedule details how often mowing and strimming, along with other work, will be carried out on your street during the Summer months (April to October) and in the Winter.



HOW TO ... CLEAN WITHOUT CHEMICALS

Here's the latest guide in our 'How to...' feature to help you easily and cheaply keep your home clean without the need for chemicals.

- *To make your sinks shine, sprinkle salt on half a grapefruit or lemon then use it to wipe down the sink.*
- *To unblock your shower head, put some vinegar in a plastic bag and attach it over the shower head with elastic bands. Leave overnight.*
- *To clean windows and mirrors, wipe them with chopped potatoes. Leave for a couple of minutes, then wipe clean.*
- *To remove stains from tiles, mix vinegar with baking soda and leave on the tiles for a few minutes. Then rinse off with water and wipe dry.*
- *To clean your carpet, sprinkle baking soda over it and leave it for 15 minutes, then vacuum.*



SHARE YOUR STORY

We're on the look out for residents to feature in future issues of our newsletter. If you'd like to tell us why you like living in your home and community, call **0300 123 4009** or email sue.haywood@midlandsrural.org.uk

COMPETITION UPDATE

Thank you to the residents who entered our gardens competition. We'll be announcing the winner of the £50 voucher in the Autumn issue.

HOW WE'RE PERFORMING

We're continuously monitoring the service we provide for you and making improvements where we need to. This is how we've done during the past financial year:

- Fourteen compliments were received: 9 for repairs, 1 for customer service and 4 for housing management.
- 91% of calls were answered within our target of 20 seconds and the average wait time is 11 seconds.
- 233 residents have registered with myhomeonline.
- Our perception survey showed that 93% of residents say we keep them informed.
- 97% think we have friendly and helpful staff.
- 96% are pleased with how their enquiries are dealt with.
- Our website had 4982 new visitors and we're making it even more interactive.

- 63% are always satisfied with our repairs and maintenance service.

TAKING ACTION:

- The appointment booking process to be improved by all contractors.

- Four formal complaints were received and all were upheld. These related to repairs, planned maintenance, allocations and our gas contractor.

TAKING ACTION:

- Our kitchen replacement processes have been improved.
- Our surveyors will undergo damp training.
- Our gas appointment process has been clarified with our contractor.
- We're reviewing our complaints procedure to ensure residents are satisfied with the action taken.

NEW HOMES

- We've got the go-ahead for nine homes in Nassington.
- 6 homes are set to get underway in Little Addington.
- We're waiting for a planning decision on 6 homes in Brigstock
- Plans are being submitted for 8 homes in Norton.

To register your interest in any of our new homes, speak to your Tenancy Services Officer or call **0300 123 4009**.



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