



# HOME

WINTER 2021



## New Charter released for social housing residents



Housing and Property support services  
during national lock down



Search Facebook for "NKDC Housing"



**North Kesteven**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# are you covered?



Crystal Insurance

## Designed for tenants in social housing

Your Landlord does not insure your furniture and belongings and personal possessions. However we are able to offer all our tenants the chance to insure their home contents and belongings.

### Some of the benefits are:

- You don't need to have special door or window locks (just a lockable front door)
- There are no excesses to pay (you don't pay the first part of a claim)
- Flexible regular Pay-As-You-Go payment options (fortnightly & monthly premiums include a transaction charge)
- Storm and flood damage is covered (excludes damage caused by frost or anything that happens gradually)
- Damage to fixed glass in doors and windows which you are responsible for is also covered
- Theft from garages and outbuildings is included as standard (up to £2000)



For more information contact

**Crystal Insurance on 0345 450 7288**

or visit: [www.crystal-insurance.co.uk](http://www.crystal-insurance.co.uk)

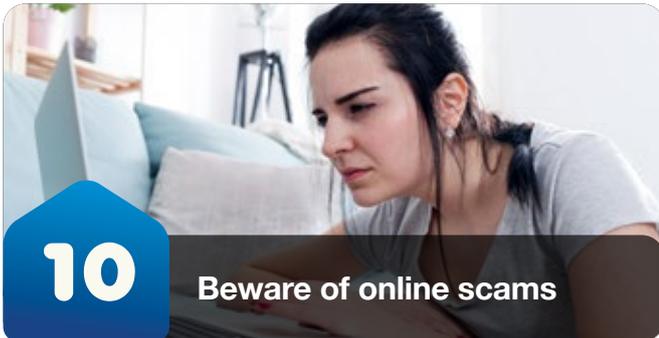
Terms & conditions, limits and exclusions apply, a copy of the policy wording is available upon request.





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Produced in consultation with tenant representatives. At Home is produced by North Kesteven District Council.



## YOUR COMMUNITY MATTERS

Never before has being a good neighbour, and having good neighbours, been more important than during this pandemic.

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This document is available in large print, braille, audio tape, electronic formats such as CD, or in a different language. Our website is ReadSpeaker enabled. For a copy contact Community Engagement on 01529 414155 or email [tenant\\_participation@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:tenant_participation@n-kesteven.gov.uk)

# NEW RESIDENTS' CHARTER

The Government has released the long awaited Charter for social housing residents. Here is a very brief summary for NK tenants.



'A home should provide safety, security and dignity. An opportunity to put down roots and contribute to your community so you can enjoy social and civic lives. Regardless of who you rent from, your landlord should treat you fairly and with respect. And if things go wrong there should be a swift and effective means of redress'.

The Government has been listening to social housing residents across the country about the changes that they want to see. Some of the NK Tenant Representatives were part of that consultation. The new Charter for social housing residents sets out what you should be able to expect:

- To be safe in your home. The Government will work with industry and landlords to raise safety standards and to help residents feel safe and secure in their homes
- To know how your landlord is performing. This includes

repairs, complaints and safety, and how your rent is spent, so that you can compare performance with other landlords and hold it to account

- To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong housing ombudsman (See page 5)
- To be treated with respect. Transformation of consumer regulation backed by a stronger regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants
- To have your voice heard by your landlord. This will give residents a clearer voice to hold landlords to account, for example through regular meetings or scrutiny panels. The government will provide help, to give tenants the tools to ensure your landlord listens
- To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in. Government heard that tenants are proud of their communities and want greater investment in them. The Government wants to ensure social tenants have good quality, decent homes and neighbourhoods, including access to green space and support for wellbeing

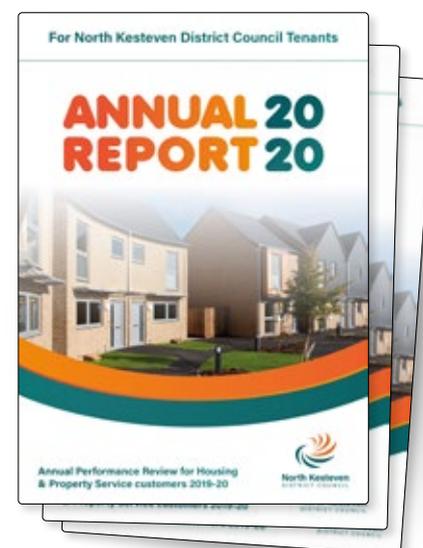
During 2021 we will be keeping track of the developments from the Regulator of Social Housing,

the consumer regulation and health and safety standards, and any further enhancements to social housing. In conjunction with those developments we will review our service to ensure that it complies with the requirements of the charter



Look out for further information and developments in future editions of At Home magazine. In the meantime if you want to know more about the charter visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and search for 'housing white paper'

If you need a hard copy please contact the Council and ask for the Housing Community Engagement Team or email [tenant\\_participation@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:tenant_participation@n-kesteven.gov.uk)



# COMPLAINT HANDLING

The Council welcomes complaints they are useful for letting us know when things have gone wrong. To ensure that tenants voices are heard clearly the Housing Ombudsman has issued new guidance, a 'Complaint Handling Code' that will ensure that tenants are treated fairly when trying to resolve their problem.



The Social Housing Charter:

- Removes the need for a tenant to go to a designated person or wait eight weeks before approaching the Ombudsman
- Increases Ombudsman powers to make decisions more quickly and take stronger action against landlords where needed
- Ensures greater co-operation between the Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing to hold landlords to account

The new Complaint Handling Code sets out some specific requirements for Housing Ombudsman. They may now;

- Assist residents throughout their complaint to support local resolution whilst it is within the landlord complaints procedure.
- Establish local resolution, mediation, or arbitration arrangements for resolving disputes
- Consider whether the landlord dealt with the complaint fairly and according to the requirements of the Code.

The Complaint Handling Code requires Landlords to;

- Publicise regularly and make it easy for residents or their representative to make a complaint.
- Ensure the complaint procedure is resident-focused and complaints are fairly and impartially investigated
- Have published a self-assessment by 31 December 2020
- Publish an Annual Report to include the volume, category and outcomes and any learning or changes required to policy or procedures
- Have a complaint process with two stages only
- Aim to resolve complaints as quickly and fairly as possible

- Communicate regularly with the resident throughout the complaint
- Ensure that any remedy offered reflects the extent of service failures, or detriment caused
- Learn from the complaints and consider whether anything needs to be changed for the benefit of all residents.



The Council has reviewed the complaints policy and procedure and to adhere to the Code will define a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.'

If you need to make a complaint you can do it online **[www.n-kesteven.gov.uk](http://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk)** or contact the Council and say that you wish to make a complaint.

# SOCIAL STIGMA - IT'S NOT OKAY

There are 3.9 million households, 17% of the national population, living in social housing.

Despite this, the Chartered Institute of Housing's Rethinking Social Housing Project found that many people living in social housing experience stigma because of where they live.



Such stereotypes can be reinforced by negative language, including the way that media sometimes represents social housing and the people who live in it. It's time to end these stereotypes.

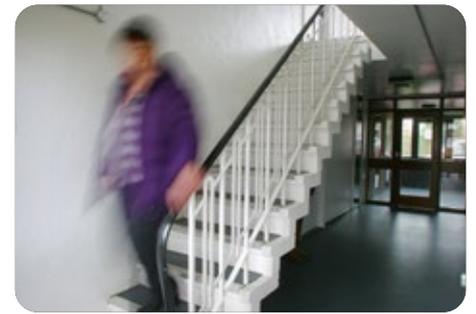
The role of social housing providers and the people who work for them was highlighted in research by the campaign 'See the Person', and landlords are being called to work with tenants to become part of the solution.

Tenants are clear on what contributes to the stigma they experience and on what landlords can do to

tackle it. This means placing them, the customer, at the heart of the culture and values of the organisation providing the housing.

In a recent paper by the CIH and See The Person, the most commonly reported areas that tenants wanted organisations and staff to recognise and tackle were listed as:

- 'Lack of respect for the person – seeing only the tenure, not the person.'
- 'Remember, when tenants contact you it is not just to pass the time of day, they are concerned.'
- 'Promoting a tiny percentage of tenants as speaking for us all.'
- 'Seeing properties as assets, not homes.'
- 'Colleagues feel they know more about living in social housing than customers do.'



## The challenge for change:

As a provider, we try to communicate with tenants regularly through At Home magazine and other means. However it's important for us to listen to what tenants have to say about their experiences and to understand if and how our communication with you contributes to any experience of stigma.

We asked tenants in the 2018 STAR survey if they felt stigmatised

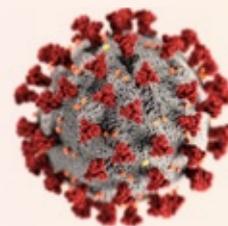
- 9% of tenants said that they felt that they have been treated differently by others, because they live in a council house.
- 10% of tenants felt that the way they are viewed by others is affected because they live in a council house.

If you feel you are affected by social stigmatisation we would like to hear from you. It is important for us to understand if there is anything that can be done to help tenants. Contact the Council and ask to speak to the Housing Community Engagement Team or email: [tenant\\_participation@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:tenant_participation@n-kesteven.gov.uk) All information will be treated confidentially.

# COVID-19 UPDATE

As the pandemic draws on into 2021, it continues to affect the people in our communities ever more deeply.

We've put a number of things in place to help and support our tenants, and deliver services to them.



## Your tenancy

If you're struggling financially and find you're unable to pay your rent or buy food for your family, please contact the Duty Neighbourhood Officer as soon as possible. There are a number of things the Council can do to help you through this difficult period, including referral to the Community Larder and advice on other help and support available.

Remember - the quicker you talk to us about any financial difficulties, the easier it is for us to help you find a solution.

See back page for more information.



## Property services

Our contractors are still working hard to deliver services to tenants including repairs, improvement works, and gas servicing.

You should report any repairs to either Kier or Aaron Services as normal. All contractors are following the guidelines set by Government at this time.

To make sure everybody is safe, tenants must keep their distance and stay out of the room any operatives are working in.

If you cannot keep your distance

Make sure to follow **@northkestevendc** on social media or sign up to e-newsletters at **[www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/stayconnected](http://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/stayconnected)** for all the latest on Coronavirus and support.

for any reason please wear a face mask. If you want the operative to wear a face mask whilst in your property, feel free to ask them to do so.

All work is risk-assessed for the safety of both your household and the operatives. We thank you for your co-operation so that we can carry on delivering services throughout this time.

# TENANTS' PRIORITIES

Over the past two years we've been asking our tenants questions about what our new housing business plan should concentrate on over the coming five years.

In the last survey - the 'priority check' - sent out in the last edition of At Home, tenants confirmed the final priorities.

Our Housing and Property Service would like to thank all our tenants for filling and returning these surveys.

Thanks also go to those tenants who responded to the survey on Facebook; these results and comments have been recorded too.

In a future edition of At Home there'll be a summary of the housing business plan with tenants' priorities for your information.

And congratulations goes to Mr and Mrs Morrison of Metheringham, the winners of our prize draw!



# BOGUS CALLERS

Tenants have reported a number of bogus callers throughout the District over the past year.

If you are not expecting anyone to visit you for a product or service, do not let them into your home. If you're really unsure, don't open the door.

## Check identity cards carefully

Council officers, our contractors, or a genuine caller won't mind

waiting until you have checked they are who they say they are. Telephone the organisation they say they're from using a number that you already have – not one the caller gives you. You can shut the door while you do this.

Alternatively, ask the caller to come back at a time when it is more convenient for you, and when you can arrange to have somebody you trust present for the appointment.



# BEWARE ONLINE SCAMS

Action Fraud is warning people selling items online to be on the lookout for criminals sending fake PayPal emails.

Between January 2020 and September 2020:

- A third (21,349) of all crime reports of online shopping and auction fraud were made about fake PayPal emails.
- Victims reported losing a total of £7,891,077.
- Those targeted included people selling jewellery, furniture and electronics via online marketplaces.

## How does it happen?

The emails trick victims into believing they have received payment for the items they're selling.

Typically, after receiving these emails, victims will send the item to the criminal. This means they

no longer have possession of the item and have also not received payment.

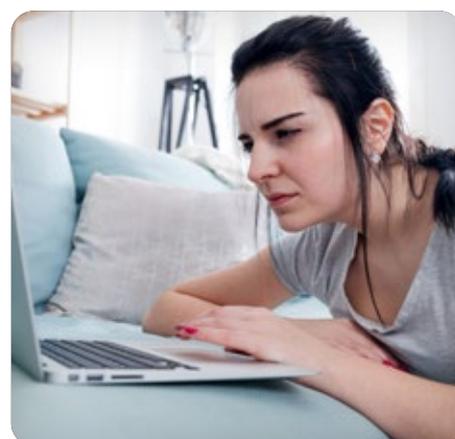
## How can you protect yourself?

- **Sellers beware:** Be aware of the warning signs that your buyer is a scammer. Scammers may have negative feedback history, or may have recently set up a new account to avoid you seeing poor feedback. Don't be persuaded into sending anything until you can verify you've received the payment.
- **Scam messages:** Don't click on links or attachments in suspicious emails, and never respond to messages that ask for your personal or financial details.
- **How to spot the difference:** A PayPal email will address you by your first and last name, or your business name, and will never ask you for your

full password, bank account, or credit card details in a message.

- **Check your Paypal account:** Log in to your account separately in another window – not following any email link sent with the message – and check that payment has been received.

If you think you've been a victim of fraud, report it to Action Fraud online at [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or by calling **0300 123 2040**.



# BEWARE OF LOAN SHARKS

Right now, protecting people against loan sharks is more important than ever.

The Coronavirus crisis means more of us are facing financial difficulties, resulting in more people finding themselves in tough situations.

Loan sharks are never the answer to financial difficulties. These unscrupulous individuals take advantage of people who feel they have nowhere to turn for help and make money by preying upon those who can least afford it.

A loan shark might:

- Contact you in ways a legal bank or lender would not, such as social media, and offer little or no paperwork such as a credit agreement or record of payments.

- Refuse to give you enough information, such as the interest rate.
- Insist on taking items as security, such as passports, bank cards or driving licences.
- Increase the debt or add additional charges at any time, and even stop you from settling your debt.
- Get nasty - they might resort to intimidation, threats or violence.

Do you need a safe, reliable way to borrow money? If you're facing financial challenges because of COVID-19, your local credit union is there to help.

Credit unions provide loans at low rates, encourage members to save regularly, and help members in need of financial advice and assistance.

Members open a credit union account and save for three months they qualify for a £25 bonus which is funded from the money taken back from loan sharks.

## Your local credit union

[www.nottsandlincscu.co.uk](http://www.nottsandlincscu.co.uk)

Email: [info@nottsandlincscu.co.uk](mailto:info@nottsandlincscu.co.uk)  
Telephone: **0115 828 3121**

To report a loan shark  
Call the 24-hour confidential helpline on **0300 555 2222**.  
Email: [reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk](mailto:reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk)  
Complete a report form online at  
[www.stoploansharks.co.uk](http://www.stoploansharks.co.uk)

## Garden Waste Collections

Save yourself the hassle by joining the Council's seamless garden waste service for 2021/22.

You are invited to sign up or re-join the service online from 1 February, or via Customer Services from 1 March.

The collection period will run from 29 March 2021 to 25 March 2022.



A full year's collection of garden waste from your home, starting 29 March



[www.n-kesteven.gov.uk](http://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk)



**01529 414155**

# HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT!

Millions of people around the world are trapped in modern slavery. But did you know it is a crime happening in Lincolnshire in our own communities, in takeaways, car washes and nail bars

- In 2019 almost half of victims identified in the UK were exploited as children
- Over half were British nationals

Modern slavery is an umbrella term used for practices in which people are trapped, controlled and exploited in situations they can't escape.

Typical signs that someone is enslaved:

- Forced to work under mental or physical threat
- Owned or controlled by an employer using or threatening abuse
- Dehumanised – treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'
- Have restrictions placed on his or her freedom or physically constrained

For more information see [www.unseenuk.org/modern-slavery](http://www.unseenuk.org/modern-slavery)

If you suspect someone is in immediate danger call the Police on: **999**

For help, advice or to report a suspicion call the Modern Slavery & Exploitation helpline on **08000 121 700**. See advert to the right.

## MODERN SLAVERY

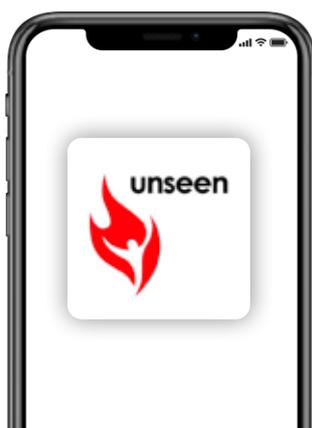
HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT  
ACROSS LINCOLNSHIRE



**GET HELP, REPORT A CONCERN OR SEEK ADVICE.**

Call the Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline:

**0800 0121 700**



**OR USE THE APP:**

Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline reporting app:



**IF SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL: 999**

**Safer**  
Lincolnshire  
Partnership

**LSAB**  
Lincolnshire Safeguarding  
Making safeguarding personal

**LSCP**  
Lincolnshire Safeguarding  
Children's Partnership

**THE CLEWER**  
INITIATIVE

# THE HANDYMAN CAN

In our recent Housing and Property Service Priority Check survey, 62% of respondents said they wanted a handyman to support them.

Did you know a FREE handyman service is already available to support tenants with small jobs in and around the home?

Our handyman, Mick, can do a wide variety of small jobs for NK tenants including:



**Levelling the odd slab for safety**



**Light bulb replacement**



**Fitting your new toilet seat**



**Small furniture assembly**



**Cupboard doors and hinges tightened**



**Small one-off gardening jobs**



**Fitting your hand rails**



**Putting up curtains/curtain rails**



**Putting up mirrors, pictures, shelving etc**

If there are any other small jobs that you are not able to do for yourself and don't have anybody else who can do it for you, talk to the Repairs team and ask if the handyman can help you. You will need to purchase some items such as toilet seats, hand rails or light bulbs yourself for the handyman to fit for you.

To discuss your requirements or for more information please call **01529 414155** and ask for the Repairs team



# YOUR COMMUNITY MATTERS

Never before has being a good neighbour, and having good neighbours, been more important than during this pandemic. It has affected everyone in one way or another. Whether you are having to self-isolate, or you're on the frontline. Whether you're furloughed or unemployed or you're working from home and schooling your children, this is the time when good neighbours and your community matters.

## LITTLE ACTS OF KINDNESS

The Red Cross believes that 'little acts of kindness are important, now more than ever, and really do go a long way in times of crisis.' You can help by staying safe and following the current Government guidelines. But here are some ways you can help others when you are safe and well:

- Contact family, friends and neighbours for a chat. It can raise their spirits and your own too and prevents loneliness. Talking about what you're going through with others can help
- Be kind to yourself – eating, sleeping and exercising safely will help keep you well and more able to support others.
- Can you check on neighbours who might be isolated to see if they need anything such as shopping, or medicines collecting?

## GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Having good neighbours makes life easier and being a good neighbour is equally important in these difficult times. We all have different lifestyles and difficulties to deal with at this time. No neighbour is always perfect but being friendly and showing each other tolerance and respect will help.

Top Tips to being a good neighbour:

1. **Take responsibility for the behaviour of your household**
2. **Keep noise levels down**
3. **Keep your home and garden clean and tidy**
4. **Keep pets under control – and clean up after them**
5. **Park vehicles with consideration to your neighbours**

If you have neighbourhood issues, can you discuss the matter with your neighbour; or consider if you are doing anything that may be contributing to the problem. You may wish to report concerns to NKDC or where a crime has been committed - the Police. If you want to discuss a problem or need further information please contact the Council and ask for the Duty Housing Officer. (Please remember that both of these organisations must work within the legislation and may not be able to help in every situation).

## THE LINCOLNSHIRE RESILIENCE FORUM

The Lincolnshire Resilience Forum is co-ordinating support, advice and assistance for those who need it. If you are struggling and are unsure where to turn, call **01522 782189** for help and advice. Alternatively there are lots of charities who are there to support people. No one needs to go through this alone.

## GIVE HELP. GET HELP

Given the significant economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of people experiencing destitution is higher than ever. This crisis has caused foodbanks to experience record levels of people in need of help.

The Trussell Trust's Foodbank Network, provided 1,900,122 three-day emergency food supplies and support to UK people in crisis in 2020 an increase of 47% on the same period in 2019.



## GIVE HELP

Demand for food-bank provisions locally has gone through the roof. However food-banks are run by volunteers and they also rely on public donations from local people, schools, churches and local businesses to stock their

larders. Donations such as tins and packets of food are always welcome while monetary donations allow foodbanks to provide other essentials such as milk, bread, essential toiletries and nappies.

Food-banks serving the North Kesteven District include: The New Life Community Larder, an independent food bank, based in Sleaford see: [www.communitylarder.co.uk](http://www.communitylarder.co.uk) The Lincoln Foodbank is part of the Trussell Trust see: [www.lincoln.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.lincoln.foodbank.org.uk)



## GET HELP

People are referred to food-banks by local agencies such as doctors, health visitors, social workers and police who identify people in crisis and issue them with a food-bank voucher which can be redeemed for three days' emergency food. The

volunteers meet clients and can signpost people to other agencies to help solve the longer-term problem.

## WHAT IS A FOODBANK?

A food-bank is a local provision that is able to provide a three day supply of nutritionally balanced food and other items for genuine emergencies to those people who find themselves in temporary hardship, with no other source of money or support. Foodbanks are there when people really need.



## FOODBANK DONATION

Having watched the demand grow for food banks within local communities Aaron Services Limited were committed to help out. They saw that the difficult situation that everybody found themselves in was affecting some more than others, those who had lost jobs and were struggling to make ends meet and put food on the table.

Aaron Services Colin Boyd, Contract Manager for NK presented a donation to volunteer Anna Maltby of the New Life Community Larder where the donation was well received

Colin said 'The Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) recorded a staggering 177% increase in emergency food parcel deliveries between May 2019 – May 2020 our team were shocked by this figure and keen to reach out.' Adding 'It is very easy to become detached from what is actually happening in society, and the visit made myself appreciate how lucky I am!

# COUNCIL COLLEAGUE PUTS BEST FOOT FORWARD FOR CHARITY

A cancer survivor and Council colleague has raised over £1,500 for charity after running 80 miles in under 24 hours.

Mark Haynes, an Asset Surveyor at North Kesteven District Council, is no stranger to big challenges having got the cancer all-clear in 2020.

During his battle with 'the big C' he had set himself the challenge of running 100 official marathons in the five years following his diagnosis.



He was on course to hit his target in May but the coronavirus lockdown put paid to that, which meant he was stuck having completed 91 of them.

Mark, who carries out the health and safety inspections of all of the Council community centres, came up with the idea of running to every community centre in North Kesteven in succession.

It would be nice, he thought, to get communities involved en route and to cheer people up as the first lockdown began to ease.

On 27 August Mark left the Council Offices in Sleaford and headed first to Heckington, then Billingham, Metherringham, Heighington, Bracebridge Heath, North Hykeham, Waddington, Welbourn and Ruskington before arriving back in Sleaford the following day. He completed his challenge of running the 80 miles in an impressive 22 hours.

Mark raised a total of £1,505.50 to be shared between Macmillan Cancer Support, Notts and Lincs Air Ambulance, and the NHS Lincolnshire Charity.

Mark said: "The event was a success and a lot tougher than I bargained for having not been able to train for it! It was emotive and certainly hurt....a lot!"

If you want to support his fundraising, visit [www.virginmoneygiving.com/markhaynes](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/markhaynes).



## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Social enterprises are businesses that are changing the world for the better by reinvesting or donating their profits.

They create employment and aim to improve people's life chances by providing training and improving social skills.

Lindum Group has committed to working with social enterprises to provide social value to each of their projects. In turn this benefits the wider community.

Having recently completed some roofing works in Ruskington, Lindum Group provided Winchelsea School in Ruskington with its choice of wishing well for the school garden.

The wishing well was made by the Pelican Trust. Its team offers a supportive environment to ensure adults can move on in life by providing work experience, employment and education opportunities.

Head Teacher at Winchelsea School Helen Duckett said: "We used to have a Pegasus statue in the garden, it will be nice to have the wishing well to fill the gap."



# LOOKING BACK WITH SYLVIA SEARBY

**We're continuing to look back over 100 years of Council housing, thanks to tenants coming forward with their memories.**

Sylvia Searby contacted us to tell us about her parents, who lived in the first Council houses built in Swinderby.

Sylvia's family were long standing residents of Swinderby. During her early years, Sylvia lived with her father and mother, Harold and Amelia in a tied cottage.

In 1934 they moved into a newly built Council house in Back Lane (now Manor Road). For many years the house was reached by a dirt track. There were no amenities in the village; no shops, no electricity, no piped running water, and no buses. Sylvia said they "lived on basic."

"I think that's why we all lived so long. Father worked hard outside and mother worked hard inside" she said.

Sylvia still holds the original insurance certificate for 'Household goods and personal effects of every description' that her parents took out when they moved into the house. In the period of March 1934 to 'Lady Day' 1935 the sum insured was £100 for a premium of just two shillings.

"Father cycled, daily, to work in North Hykeham where he worked for Leys Malable, building tank axles. Later he got a little Austin car, and a fuel ration book to get him to work. He also had an allotment, where the aerodrome is now, and each year would hire a dray and horse for us to prepare the land for planting potatoes and root vegetables to feed the family.

"The house was very basic by today's standards. The kitchen and bathroom were painted bare brick walls. The toilet was outside and mother used to fetch water from the high street when eventually a tap was installed in the village.



"Collected rainwater was used to fill the 'copper' for Monday wash day, using a dolly tub and a mangle to squeeze the water out before hanging out to dry." Sylvia's parents were delighted with the house, however.

After the war things began to change in the village, due in part to RAF Swinderby opening in 1940 next to it. Electricity and water supply reached the houses and the village gained a telephone box and other amenities.

The house had some improvements made to it. A ceiling light bulb and one socket was installed in the living room and also in the kitchen, and a range with a back boiler was fitted.

The bathroom was still in the dark but had one tap installed to run the bath. In the mid-1960s the house was modernised again when a toilet was installed in the bathroom.

Sylvia married husband John in 1951 following his National Service in the Navy on minesweeper duties. After this John became a joiner and

worked on the building of more Council houses in Station Road, Swinderby.

The couple had three children and moved around the District. Once the children had grown up and flown the nest the couple applied for a Council house and were eventually accepted for one in Carlton le Moorland.

Sylvia loved to garden and tended her plot, winning best kept garden prizes for her efforts. However, due to John's ill health Sylvia left her garden behind when they moved once again to a bungalow in North Hykeham.

Sylvia was an only child while growing up but there were other large families that lived in the row of houses in Swinderby, so she came to know the other children in the street.

A number of them have remained lifelong friends and still meet regularly. Recently the friends featured on BBC Radio Lincolnshire talking about the Swinderby they knew as children.



# TO ALL NK TENANTS

I hope you and your loved ones are still managing to keep safe and well. I write to you now we are once again in a national lockdown and as we continue to respond to the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and the changing Government guidance and restrictions into 2021.

## OUR OFFICES

In line with Government guidance, the vast majority of our colleagues continue to work from home. Our Offices remain closed to the public for the foreseeable future. As previously advised we have adapted to make sure our service areas are contactable in a variety of ways either by phone, e-mail or social media.

## OUR SERVICES

Most of our services are still being delivered, although this may be in a different way to which you have experienced before. At present we are only able to undertake essential journeys and visits. That is those visits in relation to essential services, health, safety, welfare and contractual obligations.

## CONTRACTORS

The latest guidance is still clear that our contractors can continue to enter peoples home in order to undertake, improvement works, repairs and appliance servicing. It is important that you continue to report faults and allow our contractors into your home to complete works. Please contact Keir Services on **01529 416399** for general repairs and Aaron Services on **01205 591979** for heating and servicing of your appliances. Our contractors are taking all recommended steps to keep you and themselves safe and to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

## PAYING YOUR RENT

We want to provide you with as much support as we can, but it is really important that you continue to pay your rent. If you are struggling, contact us as soon as possible, to speak with your Neighbourhood Officer. Our Officers will listen with compassion and provide clear guidance on options available to you. Failure to engage with us or to not respond to contact will leave us with no alternative but to consider serving you with a notice. We do not take this action lightly and will aim to avoid where possible, please work with us.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Whilst we remain uncertain on what the future might hold it is understandable that you may be worrying more about how you will continue to cope financially. We have a range of assistance available as well as being able to sign post you to other options, these include but are not limited to:

- Test and Trace Support Payments
- Council Tenancy Hardship Scheme
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Council Tax Support Scheme
- Money Advice Service

## COMMUNAL ROOMS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

We understand the continued frustrations with the current restrictions preventing the use of our communal facilities. I would like to reassure you we do value these facilities, and will work to reopen these as soon as Government guidance permits.

## WELFARE AND WELLBEING

Our families, friends and neighbours are a tremendous support, but there is assistance available for those more isolated in our communities. The Lincolnshire Resilience Forum is co-ordinating this help, and this Council is part of that assistance. If you are in need of assistance but unsure where to turn call **01522 782189**.

## GOING FORWARD

I understand that the ongoing situation is extremely worrying to most people, with concerns about the health and wellbeing of yourself, family and friends. On behalf of the Council, I thank you for your compliance with Government guidance of Stay at Home and Hands, Face, Space, your understanding and continued patience with our colleagues and contractors

**Michael Gadd**  
**Head of Housing and Property Services**