



**A community fund set up by Spire Homes is helping residents to bring about long-term, positive changes in neighbourhoods across Northamptonshire and Leicestershire.**

### **Funding community activity**

In 2006, Spire Homes decided to create a scheme that would support and encourage community development. The association created a fund where residents could bid for cash to transform local neighbourhoods or people's lives.

The fund encourages communities to apply for cash that will improve their area, help people access education or training, or support residents who are disadvantaged due to age, a disability or rural isolation. The main point is that any funds provided will support people or communities into the future.

One of the first good causes to benefit from the community fund was a village-based technology and community resource centre in Kingscliffe. The centre acts as the heart of the village; it provides computer clubs, youth groups and get-togethers for older people. By funding a part-time centre manager post, Spire Homes helped to keep the facility open.

To date, the association has provided more than £75,000 funding to support a wide range of community activities. Examples include developing peer befriender schemes, and recruiting and training youth outreach workers.

The latest project, a community garden in Thrapston, is set to open in June 2009. A local Baptist church has provided match funding alongside Spire Homes. Once complete, the garden will be used by local youth clubs, mums and tots' groups and older members of the community.