

Thereview

More, more, more...

More homes than ever before. More help for college students. More success for solar and sustainable energy initiatives. More support for schools, charities and local communities. More praise from industry peers.



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Building more homes on more sites than ever before



Our two housebuilding companies - Larkfleet Homes and Allison Homes – are now building more homes on more sites than at any time in our history.

At the time of going to press we were actively selling properties on sites in Bourne (Lincolnshire), Oakham (Rutland), Doddington (Cambridgeshire), Greetham (Lincolnshire), Gretton (Northamptonshire), Hempsted (Peterborough), Creech St Michael and Churchinford (Somerset), Corby (Northamptonshire), Pinchbeck (Lincolnshire) and Thorney (Cambridgeshire).

We have just launched the second phase of development at Whittlesey (near Peterborough) and will soon be doing the same at Bonnybank in Scotland –

“We now have active operations in Scotland, in the South West of England, in Norfolk and across the Midlands.”

Karl Hick
Larkfleet CEO

both places where our first phase of development swiftly sold out and we are now working on a second phase.

We are also bringing a number of new sites forward for development including locations in Boston, Colsterworth, Horncastle, Sleaford, Louth and Weston Hills which are all in Lincolnshire.

Karl Hick, Larkfleet CEO, said: “The house building industry has been through some difficult years recently. I am pleased to say, however, that Larkfleet weathered the storms of the recession and we are now rapidly expanding our activities.

“We remain committed to working with local authorities and local communities in our ‘core areas’ of Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Rutland.

“We continue to deliver high quality homes that meet the urgent need for new housing that will enable people to ‘get a foot on the property ladder’.

“And we are not confining our activities to the local area. We now have active operations in Scotland, in the South West of England, in Norfolk and across the Midlands.

“In some of these places we have already built and sold homes, in others we are



Larkfleet - the perfect property for Ideal World

AS SEEN ON TV!

Ideal World TV chose a Larkfleet home to form part of its 17th birthday advertising campaign.

Ideal World made the choice to film in the stunning Gretton Valley showhome, Corby, as a Larkfleet home because ‘it’s the perfect type of property many of their viewers aspire to own.’



Thorney showhome opening

Our new showhome at Thorney Meadows was officially opened by the then Mayor of Peterborough, councillor David Sanders, and then city MP Stewart Jackson.

Stewart Jackson said: "I am 'pro house building' and believe younger people should be able to buy homes which Larkfleet Homes is encouraging with its developments.

"I would like to thank Larkfleet for its continued commitment to Peterborough's growth and prosperity."

The showhome gives prospective new buyers a great opportunity to visualise a 'real life' version of their new home and includes features such as family rooms, open plan

living areas, luxury dining together, bathrooms and spacious bedrooms.

Larkfleet Homes joint managing director Helen Hick said: "Viewing the new showhome really 'brings to life' how beautiful a Larkfleet home can look with the right furniture and added extras."

Members of the Larkfleet team were joined at the opening by Peterborough city councillors and Thorney parish councillors alongside local business leaders and the two VIPs who performed the official opening.

■ The showhome is now open seven days a week between 10am and 5pm.



The then mayor of Peterborough, councillor David Sanders (left), is joined by Stewart Jackson (then Peterborough MP) (centre) and Karl Hick, Larkfleet CEO (right), to officially open the Thorney showhome.

building now, and in the rest we have started planning consultations with councils and potential neighbours.

"But our expansion further afield does not in any way diminish our pride and pleasure in building for local communities closer to home."



Promotion for Sam



Larkfleet Homes has strengthened its team of directors with the appointment of Samantha (Sam) Hart as its new director of sales.

Sam joined the team at Larkfleet Homes to lead the sales department in June 2016 and to manage the growth of the sales team.

Sam oversees all the sales functions at Larkfleet while managing and implementing various schemes that Larkfleet offers to help customers purchase their new Larkfleet home at the best possible price.

Helen Hick, joint managing director of Larkfleet Homes, said: "Sam is a great asset to her team and will join the directors as we continue to lead Larkfleet as a customer-focused, local housebuilder."

Adrian Green joins the team

Larkfleet Homes has strengthened its team with the appointment of Adrian Green as its new head of commercial.

Adrian has joined the team at Larkfleet Homes to manage the commercial department and brings with him a wealth of experience to focus on the long-term interests of the business.

Helen Hick, joint managing director of Larkfleet Homes, said: "We are delighted to welcome Adrian.

"He will be developing, leading and managing all commercial activities of the business.

"The company is developing more and bigger

sites in 2017, up and down the country, and the expansion of the team is testament to our growth."

Adrian said: "I have worked in the construction industry for 30 years and I will bring this experience along with my forward-thinking approach to the Larkfleet team.

"It is an exciting time to join the business as it continually expands its developments in the UK."

Outside work, Adrian enjoys keeping fit and enjoys rugby having previously played, coached and chaired a club.



Moving ahead with elevating house



The Larkfleet 'elevating house' – at normal height and elevated on jacks in advance of flooding.

The Larkfleet Group of Companies has obtained planning permission to build an experimental house that will rise above flood waters. The three-bedroom detached house to be constructed in Weston Hills near Spalding, Lincolnshire, can be raised up to 1.5 metres above ground level by eight mechanical jacks.

If tests are successful, the house could provide a model that would enable housebuilding on thousands of sites across the UK which at present cannot be developed because of the risk of flooding.

Work on constructing the house, which will sit on a steel ring beam in place of conventional foundations, will begin in factory conditions later this year. Experiments with raising and lowering the house – including testing long-term maintenance and operation of the jacking system – will run for up to five years.

It is anticipated that houses of this design would be jacked up well ahead of the arrival of flood waters, based on advance warnings from organisations such as the Environment Agency. However, the mechanical jacking system could lift the 65 tonne house to the full 1.2 metre height above ground in approximately five minutes.

Rooftop solar panels and a battery would provide the house with some continuing electricity supply when raised above the ground and the water and sewage would remain connected through flexible hoses. However, it is not envisaged that residents would remain in occupation during floods. Instead, the householders would pack up, lock up and jack up the home before taking refuge in temporary accommodation on higher ground elsewhere.

Karl Hick, CEO of The Larkfleet Group of Companies, said: "The elevating house effectively eliminates the risk of flood damage to homes so that more land across the country can be approved for future home building. This will help to tackle the 'housing crisis' that is being caused by the demand for new housing far exceeding the supply."

Model house for GPUTC

The Larkfleet Group of Companies handed over a model house to Greater Peterborough University Technical College (GPUTC).

The scale model of a typical timber-framed house built by Larkfleet Homes can be taken apart and re-assembled working to a set of drawings which Larkfleet has also supplied.

The model will help the college's students of the built environment to understand how a modern house is put together as well as getting to grips with topics such as engineering drawings.

The model is also being used to make some practical points about communications. In one test using the house the plans are held by one group of students in one room and the model is with another group in a separate room. One student from the planning group has to carry instructions to the construction group in a time trial to see which team of students can correctly build the house most quickly.

GPUTC is a brand-new £12 million state-of-the-art technical school located on the Park Crescent Campus in Peterborough. Opened in September 2016, the school specialises in teaching engineering and the built environment alongside traditional A Levels and GCSEs to students aged between 14 and 19.

Larkfleet has been involved with GPUTC since before the first plans were drawn up. A local 'employer sponsor' for the project, Larkfleet is supporting



the school's plans in a variety of ways. Larkfleet CEO Karl Hick sits on the school's board of governors.

Steve Warburton, principal and CEO of GPUTC, said: "Larkfleet's support is invaluable to our students in so many ways. The model house is just one more example of how the company is assisting us to provide real hands-on experience of industry that helps to prepare students for the world of work."

...and the same for New College Stamford

The model house donated to Greater Peterborough UTC (GPUTC) was such a success that we have now supplied another to New College Stamford.

Larkfleet Homes joint managing director Helen Hick handed over the model at an official presentation at the college where she said: "At Larkfleet we believe it is vital to invest in the future of young people, especially those interested in a career in construction."

Solar powered vehicle charging

Larkfleet has installed two car ports complete with solar PV at the group's headquarters in Bourne to complement existing electric vehicle charging points.

The new car ports alongside existing electric vehicle charging points will help us to 'go green' with the use of electric vehicles in our own fleet. Energy generated by the car ports will be fed into the grid to be used as part of Larkfleet's on-site energy consumption including delivering power to the EV charging points.

Matthew Hicks, renewables investment director of The Larkfleet Group of Companies, said: "As a leader in sustainable ideas and energy use we are fully

committed to using sustainable energy sources throughout our business at every level.

"Solar powered car ports offer an opportunity for renewable energy generation. We are keen to deliver installations for developers and commercial property owners including golf courses, country clubs and hotel car parks throughout East Anglia and the East Midlands.

"And by installing charging points powered by sustainable energy in the network we will be helping to promote the use of electric vehicles and renewables in the region."





Richard Brickwood, head of construction at New College Stamford (left), and college principal Janet Meenaghan accept the model house from Helen Hick, joint managing director of Larkfleet Homes (centre) and Karl Barfoot (right) from Kestrel Timber Frame who built the model.

Receiving the model house at the presentation was Janet Meenaghan, the principal at New College Stamford, and Richard Brickwood, head of construction at the college.

Janet said: "New College Stamford greatly values its long-standing and positive relationship with Larkfleet Homes.

"Our students already benefit in many ways from the partnership, from apprenticeship training and work experience opportunities to site visits."



Further overseas success for Solar Steam

The Larkfleet Group of Companies has won new funding for projects in Mexico and India based on the group's innovative Solar Steam concept. The technology concentrates the power of the sun's rays to heat water to create steam which can be used in power generation and industrial processes.

We have won funding from a UK government-sponsored competition to build a mobile version of the system designed to deliver renewable heat and power in remote areas of rural India.

The submission for funding was made in round four of the Energy Catalyst mid-stage technology development competition. The competition is funded by Innovate UK, the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

The two-year Larkfleet project will be delivered in partnership with Cranfield University and an Indian solar collector manufacturer. The total budget is about £550,000 and we are directly contributing £128,000 to see the project to fruition.

Solar Steam has the potential to transform energy access in India and other developing countries. In particular we are looking at delivering a mobile

containerised energy system that is able to operate where the grid is unbalanced, unreliable or unavailable – like rural India.

Meanwhile, to highlight the global commercial viability of the technology following the granting of patents, we have won funding to deliver a pre-commercial demonstration of Solar Steam at a site in Morelos in Mexico.

A funding application to develop the demonstration was made through the Mexico-UK Collaborative Industrial Research and Development Programme, which is sponsored by the National Science and Technology Council in Mexico (CONACYT), Innovate UK and the Newton Fund.

Larkfleet will develop the pre-commercial demonstrator in collaboration with academic and industrial partners in Mexico and with the support of Queen Mary University of London. We will contribute £160,000 to the total budget of £800,000 for what is expected to be a two year project.

■ For more information on solar steam visit: www.solarsteam.co.uk

Mexican potential

The potential for renewable power generation using a Solar Steam array is greatest in sunny regions like Mexico and India. The solar market in Mexico grew by more than 500 per cent in 2016 and has an estimated potential of between four and six gigawatts of capacity per year by 2030.

This potential provides an opportunity for investment in Solar Steam to increase renewable heat input and reduce energy costs. For example, industrial facilities that use fossil fuels to provide the thermal energy required for their processes can instead install the Larkfleet Solar Steam collector to generate low carbon heat.

Mexico is a growing economy, with good solar potential and a need for sustainable industrial development. In several sectors such as the oil, food, drink, textiles, paper, construction and chemical industries, the proportion of low and medium (less than 250°C) process heat demand is around 60 per cent.

Overall, the potential for renewable power generation using a Solar Steam array is vast. This global market has a value of trillions of pounds and is creating major opportunities for UK business.



The potential for renewable power generation using a Solar Steam array is vast.

The Larkfleet Solar Steam system works by focussing the sun's rays through a Fresnel lens array onto a tube which contains water. The water is heated to create steam which can be used in industrial process heating and cooling applications.

The angle of the lens array can be adjusted through a vertical axis to track the sun and is seated on a circular track which allows the array also to follow the sun's progress horizontally across the sky. By tracking in both planes, the system maintains maximum levels of solar radiation concentrated on the tubes.

The Larkfleet Community Fund

The Larkfleet Community Fund was established in 2013 to support the integration of Larkfleet housing developments within their local setting and help to create sustainable communities. It offered easily accessible cash to support local charitable projects.

Each housing development had its own 'pot' of money within the overall fund and the process of receiving applications and making grants was handed over to an independent local community foundation.

For a variety of reasons, take-up of the available money has been low – the fund has only given out a total of £14,000.

There have been cases where good causes have come forward but, because they are not located in areas where there has been a related Larkfleet Homes development, they have not been able to access the fund. In some places, communities have

“Larkfleet Homes and Allison Homes are committed to making a difference to their local communities.”

struggled to identify specific projects that can benefit from the fund.

Karl Hick, CEO of The Larkfleet Group of Companies, said: “The current arrangements seem to be restricting our ability to make grants to good causes, which is not what we intended.”

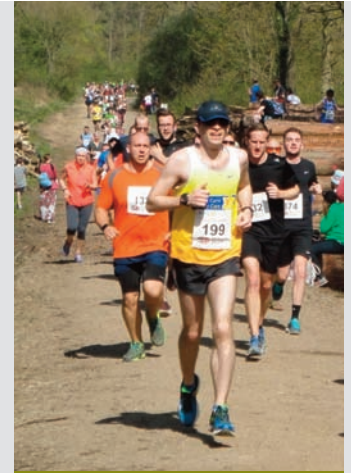
As a result Larkfleet has decided to change the way in which it operates and administers the fund. There will now be a single central fund which will make grants to any community organisation or charitable cause that operates close to a current Larkfleet Homes or Allison Homes development.

The new arrangements will help us to administer and give out grants more quickly and across a wider area, directly benefiting more good causes and local people.

Karl Hick added: “Larkfleet Homes and Allison Homes are committed to making a difference to their local communities. We have a long history of supporting good causes and of helping to create communities, not just through the building of houses but also through grants to support projects that will benefit local people and the local neighbourhood.

“We believe the changes to the way we operate the Larkfleet Community Fund will help us to be more effective in the way we do this.”

■ Full details of the changes to the fund and the new system for applying for grants will be published shortly.



Run in the Woods

Larkfleet Homes was a sponsor at the recent Run in the Woods - a popular event in Bourne offering keen runners the chance to enjoy the wonderful scenery of Bourne Woods, raise money for charity and get fit too. This time the event raised £7,000 with the help of Larkfleet.

Looking to the future of sustainable energy

It was with great regret that The Larkfleet Group of Companies took the decision earlier this year to put some of its energy businesses into liquidation.

The companies specialised in the development of large-scale solar power farms but the market was devastated by changes in government policy.

Figures from the Solar Trade Association show that the total amount of new solar power being installed in the UK dropped from around 2,000 MW per month in the first quarter of 2015 to less than 50 MW per month in the first quarter of this year.

The dramatic change in the industry's fortunes were the direct result of cuts in government support for solar power.

The Larkfleet Group of Companies was hit as badly as

the rest of the industry. Group companies Renewables Solar (UK), Renewables Solar (UK) Commercial and Renewables Solar (UK) Construction therefore ceased trading. They had all been making losses for some time and these eventually became unsustainable.

A number of people lost their jobs because of the closures. Group CEO Karl Hick said:

“We attempted to preserve as many jobs as possible but were forced to make some people redundant. We wish them success in finding new jobs elsewhere and will do all that we can to help.

“Some suppliers and contractors have also lost money and we genuinely regret the difficulties that this is causing.

“However, we are looking at new opportunities in a range of renewable energy technologies.



“We have created a number of companies operating under the banner of Lark Power Group which are developing exciting new projects in areas such as district heating and gas-fired electricity generation. We also retain much of our solar power expertise and are still keenly interested in talking to potential clients about projects which can be financially viable without government subsidy.

“Meanwhile, existing contracts

supporting customers in, for example, the operation and maintenance of solar power farms will continue without interruption to the service.”

Because companies in The Larkfleet Group of Companies are all independent businesses, although with common ownership, they have not been financially affected by the closure of some of the group's energy businesses.





Larkfleet Homes director of sales Sam Hart (right) handing the trophy to Phoebe Hawkins, daughter of Emtidaad owner Bill Hawkins (left) with jockey David Mansell.

Cottesmore point-to-point

Larkfleet Homes sponsored the Open Maiden race at the recent Cottesmore Point-to-Point event held at Garthorpe, not far from our HQ in Bourne.

The winner of the race we sponsored was a horse called Emtidaad owned by Bill Hawkins and ridden by David Mansell. There were 15 runners but Emtidaad – just four years old – romped home to win very impressively by 15 lengths.

Point-to-Point racing is a traditional rural event attracting people from the immediate locality and enthusiasts from further afield. 'Maiden' races are for horses that have not previously won at an event.

The Cottesmore race day is run entirely by volunteers (about 90 people are involved on the day) and is financed by race entry fees, admissions to the race course and by sponsorship – so Larkfleet's contribution helped to keep this thriving tradition alive.



Larkfleet helps kids stay safe

Larkfleet Homes has been helping local youngsters to 'play safe'.

Joe Yardley, Larkfleet's health and safety advisor, told youngsters of the dangers of playing on building sites in a special assembly at Elsea Park Primary Academy. The school is only a short distance from Bourne Heights, the site where Larkfleet is building a range of 2, 3, 4 & 5 bedroom homes.

The school assembly was attended by 150 children aged between four and ten years old. Joe dressed for the part in a safety helmet, high visibility vest and safety footwear.

Joe Yardley said: "We want to prevent injuries to youngsters who might view construction sites as exciting playgrounds when there is no-one around. It is important that we educate children about the dangers."

Choir sings Larkfleet's praises



Larkfleet Homes has been helping local youngsters to stay warm and look cool at the same time by sponsoring tee shirts worn by key stage two students at Bourne's Elsea Park Primary Academy.

The new tee shirts, featuring the school badge on the front and Larkfleet logo on the

back, are worn by the choir when they are singing and representing the school.

Nick Brompton, head of Elsea Park Primary Academy, said: "We would like to say a big thank you to Larkfleet for their continued support and for sponsoring a lovely selection of tee shirts for our key

stage two choir students to enjoy!

"We are also proud to represent the company's name when out and about, not only showcasing the school but also the support of Larkfleet."

Seven steps for economic success

As the political parties set out their manifestos ahead of the general election, Larkfleet CEO Karl Hick offered some suggestions for economic policy.

Shortly before the election was called the government published a green paper – Building our Industrial Strategy – which set out a plan for future economic growth and development in post-Brexit UK. The green paper was a ‘consultation document’ on which individuals, companies and other organisations were invited to submit comments.

Karl read the green paper and thought there are many aspects which are either not given enough attention or are missing altogether. He wrote to the government to respond to its request for comment and also set out his ideas in a guest blog on the Eastern New Home Buyer website at:

www.tiny.cc/seven-steps

He listed seven areas in which he thinks the green paper is

“either silent or less than compelling” and in his blog he sets out his views on what needs to be done to address these issues.

Although the blog was written in direct response to the green paper he believes it offers sound advice to any would-be government – especially in view of the general election result which saw the Conservatives returned to power only with support from the Northern Irish DUP.

Top of his list of seven priorities is productivity and education. He points out that productivity levels in this country are lower than in many of our major international competitors. He writes:

“Much of the problem, I believe, stems from poor

education at the primary and secondary school level.

“We should be ensuring throughout the UK that boys and girls concentrate on science and maths courses. While the arts should not be completely neglected they ought to take far less precedence in our education system.

“That change needs to start now so that we can provide our future industry with engineers and practical people who can help to increase productivity. This cannot be done overnight. It needs a 10 to 15 year plan but we must begin now.”

Karl Hick’s list of seven topics for government to consider also includes skills development, immigration and the labour force, research and development, business support and taxation, energy and regional equality.

He says in his blog: “As we head for Brexit it is important that we have a clear sense of



Karl Hick, CEO of The Larkfleet Group of Companies.

direction and a plan for future economic growth.

“I welcome the fact that the government has asked for views from a wide range of people. I hope it will give due weight to the opinions of those actually working in industry – the entrepreneurs, managers and workers who are creating wealth for the UK.”

Site agent of the year

Dean Dye, site agent on the Larkfleet Homes development at Bourne Heights, was shortlisted for the regional ‘Local Authority Building Control site agent of the year’ award.

Building control for this site has been provided by The East Midlands Building Consultancy which operates a building control partnership between South Kesteven District Council, Newark and Sherwood District Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council.

Staff from The East Midlands Building Consultancy may be at Bourne Heights two or three times each week. Dean schedules visits for key stage completions such as drainage and footings.

Sean McManus of The East Midlands Building Consultancy said: “I am on site



myself once or twice each week. The good working relationship which Dean has with his colleagues and contractors is noticeable – he is capable of speaking firmly to people when things need sorting out yet without giving offence.

“And he always accompanies me when I go out on site – whatever the weather – when he could easily stay in the warm and dry!”

Sustainability performance recognition



The Larkfleet Group of Companies was shortlisted as a finalist in the EDIE Awards in the ‘Sustainable Business of the Year’ category.

The awards recognise the businesses or organisations that have taken their environmental, social and financial performance ‘to the next level’ - managing and mitigating their impact while using the sustainability agenda to gain the competitive edge.

The judges examined the group’s corporate strategy and looked at performance within a number of strands, including waste, transport, energy, carbon emissions, buildings, pollution control and stakeholder engagement.

CEO Karl Hick said: “We were shortlisted alongside some of the biggest names in British industry and commerce – demonstrating that we are among the best in the UK in terms of our performance when it comes to sustainability.”



...better, because we care

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