

Voice of estate – Finsbury tenants' campaigner Betty Knight wins award



Betty Knight with from left: daughter Deborah Pinnock, son Gary Knight, companion Jimmy Anderson, son-in-law Louis Pinnock, Mayor Anna Berent, Spa Green Estate Manager Thomas Cooper

SHE'S confined to a wheelchair, but that did not stop Finsbury tenants' champion Betty Knight getting to Islington Town Hall last week to receive a Special Mayoral Award for her outstanding contribution to the community.

Ms Knight, the driving force behind Spa Green estate's tenants' association, was surrounded by friends and family for the presentation by outgoing mayor Anna Berent.

She described how she was particularly proud of helping to launch Spa Green Tenants' Management Organisation (TMO) in 1995. "It has meant that tenants have a big say in the running of our estate," she added. "But at the time a lot of people were against it."

Ms Knight said there has been a marked improvement at the estate since the TMO took over. "If you had seen Spa Green before the TMO, it was filthy with graffiti and litter. Walk around now. While it may not be spotless it's pretty clean."

Her message to tenants on other estates is that the only way they can bring about improvements is by getting involved in management. The TMO currently has a landscape gardener working on new designs and a liaison officer who takes children on day trips.

She said: "It's the residents who decided how to spend the estate's money, which means everything is a lot more focused."