adventures and challenging projects for young people – see the flyer inside Spotlight!

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Welcome to the autumn edition of Spotlight

Dear Resident,

Thank you to everyone who took part in our survey on resident involvement by filling in the questionnaire included in the last edition of Spotlight. Not only did we recruit another 13 people to our volunteer workforce, but we learned a lot about the huge amount of time and energy Saxon Weald residents give to good causes in the community.

If you would like to get involved with one of our service interest groups, or join us as a mystery shopper to test our services, please contact Sue Tew, our Community Support Manager, on 01403 226137 or email sue.tew@saxonweald.com

Congratulations to the winner of the prize draw, who lives in Storrington and will receive £50-worth of shopping vouchers.

Saxon Weald has a duty to spend your rent money as wisely as possible. Please help your housing association do this by keeping appointments you have made with HomeFix. Any appointment you fail to keep costs money and means that fewer repairs can be done that day.

Finally, just a couple of good housekeeping reminders:

• It’s a good time of year to test your heating system – before it gets cold.
• Remember to open your windows every day to keep condensation at bay.

Very good wishes,

Martin Loates
Board Member and Chairman of the Residents’ Action Panel

Survey feedback

Thanks to everyone who returned our questionnaire about resident involvement. We had more than 100 replies. A third of those interested in volunteering with Saxon Weald have now joined one of our service interest groups (SIGs).

It’s clear that many of our residents volunteer in their local communities, while the majority of people who don’t volunteer would like to but just don’t have the time.

Most people who want to volunteer with Saxon Weald are interested in influencing neighbourhood services; the design and development of new homes; and finance.

Some people feel that they can’t volunteer because they have a disability – we hope that Everyone Counts, our SIG devoted to equality and diversity, will be able to help them to join in in the future.

If you would like to know more about volunteering and helping to influence the way Saxon Weald operates, please contact Sue Tew, Community Support Manager, on 01403 226137 or email sue.tew@saxonweald.com

Become a mystery shopper

Would you like to join our Service Testing team? You’ll help to monitor the services we deliver, undertake mystery shopping and report back to the Saxon Weald Board with recommendations for service improvement.

If you would like to join them, contact Sue Tew, our Community Support Manager, on 01403 226137 or email sue.tew@saxonweald.com
Journey to work

Are you unemployed and claiming Job Seeker’s Allowance (JSA) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)?

Horsham District Council’s Journey to Work programme can provide you with valuable work experience, either at the council, or at one of its partner organisations, including Burleys and Cleanscapes, Saxon Weald’s landscape gardening and cleaning contractors.

Jan English is the council’s work experience and employability officer. She aims to help everyone who is referred to her by the Jobcentre, meeting people face-to-face so she can find the best matching job opportunity.

So far 300 people have taken part in the programme and more than 200 participants are now in paid employment.

Interested? Please talk to your adviser at Jobcentre Plus and then send your CV to jan.english@horsham.gov.uk or call 01403 215262.

Summer fun, thanks to the Chairman’s Trust

Saxon Weald would like to thank the Chairman’s Trust for a grant of £1050, which enabled us to give 21 tenants £50 each towards funding summer activities for their children.

Karen Spencer, Saxon Weald’s Lettings Manager, said: “It was lovely to be able to help a number of very deserving families enjoy the school holidays.”

The Chairman’s Trust is a fund for people in need in Horsham district who fall outside existing statutory and charitable provision.

Toilet humour

Residents and Friends of Downlands Court, Peacehaven are raising money to fund an additional disabled loo at the extra care scheme.

This novel garden ornament is designed to raise awareness of, and hopefully money for, the project.

Sue Sayers, Downlands’ Community Participation worker, also boosted funds by celebrating her 60th birthday with a sponsored parachute jump!
Blooming lovely!

A massive thank you to Cranbrook resident Colin Coppard, who ensures that life at the Eastbourne extra care scheme is brighter for fellow residents by making continual improvements to the gardens.

Colin’s latest venture is to build and paint two arbours in the scheme’s private garden, and over the last few weeks he’s been busy planting them up so they’re covered with flowers. He spends hours each week, and his own money, on making sure that Cranbrook looks as good as it does.

He’s very proud of the water feature, installed in the front garden, which provides a colourful welcome to everyone arriving at the scheme.

“I’m always busy,” says Colin, pictured here with Alison Payne, from Saxon Weald. “I enjoy what I do and I like to bring a smile to people’s faces.”

As well as giving a new coat of paint to the outdoor furniture and planters, Colin is now planning a new landscape project on an unused bit of the scheme’s garden. Watch this space!

New dementia club in Slinfold

If you care for someone with dementia and live in Slinfold, you might be interested in Age UK Horsham District’s new dementia club.

The Slinfold Dementia Club provides much-needed respite for carers, allowing them to pursue their own hobbies or to work, secure in the knowledge that their loved ones are having an enjoyable day out.

A typical day at the club, which is limited to 12 members, may include quizzes, light exercise, music, board games, arts and crafts, as well as occasional trips and visits from outside entertainers. Also included in the fee is a two-course lunch and all refreshments.

The Slinfold Dementia Club is the third rural dementia club to be opened by Age UK Horsham District. There are similar clubs in Storrington and Henfield.

The club runs every Wednesday from 10am until 3pm at Saxon Weald’s retirement scheme The Cobblers. It offers free trial days for potential members. Please contact Age UK Horsham District on 01403 751327 to find out more.

Our interactive website is on its way!

We are planning to release an online self-service portal that will allow you to check your balance and pay your rent. Eventually you’ll also be able to pick a convenient appointment slot when logging a repair.

We’ll also be launching a Saxon Weald mobile app you can use when you’re out and about.

Would you like to volunteer to try out our new self-service portal on the website, or give us your views on our new app?

If you can spare an hour or so of your time to give us feedback on our IT improvements, please register at https://my.saxonweald.com/ssp/ and we will send you logon details closer to the time.

Volunteers will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 voucher for the store of your choice.
Don’t break your date!

If you make an appointment with HomeFix to carry out a repair in your home please remember to be in when we arrive!

Just as you have a right to repairs, you also have a responsibility to let us in to do those repairs, as set out in your tenancy agreement.

Missed appointments cost us time and money - and mean that we carry out fewer repairs in a day than we plan to.

Why not set yourself a reminder on your mobile phone or calendar next time you need to be home for HomeFix? Or give us your mobile number and we’ll send you a text.

Newly-wedded bliss at Abbotswood

Congratulations to Margaret and Denis Turner, who met and fell in love at Challen Court retirement scheme in Horsham. They tied the knot on 16 May and celebrated Denis’ 92nd birthday on the same day! Here they are celebrating with their friends at Abbotswood extra care scheme in Rustington, where they now live.

A grand day out

Residents from Alan Chun House, Allison House and Robin Place in Southampton enjoyed a visit to Exbury Gardens to admire the azaleas earlier this year, and some of them got together again in July to sample a tasty cream tea organised by Scheme Manager Lin Keitley.

Lin says: “It’s lovely to have some interaction between the different schemes. The cream tea was delicious – a local baker supplied the huge scones. A lovely and fun (if fattening) afternoon was had by all who joined in.”
Pop-up skate ramp funded by community grants

A mobile skate ramp trailer to create a pop-up skate park in villages in the Horsham area, and new ‘Resusci Annie’ dolls for first aid training, are just two of the purchases made with money from Saxon Weald’s Community Grants funds this year.

Representatives from 16 winning organisations showcased their work to local government, council and community figures, including Jeremy Quin MP (pictured here with Saxon Weald’s Chair Simon Turpitt), at an event also attended by Horsham Police and Saxon Weald staff at the Drill Hall in July.

The groups varied from Mocktails, an alcohol reduction and education charity, to Chestnut Tree House, which provides specialist palliative care to children and young adults with progressive life-threatening illnesses.

Simon Turpitt, Chair of the Saxon Weald Board, said “It’s fantastic to see the genuine benefit to the community brought together by the hard work of these charities and the financial support from Saxon Weald”.

The Community Grants scheme distributes around £26,000 to charity organisations every year. To find out more about Saxon Weald’s Community Grants, you can contact Saxon Weald’s Community Support Manager, Sue Tew, on 01403 226137.

Mike ‘braves the shave’ for Macmillan

Congratulations to Saxon Weald employee Mike Barraclough, who volunteered to lose his hair in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

Braving the shave has enabled him to raise £370 for this great cause – he’s now hoping his hair will grow back before the winter chill sets in!

Horsham Matters celebrates two years of youth work – and appeals for helpers

With more than 450 young people on their books, Horsham Matters’ Community Youth Work team is busy, busy, busy…

The charity is appealing for more volunteers to work with young people at its 10 weekly youth clubs, two youth councils and three special interest groups – not to mention all the ad hoc events that run over the course of the year.

To find out more about joining a youth club, or working as a volunteer at Horsham Matters, please contact Liz Burt, Youth Projects Manager with Horsham Matters at liz.burt@horsham-matters.org.uk or call 01403 211833.
Your repair responsibilities

We’re not responsible for these repairs to your home. Please check this list BEFORE you call HomeFix:

**Doors, gates and windows**
- Adjusting doors to fit carpets
- Door bells
- Door numbers
- Draught excluders
- Easing internal doors
- Furniture to internal doors, including hinges, locks and latches
- Gate catches
- Letter plates

**Electrical**
- Electrical faults resulting from the use of faulty appliances that were installed by the tenant or somebody acting for them
- Electrical fuses
- Electrical plug tops
- Florescent tubes
- Light bulbs
- Smoke detector batteries

**Plumbing**
- Blocked waste pipes to baths, wash basins and sinks
- Insulation jackets to hot water cylinders
- Toilet seat and covers

**Miscellaneous**
- Cupboard hinges, catches and furniture
- Curtain battens and rails, hat and coat hooks
- Decoration, painting and wallpaper
- Fire lighting tools and ash pans
- Floor coverings, including tiles laminates and carpets
- Insect and rodent infestation within the property
- Minor plaster cracks
- Minor repairs to kitchen units (e.g. catches, furniture, hinges and shelves)
- Plugs and chains to baths wash basins and sinks
- Replacement of lost or broken keys
- Sweeping flues and chimneys
- Wall tiles, floor tiles and fireplace tiles
- Washing lines/posts (except in communal areas)

If we are called out to do a repair that is your responsibility, or if we find out that the damage has been caused deliberately, accidentally or through neglect, we will charge you for the cost of the repair. We will ask you to sign an agreement to pay those charges before we start work.
Laurel Walk tidy-up

Our Neighbourhood Assistants Josh and Colin joined forces with Burleys, our grounds maintenance contractors, to help clear out 1800kg of garden waste and unwanted bulky items from Laurel Walk, Horsham, at the beginning of August.

It was great to see some of our younger residents join in with some litter picking, alongside members of Horsham District Council’s Adopt a Street programme. We had a selection of refreshments and face painting on offer as a thank you.

Laurel Walk’s Housing Manager, Lee Clark, said: “It was fantastic to see so many people wanting to get involved with tidying up their area. We were able to help a lot of residents make their gardens look better.”

Please remember that it is a condition of your tenancy agreement to keep your garden tidy and rubbish free.
Glorious gardens

Two beautiful Saxon Weald gardens in Storrington have been singled out for praise by Janet Webber, who chairs the village’s horticultural society.

Mrs Webber says: “The garden in Love Lane is a very neat and tidy well maintained garden. The planting has a varied combination of shrubs, perennials and annuals which will give all year round interest.

“The one at Fletchers Croft has an eye-catching display of varied summer flowering plants. This very colourful show must bring many a smile and great pleasure to anyone passing by. The plants were also greatly appreciated by many visiting insects, so it is good for the ecosystem.”

Mrs Webber kindly sent in some photographs so you can judge for yourselves!

VAT relief on aids for those with disability or long term illness

Tenant Board Member and Residents’ Action Panel representative Debbie Joseph writes: “I recently had to purchase a walker due to my rheumatoid arthritis and was very happy to learn I did not have to pay VAT on it due to my ongoing condition.

“I wanted to share this good news because I know many others with long-term conditions may also find themselves having to buy similar products on tight incomes. I found a useful explanation online at www.lloydspharmacy.com/en/info/VatReliefInformation

“If you are buying aids for your own use and have a long term health condition, ask if you have to pay VAT. You never know - you may not have to!”

We want your feedback!

Saxon Weald has started asking customers to rate their customer service experience when they call Saxon Weald. This is in order to make our service the best it can be.

Callers will receive a text message shortly after ringing in, asking them to score the service from poor to excellent. If a service is rated poor, we can act quickly on your feedback to improve things.

If you don’t want to take part, you can either ignore the text or select to opt out of future SMS surveys. You will not be charged to receive the text message. Reply text messaging rates may apply, depending on your plan with your mobile phone carrier.
Feedback on new homes

Shirin Shad, Saxon Weald’s Business Development Support Assistant, writes:

“The Design and Development Service Interest Group (SIG) meets many Saxon Weald residents a year after they move into newly-built homes. Our New Home Satisfaction survey asks for feedback on the design of the properties.

“The SIG is a valuable resource for Saxon Weald – resident-to-resident feedback has been found to be a particularly effective way to find out what people really think of their new home.

“The findings are fed back to the Development team and other relevant departments, including HomeFix and Housing and Neighbourhood Services. They are used to inform design briefs for future build projects.

“Things that have changed as a result include altering chair heights in the communal areas of our extra care schemes and incorporating shelves for chargers in buggy stores.

“Unfortunately there’s only so much we can do – a common complaint is there isn’t enough storage in new homes, but this would cost between £1500 and £2000 per metre square.

“The Design and Development SIG has recently met residents at Ellis Gardens and Padfield Close, Rotherfield in East Sussex. We look forward to continuing to engage with more residents in our recently completed developments over coming months.”

Play date

Residents from Bridges Court, Roffey were invited to a play at Littlehaven School on Monday, 13 July. The theme of the play was memories.

Scheme Manager Susan Dale says: “The play was based on Bridges Court, which the residents found very entertaining.”

A taste of the Andes

This colourful group entertained Ashby Court residents in Horsham with an evening of Peruvian music and dance.

The evening was arranged by resident Fred White, who is happy to arrange a similar event for other schemes. You can contact him through the Ashby Court Scheme Manager, Paula Liley, on 01403 226164 or email paula.liley@saxonweald.com
Love food, hate waste

Here are some good tips for saving on your food bill – and throwing less food out. You can find more at www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

1. Have a good look at what you already have before starting the week and planning the shop. You can take a photo of the fridge before you go!

2. Make the most of non-perishable and freezer basics such as lentils and frozen peas.

3. Use up what you already have in – mashed potatoes and a tin of tuna with some parsley make great fish cakes!

4. Plan out exactly what you will need - add a menu for the week to the front of the fridge.

5. If you aren’t as hungry as you thought why not have what’s left for lunch tomorrow?

6. Freeze half a loaf to defrost or toast at a later date.

7. Grate some cheese and freeze to use later.

8. Salad – once opened store in a tub with a paper towel to keep it fresher.

9. Keep fruit and veg in the bag and in the fridge – it’ll last longer. (The exceptions to this are bananas, pineapples, potatoes and onions, all of which should be kept in a cool place, but not the fridge.)

Singing for their supper

Abbotswood extra care scheme in Rustington hosted a cheese and wine party with entertainment from a 30-plus strong choir in July.

Scheme Manager Helen Ellis says: “The choir are the Jolesfield Community Choir from Partridge Green and they sang an amazing repertoire of songs. Councillor Graham Tyler and his wife Diane were the guests of honour and they, along with the residents and staff, had a thoroughly enjoyable, if late, evening.”

Highwood Mill

If you’re finding life difficult in your own home, or would like to move to somewhere you know you’ll have company, Saxon Weald’s new extra care scheme in Horsham may be the answer.

Highwood Mill, which is currently under construction by Berkley Homes, will have 105 apartments specially designed for older people. There are 60 for affordable rent and 45 for sale.

The scheme will have a communal lounge, restaurant with bar, library and activity room, with a regular programme of events.

If you’d like to find out more about Highwood Mill please ring Aimee Phipps on 01403 226196.
Thank you to the Butterfly Project in Horsham for the generous gift of a handmade bench for the residents of Leggyfield Court extra care scheme.

The bench has been placed on the balcony outside the lounge, which overlooks Boldings Brook. Pictured here enjoying the new seat are Atty Carden, Arthur Carden, Margaret McKessock and Doreen Williams.

The Butterfly Project, Horsham is a day centre that supports adults with learning difficulties, autism and other disabilities, helping them to engage in work and community activities and developing work and personal skills, while building confidence and self-esteem.