

Spotlight



Saxon
Weald

The Newsletter for Saxon Weald Residents | Autumn / Winter 2018



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Season's greetings!



It's been almost six months since I took over the helm as Chief Executive at Saxon Weald. The time has passed unbelievably quickly as I've set about bringing my plans for Saxon Weald into effect. It's been an inspiration to see the whole team rise to the challenge so enthusiastically of growing and modernising the business.

Our new vision 'great homes, building futures' is an ambitious statement of what we want to be. It supports the work we do in our communities, the investment we make in our existing homes and the new homes we plan to build in the future. This statement forms the basis of our new corporate plan, which will direct our work for the next three years. If you would like to read the plan, please go to the publications page on our website.

I was recently lucky enough to visit our new homes in Sleets Road, Broadbridge Heath and was incredibly impressed by what I saw. Where there was once a run-down block of garages, there now stands nine fantastic one and two-bedroom apartments. The resident I spoke to was thrilled with her new home and it really brought home to me how important our work is and the difference it makes to the community.

So, to all our residents, may I wish you a very happy Christmas and I look forward to a busy but exciting new year.

Steven Dennis,

Chief Executive

MySaxonWeald.com

Latest news!



Over 3600 residents are now registered for online services through My SaxonWeald.

Joining has many benefits and can transform the way you manage your home.



*Sign up today
and you'll be able to:*

- Report a repair and choose an appointment slot that suits you. Why wait for us to answer the phone when you can secure your time online?
- Check your rent balance and make a payment any time.
- Contact us 24/7 by secure web message.



Visit mysaxonweald.com to register.

Top marks again!



In November, the Regulator for Social Housing, awarded us their highest rating (VI, GI) for governance and financial viability. The regulator is a government body, who carry out an annual check on all registered social housing providers to make sure they are properly managed and are operating effectively and efficiently.



Getting colourful in the community!

As part of an ongoing series of community projects, staff members from across Saxon Weald recently joined forces to bring a new lease of life to the grounds of Trafalgar Infant School in Horsham.

Thanks to a generous donation of supplies from Brewers in Horsham, we were able to complete a number of tasks around the school, including repairs, painting and gardening. We were also lucky to have the help of Burleys' Chris Nolan, who worked hard to tame the school's willow structure, and provide expert advice around the garden.

The biggest transformation of the day was the garden, where the team created an exciting and colourful environment for the children to return to after half term, aimed at stimulating their senses, from sight, to smell, to touch.

Kat Green, Headteacher at Trafalgar Infant School, said: "We were thrilled to be asked by Saxon Weald if they could carry out a community day here at Trafalgar Community Infant School. The children were excited to see their school looking even brighter and more welcoming when they returned from their half term break. Thank you to Saxon Weald and their staff, for their time and efforts, and for making a financial contribution to the resources needed for this work at a time when school budgets are extremely tight."

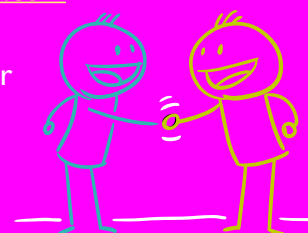
The day was a great success, and we'd like to say a huge thank you to the volunteers, suppliers and school for making the project possible.



We'd love to help!

Do you have a project that you could use some help with? Got something in mind you'd like to do but just don't have the time or resources? Get in touch at PR@saxonweald.com

to see if we can help you get your project off the ground.



Confused by benefits? We're here for you!

Saxon Weald's Money Matters Team are here to help. We have three specialist advisers ready to assist residents with all aspects of welfare benefits, including universal credit or housing benefit claims. The team can help with maximising your income and provide some top tips for budgeting.

So far this year, our Money Matters Team have helped residents claim £46,000 in backdated housing benefits or universal credit, and £107,000 in other backdated benefits. We also provide support and assistance with other welfare benefits such as personal independence payments (PIP) and employment and support allowance (ESA).

For more information or advice, please contact the Money Matters advisers at moneymatters@saxonweald.com.



A real difference

New tenant Mrs P was a full-time carer for her son, but had never claimed carers allowance. She was struggling to make ends meet and was worried about how she would keep her home. Our Money Matters team got on the case and helped Mrs P complete an online claim form. Mrs P received a backdated payment of £839 which she used to help furnish her new home and get back on her feet. She also now receives £64 per week in carers allowance, enough to make a real difference.

Helping you save for a rainy day

The Help to Save scheme has been designed to support working people who receive tax credits and universal credit in building up savings. As the scheme is backed by the government, you can rest assured that the money you save is kept secure.

With Help to Save, you can receive a 50% bonus on your savings, meaning for every £1 you save, you'll earn 50p. Accounts last for four years from the date it's opened, allowing you to save between £1 and £50 every calendar month.

You can pay into a Help to Save account on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis to best fit the way you manage your money.

Interested in finding out more or keen to open an account?
Visit gov.uk/helptosave.

Get 50p
for every
£1 you save



Apply now for Help to Save
if you work and receive Working
Tax Credit or Universal Credit.

 HM Government

gov.uk/helptosave

Brightening up bin storage

When Horsham Council made changes to their waste plans to encourage recycling, it meant more bins for areas with communal collections. To help keep the bins in one place and make the refuse areas less unsightly, we've built several new bin stores. The stores not only look nicer than loose bins but can also feature a door entry key pad to make sure only the right people are using them.



If your neighbourhood would benefit from a bin store, or similar communal improvement, please contact us with your suggestion by emailing housing.managers@saxonweald.com.

Watch your waste

Christmas creates a lot of extra rubbish for many households, but please be responsible in how you dispose of it. Bags of rubbish left loose in bin stores will not be collected by the council, and will end up attracting vermin and smelling awful. If you have extra bags that won't fit in the bin, please take them to your nearest household waste site. If you aren't able to get to the tip yourself, maybe a friendly neighbour would take a bag for you if they are visiting themselves?

Top tips for Christmas recycling

1. Cardboard and paper

From wrapping paper to Christmas crackers (not metallic or glittery), cards and tags to food packaging, it can all go in the recycling bin.

2. Real Christmas trees

Dispose of Christmas trees at your local household waste recycling centre or cut into pieces and throw in your brown-top bin for garden waste.

3. Understand the recycling symbols

With so many recycling symbols now used, it's often easy to get confused. Visit www.recyclenow.com for more information.

4. Leftover food

Many households will over cater on food this Christmas. But don't throw out leftovers – visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com for culinary inspiration. Unopened food that is still in date can also be donated to local food banks but fresh food cannot be accepted.

5. Presents

Looking to clear some space for your new gifts and gadgets? Belongings that you no longer want but are still in good condition can be donated to charity.



Company change

From the end of December, we will be a charitable Community Benefit Society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority rather than a limited company. This has no impact on our services or your rights, and we are still a not-for-profit organisation, but it does bring us significant administrative savings. It also means a change to our name from Saxon Weald Homes Ltd to simply Saxon Weald.

A new look for Saxon Weald

After nearly 20 years of our 'wheatsheaf' logo, we have decided the time is right for a new look. In late December, we will be changing from a limited company to a community benefit society, which means that all our company stationery would have to change anyway – making it the perfect time to introduce something new.

Costs have been minimised by doing all the design work ourselves, and we will be replacing items such as leaflets as they run out. The biggest cost associated with changing our logo is replacing signage. However, a fair proportion of the signage is faded, so replacing it will freshen up our neighbourhoods.

We feel our new logo reflects our company vision 'great homes, building futures' giving us a more contemporary look to go with our plans to modernise our business and improve services. We plan to launch the new look in January, but you may see it appearing on letters before Christmas.



★ ★ ★
Competition! ★

Top 5 condensation mistakes

Condensation is always a hot topic in the colder months. But how much do you know about dealing with this problem?

Here are the top 5 mistakes people make in managing condensation.

1. Turning the extractor fan off the minute they have finished cooking or showering.

Leave the extractor running for around 10 minutes after you have finished as there will be extra moisture in the air that you can't see. If you don't have an extractor, make sure you open a window.

2. Wiping windows down then drying the cloth on the radiator.

If you use a cloth to wipe down windows, wring it out completely before leaving it to dry, ideally outdoors. If you get a lot of condensation, it may pay to invest in a window vacuum.

3. Pushing furniture right up to the walls.

Always leave a small gap (around 5cm) between the walls and your furniture to allow air to circulate.

4. Stuffing cupboards to the brim.

Over-filled cupboards lack ventilation and can create mould growth.

5. Blasting the heating on a high setting once a day

Try to maintain a more constant temperature, as it's when warm air cools that you get condensation. It is also usually more cost effective to maintain a reasonable degree of warmth.

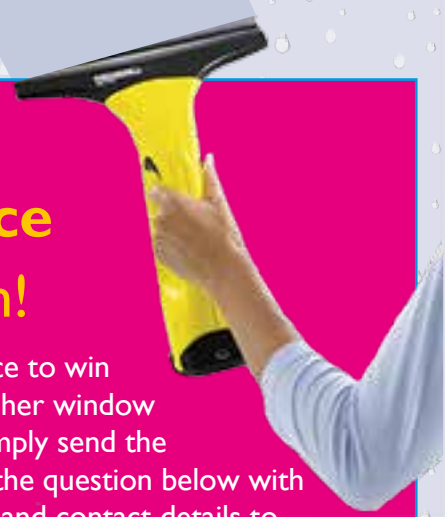
Your chance to win!

For a chance to win a new Karcher window vacuum, simply send the answer to the question below with your name and contact details to pr@saxonweald.com or enter online at www.saxonweald.com.

All correct answers received by 7 January will be entered into a draw. Terms and conditions on our website.

Q Approximately how much condensation is created by running a bath?

- a) 1 pint
- b) 2 pints
- c) 4 pints



Global Gruffalo



To celebrate Horsham District Year of Culture 2019, 20 special Gruffalo soft toys will be travelling about as many places and seeing as many people as possible during the year. In support of the council, Saxon Weald has sponsored one of the Gruffalos and want it to have plenty of adventures during its time with us. If you are involved in a group or organisation that would like a visit from our Gruffalo, please email pr@saxonweald.com or send us a message on our Facebook page.



Winter driving

Here are a few checks to carry out to help keep you safe in the car this winter.

Fuel – it sounds obvious, but make sure you have plenty of fuel for your journey. Your car is likely to use more fuel if it is cold and you really don't want to get stranded if the temperature plummets.

Tyre check – make sure your tyres have a good level of tread and are inflated to the correct pressure so you have as much traction and grip as possible.

Wiper blades – clear your windscreen of snow and ice and ensure the wipers will lift off the screen before switching them on. If they get stuck, use a little warm water (not boiling) to free them if necessary. If you try to use them when they are stuck, you could blow a fuse.

Lights – Check your lights – they are essential for you to see and be seen, so make sure they are clean and working.

Prepare for the worst – If you are travelling any distance, prepare for a breakdown or major traffic incident by keeping a blanket in the car as well as a torch and bottles of water. Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged and consider taking emergency food supplies such as an energy bar too.

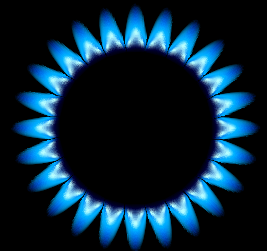


HOME Glowing gas report FIX

Gas safety is one of our top priorities, so we are delighted to have been given a glowing report by our auditors, Morgan Lambert. The audit ensures that our operatives are complying to the high standards expected under the gas safety regulations 1998, when carrying out landlord gas safety checks or repairs.

- Saxon Weald are currently ranked 6th out of 197 companies Morgan Lambert inspect on gas safety nationwide
- Our average score is 19.9 out of 20
- 97.75% of audits completed had a maximum score of 20 out of 20
- Our customer satisfaction survey for operatives is 100%

Morgan Lambert described Saxon Weald's performance as excellent and added that the service is beyond expectations given it has only been operating since February. Needless to say, we are very proud of this result and will continue to put customer safety first.



Town centre convenience... affordable prices

If you like to be at the heart of the action, and want an affordable way to join the property ladder, our new homes at Winterton Square could be for you.

The development offers 12 apartments and six chalet bungalows for shared ownership. Located just a stone's throw from Horsham's amenities, Winterton Square also benefits from amazing transport links via Horsham station. With over 50% already sold, you'll need to act fast. Prices start from £73,125 for a two-bedroom apartment.

If you are not quite ready to buy at Winterton Square, our Alden Court development is launching in spring 2019. Again located in Horsham town centre, it offers 21 one and two bedroom properties on a shared ownership basis.

To buy, you'll need to register with Help to buy at www.helptobuyese.org.uk. To see what properties we have available to buy, please visit www.wealdliving.com.



WEALD Living

by Saxon Weald

Dream of owning your own home?

Shared ownership is a stepping stone towards owning your own home, allowing you to buy as much as you can afford, without overstressing yourself financially. While you'll own a percentage of your property, you'll pay rent on the remaining share.

What are the benefits?

- You'll own part of your home, rather than paying rent with no return
- Your monthly mortgage and rent can work out much cheaper than buying outright and is often less than renting privately
- You can buy more shares in your home at a later date

Find out if you qualify for shared ownership by visiting www.helptobuyese.org.uk and registering your details.

It's all in the planning

We've just submitted planning applications for three new developments as part of our commitment to provide more homes for people in housing need. These consist of:

- 6 **Six houses for shared ownership in Rudgwick.** These will replace six existing bungalows which are suffering from such severe subsidence that it is not cost effective to simply repair them.
- 9 **Nine homes for affordable rent at Blenheim Road, Horsham.** This will be a mix of one and two bedroom apartments and replaces an old block of garages.
- 21 **21 homes for affordable rent at Bennetts Road, Horsham.** These will replace six houses that have extremely large gardens. We've had to make the hard decision to ask the existing residents to move, but we ultimately believe that giving a home to 21 households rather than just six is the right thing to do.

If our applications are successful, we hope to start building in late summer / early autumn next year.

Why are we locking loft hatches?



If you are moving from one Saxon Weald property to another, you will find that the loft hatch in your new home will be locked.

We know some people will find this inconvenient as it means the loft cannot be used for storage, so we'd like to explain our reasons.

- When emergency access is needed to the utilities in the loft, stored items hamper access and delay isolation of the problem.
- When additional loads are placed on joists it affects the structural integrity of the loft. You should see how much some people store!
- Stored items can compress the loft insulation we install and make it less effective.
- Stored items affect loft ventilation and cause issues with condensation.
- Storing flammable materials could accelerate the spread of fire.
- Locking lofts improves health and safety as it prevents people or items falling out of the hatch.

If you do have access to a loft space, please keep in mind the points above and have a really good clear out!

Don't flush our money away!

In the last six months, we have spent £20,000 on dealing with blocked toilets and drains, often causing unpleasant overflows into people's home. In almost all circumstances, the problems stem from people flushing the wrong things down the toilet or pouring stuff they shouldn't into drains. Where there is a pumping station for an estate, this causes problems for the whole neighbourhood. So please, think before you flush!

The number one cause of toilet blockages is wet wipes!

Other things you should bin rather than flush include:

- ✗ Sanitary products
- ✗ Nappies
- ✗ Contraceptives
- ✗ Cigarettes
- ✗ Wrappers
- ✗ Grease and food fat



Below: a clogged up & burnt out pump from one of our properties



Getting a handle on doors

Our repairs team have been getting a number of enquiries about fixing faulty door handles or easing ill-fitting doors. Unfortunately, these are both things that tenants are responsible for maintaining themselves. But don't worry, it's often not as difficult as it sounds to fix the problem. To help you, we have two videos available on our website which give an easy step-by-step guide to these repairs. Check them out at www.saxonweald.com/living-in-your-home/repairs/Guides.



If you are not sure what jobs are your responsibility and which we will fix for you, there is a full list in your tenants' guide or on the publications page of our website.

National Fraud Initiative



The Cabinet Office has asked us to participate in its national anti-fraud initiative. This involves sharing details of all our tenancies so that they can be compared to information provided by other public bodies. This helps to identify issues such as tenancy fraud (someone claiming to be living at two or more addresses) and benefits fraud (people claiming money they are not entitled to). It can also uncover circumstances where people are receiving too little help, or where payments have been made in genuine error.

We are required by law to protect the public funds we administer and, even with the new General Data Protection Regulations, are allowed to share information with other public bodies to prevent and detect fraud. For further information on the Cabinet Office legal powers, please see www.gov.uk/government/publications/fair-processing-national-fraud-initiative.



There when you need us

Our free floating support service offers sympathetic and practical help for tenants aged 60+ who need short-term assistance. It may be you need help sorting out paperwork following a bereavement, you may be feeling isolated or perhaps you've had a stay in hospital and need help to get back on your feet. The service offers individual support but also works closely with GP care coordinators, Age UK and social services for referrals.

Over the last two years, we have helped nearly 150 residents who might not have had access to support otherwise. If you think you could benefit, please reach out and contact Julia Taylor-Waller 07595 651415 or Elaine Sayers 07595 651519.

"My name is Rose. My husband Bill and I had been feeling rather lost and bewildered about filling in forms and claiming benefits. We both have quite a few health problems so we got in touch with Saxon Weald to see if they could help. Two lovely ladies came to our home and put us right at ease. They've kept in touch over the last 18 months and not only helped us sort out our benefits, but have helped us through depression and the loss of a beloved brother. We can't recommend the service highly enough."

In loving memory In September, our retirement scheme, Leslie Loader House sadly lost their dear resident Liam to cancer. During his many years at the scheme, Liam spent much of his time in the surrounding gardens, tending to the plants, flower baskets and borders. Since Liam passed away, his grandson has continued to call in and maintain the gardens for other residents to enjoy.



Celebrating 70 years of marriage!

Congratulations to Elizabeth and George, residents at Stuart Bridgewater House, who recently celebrated their platinum wedding anniversary, marking an incredible 70 years of marriage.

In honour of this momentous occasion, family congregated in the Stuart Bridgewater lounge to join the couple for a celebration of their lives together. We wish them many more happy years to come.



Charity cake bakes

Throughout our schemes and the Saxon Weald head office, Macmillan coffee mornings were enjoyed by residents and scheme managers, baking (and eating) delicious treats whilst helping to save the lives of people who are affected by cancer. Saxon Weald collectively raised a staggering £2000 to support this fantastic cause! We would like to thank our Scheme Managers and residents for arranging such successful events, and contributing to such a fantastic cause.

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**



Over
£2000
raised!



Highwood Mill



Hordern house



Saxon Weald Head Office

Blooming marvellous

Residents of our Rotary House retirement scheme in Hampshire have been keeping their fingers green, winning gold for their beautifully arranged hanging baskets and being highly commended for their tubs and window boxes at this year's Southampton in Bloom. Rotary House also received the silver award for 'best sheltered accommodation'.

Congratulations to all our wonderful residents who contributed to this brilliant result.

PS. A huge well done to the Rotary House residents who have recently been busy hosting fundraisers for charity, raising a fantastic £700 which was split between The Air Ambulance and Sight.



Lest we forget



A few of our lovely residents at Highwood Mill were busy in the run up to Remembrance Day, knitting poppies to raise money for the Poppy Appeal, in aid of The Royal British Legion.

As this year marked 100 years since the official end of World War I, staff at Saxon Weald were keen to show their support and helped residents raise an impressive £87.23 in a single lunch time collection.



Christmas support

Anyone can reach a crisis point and we understand that Christmas can be an especially difficult time for families for many reasons. However, there are services available to those in need of support this time of year.

The Trussell Trust – local foodbanks
W: www.trusselltrust.org | T: 01722 580180



women's aid
until women & children are safe

Crisis



Samaritans – a safe place to talk
W: www.samaritans.org | T: 116 123

Women's Aid –
information and support on domestic abuse
W: www.womensaid.org.uk | T: 0808 2000 247

Crisis – homelessness
W: www.crisis.org.uk | T: 0300 636 1967

Christmas closure

We will be closing for the Christmas holidays at 4pm on Friday 21 December. We will re-open on Wednesday 2 January 2019 at 9am (8.30am for phone calls).

If you need assistance during that time, or in case of emergency, please call 01403 226000 and you will be redirected to our out-of-hours service.

Remember, you can access your account anytime at mysaxonweald.com. To ensure you can access your My Saxon Weald account during this time, please ensure that you register before we close on Friday 21 December as we will need to send new users a verification code.

Please also be aware that any payments you make or repairs you log during our Christmas closure will not be processed until we re-open on Wednesday 2 January.

Season's greetings from all at Saxon Weald



Head Office

Saxon Weald House
38-42 Worthing Road, Horsham
West Sussex RH12 1DT

Tel: 01403 226000

Email: info@saxonweald.com
www.saxonweald.com

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PRINTER INSERT



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | Gold