



SAXON
WEALD

Spotlight

The Newsletter for Saxon Weald Residents | Autumn / Winter 2019

inside!

You could win £100 by entering our latest survey/ Go to page 5 to find out more.

Thinking about making changes to your home? Read our article on page 8 and avoid any costly mistakes.



Helping hands in the community

Our teams get busy with paintbrushes, gardening gloves and team spirit to help out.



Your voice counts...

We need your views to help us improve our services. See the difference you've made.



Winter wellbeing guide

From your home to your car, to your health - we've got it covered

Weed all about it!

Saxon Weald staff have given a real boost to some worthy projects over the last few months. Two groups have taken a day out of their usual jobs and volunteered their services at the Countess Mountbatten Hospice in Southampton, and the Horsham and Shipley Community Project.

The Countess Mountbatten Hospice supports people with life-limiting illnesses and their families. Well done to Luke, Eleanor and Gemma from our Hampshire team, who braved the British weather there and did a fantastic job of clearing the pathways.

Another team of volunteers from head office and HomeFix offered their helping hands at the Horsham and Shipley Community Project. This organisation encourages social interaction and believes that age is no barrier for fun and fitness. Their range of activities,

include a 'men's shed group' and walking football.

Members of the project work tirelessly all year with the upkeep of the grounds and were thrilled when Saxon Weald offered their help with jobs that would see the grounds through winter. Together, the volunteers and members of the project painted the shed, sanded and oiled the picnic benches and built a compost bin.

Richard, a trustee at the Horsham and Shipley Community Project said: "The day was a great success and we'd like to thank all of our volunteers and members of the project for making the day possible."

Have you got an idea for a community project we could help on? Get in touch! We'd love to hear from you. Email: pr@saxonweald.com



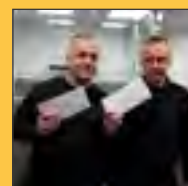
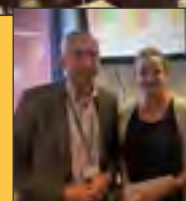
Recognising our customer service heroes

In October we celebrated National Customer Service Week. During the week we promote the work our teams do and the customer service they offer.

We were delighted to welcome Simon Turpitt, Chairman of Saxon Weald, when he joined the customer support team to experience first hand the kind of service we offer our customers. Simon sat with Dan, a customer adviser, and listened to him handling a mix of repair and tenancy calls. He also saw how we respond to queries coming through our online, email and social media channels.

Simon was really impressed with the service and commented particularly on the warm and friendly spirit in the team.

During the week we also took the opportunity to say thank you to some of our amazing staff who have gone above and beyond for our customers. Well done to all 12 of our colleagues who between them received multiple compliments from our customers, and high ratings in our satisfaction surveys.



Green fingers

Well done to the residents of Alley Groves for coming third in the Cowfold in Bloom competition. The ambitious group have already started planning how to get an even higher finishing position next year!

Elsewhere, congratulations to Monica who won Bronze in the Southampton in Bloom competition on behalf of Charles Wyatt House for Courtyard Gardens.

The effort Monica has continuously put into the garden has made it a beautiful place to sit and enjoy a cuppa.



Monica with her award

One big adventure

Saxon Weald's Global Gruffalo has continued his travels, gaining a few new outfits along the way.



He went along and showed his support at the Horsham Children's parade and he's also taken a trip to the British Library for a Customer Services in Housing event.

He's also enjoyed some fun trips including a day of culture in London, celebrating with the LGBT community at Worthing Pride and topping up his tan in Thailand.

We look forward to seeing what his next adventures may be...



Watch your money grow

The Help to Save scheme was launched over a year ago by the government and more than 140,000 people have already signed up.

If you're entitled to Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit you could be eligible to open a Help to Save account. As the scheme is backed by the government, you can rest assured that the money you save is secure.

With the Help to Save account you can receive a 50% bonus on your savings, meaning that for every £1 you save, you'll earn 50p. Once you open an account it'll last for four years, allowing you to save between £1 and £50 every calendar month.



If you're interested in opening an account or finding out more visit gov.uk/helptosave.



YOUR VOICE counts

Food for thought

In the summer, we became members of the Institute of Customer Service for the first time. Membership means we get expert advice to help us improve our services and compare our progress with the best performing organisations in the country.

To give us a starting point, the Institute carried out a customer survey on our behalf. The survey covered everything from overall satisfaction with our services, to what you think of us as an organisation, how well we manage complaints and the helpfulness of our staff.

Thank you to everyone who took part. The responses have given us plenty to think about and will help us prioritise our service improvement plans.

KEY FINDINGS

- Leaseholders and shared owners**
 Leaseholders and shared owners are far more unhappy with our services than our other customers. We are carrying out a major review of our service charge process which we hope will improve this situation.
- Complaints handling**
 You rated us poorly for how we handle complaints, giving us an average score of 38 out of 100 compared to the national housing association average score of 50 out of 100. We'll be looking at how we improve this as one of our key priorities over the coming year.
- Our staff**
 We're really pleased to say that you scored us slightly above the national average for the helpfulness and competence of our staff.

Your voice making a difference

A big thank you to the 350 people who completed our grounds maintenance and cleaning survey in September. Your feedback was invaluable. Thanks to your input, we added a number of items to the specification when we invited contractors to bid for the work. This included annual cleaning of communal garden furniture and patios and clearing weed growth around drains. We're really pleased to say that a number of customers have also agreed to help us interview the shortlisted companies. Their input will ensure we make the right choice for this important service.



Testing, testing

Thanks to the 12 customers who recently helped us out by testing our upgraded version of MySaxonWeald. Their feedback was really insightful and has led to improvements to the system, so it is even easier to use. Some of the suggestions included:

- Make it clearer which jobs tenants are responsible for before you go through the system to try and book
- Make it easier to change or cancel a repair you have already booked
- Improve the search function and make sure it accounts for misspelled words
- Make it easier to book repairs to outside areas

Why not check out the new system for yourself at mysaxonweald.com?



YOUR VOICE counts

Tell us more!

Your views are valuable. Customer feedback helps us improve services and tells us what we should prioritise. We want to make sure, therefore, that you have the information you need to hold us to account. And we want to make sure you can give your views in a way that suits you.

IN GENERAL

1. Do you feel Saxon Weald listens to customers?

Yes No Sometimes (please explain)

2. How easy is it for you to give Saxon Weald your views?

1-5 (where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy)

1	2	3	4	5
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3. How good is Saxon Weald at keeping you informed about its services and performance?

1-5 (where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good)

1	2	3	4	5
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INFORMATION

4. Is our annual performance report easy to understand?

Yes No Didn't read it

Your chance to win

As a thank you for completing the survey, all responses will be entered into a free prize draw to win £100 of vouchers for a store of your choice. The closing date is Tuesday 31 December.

Thank you for your time.

5. Is the level of information contained in the report,

Too much Too little Just right

5a. If too little, what else would you like to see?

6. How often would you like to see performance information?

- Annually is enough
 Every six months
 Quarterly

TAKING PART

7. How satisfied are you with the opportunities to participate in the monitoring and development of Saxon Weald's services?

1-5 (where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied)

1	2	3	4	5
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YOUR VOICE counts

8. If you would like to give your views, what would you feel comfortable taking part in? (please tick)

- Online surveys
- Social media discussions
- Attend occasional focus group meetings about a specific topic
- Attend regular meetings as part of a customer panel
- Be part of an estate inspection or mystery shopping team
- Reading panel (giving us comments on documents before they are published)

9. How could we improve our arrangements for you to give us your views?

Send it to us...

Please fill in your details, then cut along the dotted lines, pop in an envelope and send your completed survey to us at:

Customer Experience
Saxon Weald House,
38-42 Worthing Road,
Horsham
RH12 1DT

Thank you & good luck!

10. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

Name

Address

Postcode

Email

Phone number

You can complete the survey online instead...

Go to www.tinyurl.com/SWPRM

Dream of owning your own home?

Shared ownership is a stepping stone towards owning your own home, allowing you to buy a share in a property and pay rent on the remaining share, meaning you'll need a much smaller deposit.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Your monthly repayments can work out much cheaper than buying outright and often less than renting privately
- You'll own part of your home, rather than paying rent with no return
- You only buy what you can afford to avoid overstretching yourself financially

Most leases allow you to buy additional shares in your property at a later date. This is known as staircasing. In most cases, you can staircase to 100% of the property value, eventually owning your home outright.

Find out more about shared ownership by visiting www.wealdliving.com/home-owner-services/shared-ownership



WEALD Living
by Saxon Weald

Providing great homes for more people

On Wednesday 13 November, we were pleased to be joined by members of West Chiltington Parish Council and Horsham District Council for the official opening of Steele Close. These eight new one, two and three-bedroom homes for affordable rent are joined on site by another six shared ownership properties owned by The Rural Housing Trust.

Built on a rural exception site (sites used for affordable housing where housing would not normally have been built) the development supports West Chiltington Parish Council's desire to provide more affordable homes for local people.

This autumn, we were also delighted to officially open our latest development in Horsham, Alden Court, which consists of 21 one and two-bedroom apartments for shared ownership purchase. Joined by members of Saxon Weald staff, contractors and Horsham District Council, Chairman of Saxon Weald's board, Simon Turpitt, officially opening the development with a ribbon cutting back in September





Making changes to your home

We understand that over time you may want to make changes to your home. Before you do, it's important to get in touch and let us know. These changes include, but aren't limited to, your doors, walls, flooring, bathrooms and kitchens, as well as outdoor areas such as patches of grass, hedges, and the assembly of outbuildings, lean-tos and sheds.

If you carry out changes to your home without our permission, we may ask you to return the property to its original condition at your expense.

Real life story...

Mr Bloggs put up a lean-to in his garden with a corrugated roof but didn't get in touch to let us know. This meant that his lean-to was only found during the annual mandatory gas check at his home. Unfortunately, the operative attending Mr Bloggs' home discovered that the lean-to had been built over the gas flue on the back wall of his home. As this was preventing the necessary ventilation for the property, Mr Bloggs' gas was capped immediately, leaving him without heating. To resolve the issue, Mr Bloggs was told he had to remove the corrugated roof and side panel or take down the lean-to completely at his expense. This was an inconvenient and costly issue which could have been prevented if Mr Bloggs had contacted Saxon Weald first.



If you'd like to make a change to your home, get in touch with our Asset Management team by emailing asset.management@saxonweald.com.

Top 5 tips for preventing condensation

Some condensation in any home is normal and unavoidable. There are a few things you can do to ensure it doesn't become a problem throughout the winter months:

1. Keep your window sills dry

Give your window sills a wipe down each day to prevent moisture from building up. Remember to wring your cloth out thoroughly before leaving it to dry, preferably outdoors.

2. Let some fresh air in

It's important to let dry, fresh air into your home. Either open your windows for a short time each day or maintain a low level of ventilation by using trickle vents in your windows.

3. Keep the temperature constant

Blasting the heating on a high setting once a day isn't the best idea, as condensation occurs when warm air cools. Instead, try to keep your home at a constant temperature all day.

4. Allow air to circulate

Always leave a gap of around 5cm between your furniture and the wall to allow air to circulate. It's also important to avoid stacking cupboards to the brim, as this can lead to a lack of ventilation and increase the chance of mould growth.

5. Leave the extractor fan running

After cooking or showering, leave your extractor fan running for an extra 10 minutes to help remove excess moisture in the air. If you don't have an extractor fan, leave the window open for a short while.

Keeping well and warm this winter

It's important to make sure you and your home are prepared for winter to keep you safe and well throughout the colder months.



IN YOUR HOME

Freezing pipes – periods of very cold weather can cause your pipes to freeze, and potentially leak or burst. Leave your heating on low overnight to keep the water circulating and prevent your pipes from freezing.

Stop tap – in the event of an emergency, knowing where your stop tap is will mean you can act fast and turn your water off quickly. In most cases it will be under the sink, but it can also be found in the airing cupboard, under the stairs or near the front door.

Boiler pressure – ensuring your boiler's pressure is at the right level is important for it to operate correctly. On a combi-boiler, the pressure should be between 1 and 2 bar.

WINTER DRIVING



Check your lights – make sure your lights, indicators and reflectors are clean and working, as they are essential for you to be seen.

Wipers – check your wipers can be lifted from the windscreen before using them. You should also make sure your screen wash is topped up and contains anti-freeze, so it's available when you need it.

Pack the essentials – it's a good idea to prepare for the worst, so make sure you have a torch, blanket, food and drink supplies in the car, and don't forget to fully charge your mobile phone before leaving home.

Tyres – 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.

Fuel – during the colder months, your car may use more fuel than usual. Before heading off on your journey, be sure to check you have enough fuel

in your car to ensure you don't get stranded when the temperature drops.

YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

For most of us, the festive season is a happy and exciting time. However, it can also be a difficult and stressful time of the year for individuals and families for many reasons. If you need support, there are plenty of networks and services available to help you.

The Samaritans – the Samaritans are there to listen and offer you a safe place to talk - 01403 276276

Crisis – If you're homeless or at immediate risk of becoming homeless, you can access Crisis' services for free – 0300 636 1967

Foodbanks – if you live in the Horsham district and find yourself short of money to buy food, contact Saxon Weald to find out if you qualify for food parcels or vouchers. You can also contact The Trussell Trust to find a local food bank – 01722 580180



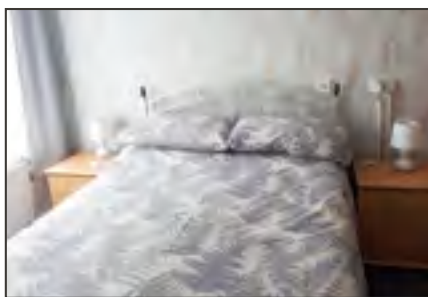
A little renovation

Hordern House got a boost when a small group of residents were joined by Saxon Weald's staff to refurbish areas of the scheme.

The volunteers utilised their combined skills, which included building, decorating and sewing, and along with having a keen eye for a bargain, were able to revamp some armchairs and give their guestroom a stylish makeover.

Together, residents and staff raised a flowerbed outside the scheme, cleared it out and replanted it. They also worked hard to make the communal garden much prettier.

Well done to everyone involved for all their hard work.



A touching tribute

Residents at Leslie Loader House held a small ceremony to remember Liam, a resident there for 11 years before he sadly lost his battle with cancer.

Liam dedicated much of his time to keeping the garden looking as beautiful, bright and colourful as possible for all his neighbours to enjoy.

A plaque commemorating his love of gardening, was placed in the garden in his memory.



Whipping up support...

An outstanding £1778.01 was raised for Macmillan at Saxon Weald's schemes and head office during their recent coffee mornings.

Staff and residents alike enjoyed an array of delicious treats, whilst raising money to help change the lives of people who are and have been affected by cancer.

Well done and thank you to everyone who hosted a coffee morning or afternoon, and to all those who contributed to the total amount raised. Nationwide, this year's events have raised a over £24 million!

Community spirit

A massive thank you to one of our Hampshire residents, Bob Wells who kindly came to the rescue earlier in the year. A large amount of mess had been dumped in the bin room and was overflowing at Stuart Bridgewater House. Bob, who isn't even a resident there, volunteered his time and his trailer to remove the excess rubbish.

As a thank you for his time and effort, and for showing such great community spirit, Bob was presented with a gift voucher.



Filling the void

Our Empty Homes Team takes the homes that have become empty (voids) and completes the work necessary to prepare them for re-letting.

The team was established in 2012 as part of HomeFix, giving us better management of time and resources than using an external contractor. Homes become empty due to tenants moving elsewhere or passing away and the condition of these homes vary greatly. The age of the property and how well it has been looked after by previous residents is a major factor. Properties can take between £1,500 and two weeks, and £7,000 and two months to make ready to let. Occasionally properties have needed extensive works costing up to £40,000!

The before and after pictures below show two amazing kitchen transformations recently completed by the team.

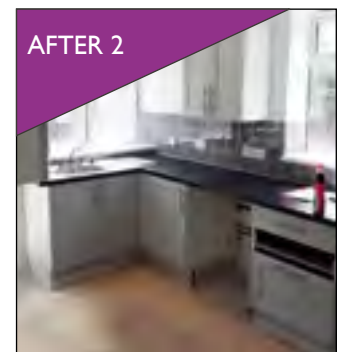
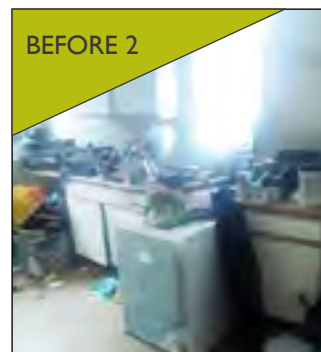
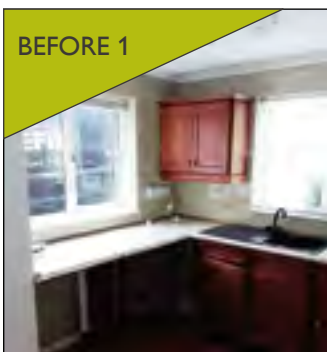
The team is small with just 13 operatives tackling 400-500 properties a year. They certainly have their work cut out for them, as they make these homes attractive for our next tenants, keeping on budget and on time.

Meet Scott

Scott is our Empty Homes Manager, who joined HomeFix back in 2016. Having previously acquired a wealth of experience



leading teams and getting results in the military, Scott threw himself into his role here. He credits the team's success with his hands-on approach to management and a great team of skilled workers. With customer satisfaction at 88% the team are doing really well.



We asked Scott...

What are the biggest challenges you've faced?

There have certainly been a few in my time here! When I first started I had to learn about social housing pretty quickly as I'd come from a different working background. Back then we had a fairly high turn-over of operatives, but I've found getting the right people in the team has been a rewarding experience. Other challenges are the targets we strive to meet - it can be hard work ensuring we achieve them, but as a team we are constantly trying to improve what we do and the way we do it.

What's your favourite thing about the job?

I love getting to work with a great group of people, who all want to do well and work to improve people's

lives and homes. I am mostly office based but I enjoy being able to get out and see the team and the jobs they are working on. It's important to me that they feel valued and seeing the work they do, the obstacles they overcome and the final result is very rewarding.

What are the main things tenants forget to do when moving out of their homes?

We often get requests from former tenants or utility providers asking for final meter readings. To help people when they end their tenancy or move home, we have produced some helpful guidance. This can be found on our website by searching 'Ending a tenancy'.

Christmas Closure

We will be closing for the Christmas holidays at 1pm on Tuesday 24 December. We will re-open on Thursday 2 January at 9am (8.30am for phone calls).

If you need emergency assistance during that time, please call 01403 226000.

Remember, you can access your account anytime at mysaxonweald.com. To ensure you can access your My Saxon Weald account please ensure that you register before we close on Tuesday 24 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 Thursday 2 January.

Deck the halls!

We don't want to stop you from getting in the Christmas spirit, but health and safety still comes first. Here's our checklist:

- Wreaths and decorations hung on doors / door frames
- Battery-powered lights
- Floor-standing decorations / trees
- Mains operated lights
- Musical decorations

It's important to make sure that all decorations are fire retardant.

MySaxonWeald

get c^onnected

It's so much easier online

- Report repairs and book an appointment
- Update your personal information
- Check your account balance
- Make payments



Sign up today @mysaxonweald.com

 The Institute of
Customer Service

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SAXON WEALD

Great homes, building futures

Saxon Weald House, 38-42 Worthing Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1DT
Tel: 01403 226000 Email: info@saxonweald.com www.saxonweald.com