



SAXON
WEALD

Spotlight

The Newsletter for Saxon Weald Residents | Spring 2022



Energy saving tips

How you could save pounds on your fuel bills with a few simple changes to the way you live.



How do we measure up?

A new system of measuring how we are performing.



Good neighbour awards

Is there someone who you'd like to nominate for this fantastic award?

A note from our Chair

I'm Simon and I chair the Board of Saxon Weald. This is the first in a regular series of articles about what the Board does and shares some of our recent decisions that are most likely to affect you. Firstly, what is the Board and what does it do?


Our Board is legally responsible for running Saxon Weald. We set strategy and then support the people who work for the organisation to achieve it. We are also responsible for ensuring the company is run properly and complies with all relevant rules and regulations. We have a great team of people on the Board, including two Saxon Weald customers, together with specialists in finance, property development and all the other skills needed to do our job.

The priorities we agreed when we reviewed our strategy last year are:

- Focus on our customers.
- Invest in our homes.
- Be a great place to work.

We and everyone in Saxon Weald are working hard to achieve those goals.

We have focused during our last couple of board meetings on our customers' experience of Saxon Weald and what we need to do to make it better. We know we have work to do to improve communications and to get our repairs and ground maintenance services up to a better standard.



Budget setting and rent increases have been important recent decisions. They set our income for the coming year and the priorities about how we will spend it. We understand that rent increases are always unwelcome, particularly at a time when the cost of living is rapidly increasing. These increases do, however, help to ensure we have the funds to continue improving our services and quality of our existing homes, and enable us to build more for those who need them. While we have taken the difficult decision to increase rents, we have also set up a fund for those who have been hardest hit. Details on how to apply can be obtained from our Money Matters team. Get in touch by emailing money.matters@saxonweald.com.

Finally, I am keen to hear from you, our customers, about how we are doing. What are we getting right, what could we do better and where do we need to fix things that have gone wrong? Your voice matters so do please get in contact.

Simon Hardwick,
Saxon Weald's Chair of the Board

Welcoming you back

We're thrilled to finally be able to welcome you back to Saxon Weald House. However, please be aware, visits to our office are now by appointment only. If you need to visit us, head over to My SaxonWeald where you can request an appointment online.



Not yet registered for an account? Visit mysaxonweald.com to sign up.

A great place to work

It's the people at Saxon Weald that make us special. In exchange for hard work, we make sure our staff get the training and benefits they deserve, including:

- 27 days annual leave, plus bank holidays
- An excellent pension scheme – with Saxon Weald contributing 6-12%
- 4 x salary life assurance
- A wellbeing plan including flexible working, cash back on day-to-day medical expenses, flu jabs, an employee assistance programme and cycle to work scheme

Check out our available positions at www.saxonweald.com/careers.



Together with Tenants

Last year, we signed up to the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants Charter. The charter sets out what residents can expect from their housing association regardless of where they live, the type of home they live in or who their landlord is.

The next step is to consult with tenants on what the six commitments in the charter mean for us. These consultations will take place by phone call, virtual and face-to-face meetings.

We've had over 100 customers register their interest in getting involved. Your voices will be used to help us improve the services we provide and shape our customer charter.

Find out more about the Together with Tenants Charter here: www.saxonweald.com/your-voice/together-with-tenants



Saxon Weald achieves gold!



We're keen to take a more sustainable approach to the way we do things. So, we're pleased to announce that our office refurbishment recently achieved the SKA Gold accreditation.

Led by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, SKA rating is an environmental assessment method, benchmark, and standard for commercial fitouts. They're made up of more than a hundred 'good practice' measures and cover things such as energy and CO2 emissions, waste, water, materials, pollution, wellbeing, and transport.

For more information about SKA rating, visit: www.rics.org



Grounds maintenance – preparation is key!

Since December, our grounds maintenance contractor, idverde, has been working through their winter plan to get our neighbourhoods ready for the growing season.



As a result, you may have seen operatives from idverde laying mulch bark down across some of our sites. Topping up plant beds with mulch helps with weed control, making it easier to maintain and giving areas a nice, finished look.

They've also been spending time clearing leaves, as well as pruning shrubs and hedges. All trimming of shrubs is done to a suitable height and hedges are cut prior to nesting season. To prevent weeds and moss, operatives have also been using drier days to treat hard standing areas and car parks.

The idverde team will still be working through their plan this month. However, if you notice any areas have been missed or require additional attention after this time, please email saxonweald@idverde.co.uk.



The importance of electrical testing

As your landlord, we are required to conduct electrical maintenance checks every five years to make sure the electrics in your home are safe. Regular checks are the best way to make sure electrical installations are in good working order and spot potential problems before they become a hazard.

What you can expect from us

We will conduct a visual inspection of the electrical installations in your home by checking:

- The electrical intake (where the electricity enters the property)
- The fuse board
- The main protective bonding (which connects pipework with the electrics in a property)
- Any fixtures and fittings, such as light fittings and sockets
- The state of wires and cables

What you can do

If you notice an electrical fault in your property, don't try and fix the issue yourself. Let us know straight away so we can arrange for one of our qualified electricians to attend your property.

Support with energy costs

We understand the recent rise in energy costs will be concerning for many of our customers and could have an impact on household budgets. To help our residents receive as much financial support as possible, we've pulled together some information on financial support schemes you may be eligible for, as well as energy saving tips.

Warm Home Discount Scheme

The Warm Home Discount Scheme could help you save £140 on your electricity bill for the 2021 to 2022 winter period. The money is not paid directly to you, but a one-off discount to your electricity bill between October and March.

Find out more about the scheme by visiting www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme.

Winter Fuel Payment

If you were born on or before 26 September 1955, you could be eligible to receive between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. This is known as a 'Winter Fuel Payment'. For more information visit: www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment.



Please be aware, the deadline for you to make a claim for the winter 2021 to 2022 period is 31 March 2022.

Cold Weather Payment

If the average temperature in your area is recorded or forecast to be below 0° Celcius for seven consecutive days, you may be able to claim a Cold Weather Payment from the government.

Visit www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment to find out more.

Top tips for saving energy and lowering your bills from The Energy Saving Trust:

- Switch off standby: you could save around £40 a year just by turning your appliances off standby mode.
- Turn off lights: switching off your lights when you're not using them or when you leave the room could save £14 a year on your annual energy bills.
- Wash at 30°C: using the 30-degree cycle on your washing machine could save you as much as £10 a year.
- Make the most of your wash load: where possible, only use the washing machine when you have a full load. Reducing your washing machine usage by one run a week could save you an extra £10 a year.

For more information: and handy money-saving tips regarding your energy, please visit our website: www.saxonweald.com/energy-advice



How do we measure up?



The Regulator of Social Housing is creating a new system for assessing how well housing associations are performing. This includes introducing a set of tenant satisfaction measures that all social housing landlords must report on. These measures will:

- Let customers see how well their landlord is performing and compare them to others
- Give the regulator an idea of which landlords need to improve

The regulator has just finished consulting with residents and landlords on what these measures should include. We are now waiting to hear exactly what questions we should be asking and what information we should be reporting. We expect to know by this summer.

We already know that the measures are based on overall satisfaction and five key themes:

- Keeping properties in good repair
- Maintaining building safety
- Respectful and helpful engagement
- Responsible neighbourhood management
- Effective handling of complaints

Why wait?

While we don't yet know the details, we do already collect information on each of these areas. We share much of this information in our annual performance report. To be more transparent, we will start sharing performance information in each edition of Spotlight too, tackling a couple of themes each time. Where we don't currently ask a question that is likely to be in the new measures, we will add this to our survey in the summer once confirmed.

How do we collect information on customer satisfaction?

We run monthly satisfaction surveys via email and text, with every customer surveyed once a year.

It's really important that we have the correct contact details for you, so that you can have your say. Please let us know if your mobile number or email address have changed, or update your details online at mysaxonweald.com



The results

OVERALL
SATISFACTION
(financial year to date)

69%

RESPECTFUL AND HELPFUL ENGAGEMENT

QUESTION

How satisfied are you that your landlord listens to your views and acts upon them?

50% satisfied

(note: around 30% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied)

QUESTION

How satisfied are you that your landlord keeps you informed?

74% satisfied

QUESTION

Do you agree that your landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect?

Question to be added to our surveys from March onwards.

Introducing our new gas partner

In the coming months, we will be starting to use TSG to carry out your boiler servicing on our behalf. Gas servicing is a legal requirement as a landlord to help keep our residents safe in their homes and we carry out nearly 4,000 services a year.



The heat is on!

With fuel bills rising and concern for the environment high on the agenda, we're working on a long-term investment plan to improve the energy efficiency of our homes. We are starting with a number of pilot projects on 35 homes. We'll be trialling different techniques and technologies to see which have the most impact at the best cost.

The first pilot is at Dennis Court in Horsham, where we have seven bungalows with very poor efficiency ratings. The properties will be getting new roofs, together with loft insulation and solar panels. We'll also be adding new external cladding, so the bungalows will look almost new from the outside, while hopefully being much easier to keep warm on the inside.



Dennis Court



Supporting women in trade

We are proud to share that we've recently joined The Women's Trade Network. This is an initiative founded by some of the most well-known organisations in housing and property to increase the representation of women in trade roles.

We have also signed the Women's Trade Network Pledge. This is a commitment to supporting long-term change in the industry by helping to remove barriers, empower and support, as well as increase access to the industry for women.



Scam support

Every year, millions of people in the UK are scammed, and being the victim of one can take a huge toll on your mental health. It's important to remember that it's not your fault and you're not alone.



Victim Support

A free helpline where you can speak to someone if you've been affected by a scam.

T: 0808 16 89 111

www.victimsupport.org.uk

Age UK

You can get free, confidential advice about scams from Age UK.

T: 0800 687 1602 www.ageuk.org.uk

Mind

Information and support on mental health

T: 0300 123 3393 www.mind.org.uk

For more information, head over to our website:
www.saxonweald.com

Looking out for each other

Everyone has a right to live safely in their home, free from abuse and neglect. When our staff are visiting neighbourhoods, at schemes or completing work in your home, they're encouraged to report things that don't seem right.

However, safeguarding is a responsibility we all share. Whether it's your neighbour, relative or friend, looking out for others is something you can do too. If you have any concerns, please get in touch by emailing hello@saxonweald.com, or visit www.anncrafttrust.org for more safeguarding information.



Lifesaving equipment at Gardener House

In September, we celebrated the installation of a public defibrillator at our retirement scheme, Gardener House, bringing the total in the Southwater area to 10.

A defibrillator is a device that gives a high energy electric shock to the heart of someone who is in cardiac arrest. This high energy shock is called defibrillation and is an essential part of trying to save someone's life.

Thanks to funding from Southwater Community First Responders charity, the defibrillator was supplied free of charge and will be maintained by the charity every three months.

We pride ourselves on helping our community and are proud to support the initiative to bring more life saving equipment to the local area.



Community spirit

We're delighted that we were able to pick up our community days again in December.

Kicking off the festive season was a Christmas themed craft afternoon at Ashby Court in Horsham. Joined by members of the team, residents enjoyed the chance to get creative. Together, they made some beautiful crafts, including baubles and knitted Santas.

Carol, a resident at Ashby Court, shared how much the afternoon meant to her: "We had such a lovely afternoon chatting and gossiping, it made my week! I have got some new tree decorations too. It would be lovely if we could do this more often. It means a lot to us to see new people and be free to chat about anything and everything. Thank you."

Thanks to the Horsham Lions and Horsham Matters, we were also able to spread some joy to customers who needed a little extra help over the festive period.

Every year in December, both organisations provide food parcels and gifts for the local community. These parcels help families who are unable to afford some of the basics at Christmas and provide them with the little extras that many of us take for granted.

Saxon Weald staff packed up their cars and spent a day delivering parcels to residents to sprinkle a little bit of Christmas magic.





Money matters

Changes to your rent

Earlier this year, we sent letters to some of our residents outlining changes to rent and service charges. If you receive Universal Credit, don't forget to notify them of any changes on or after Monday 4 April, as this could affect your entitlement. You can do this through your online journal. For further guidance, you can email our Money Matters team at money.matters@saxonweald.com.



My child is going to uni - will this affect my benefits?

If you have a teenager heading off to university, chances are you're wondering how this might impact your finances; especially if you receive child benefit, tax credits and Universal Credit.



So, what do I need to do?

Once your child is studying at higher education, they are no longer classed as your dependant. This means you won't be entitled to child benefit or tax credits for them. You will need to inform the Child Benefit Office and Tax Credit Office that your child is going to university. You'll also need to contact Universal Credit via your online journal or by calling 0800 328 5644.

You could be overpaid child benefit and tax credits if you don't report your child's change in circumstances, and HMRC will reclaim the overpayment back from you.

How will this affect my housing benefit and council tax reduction?

If you receive these, you must let your local council know your child is going to university. As they are no longer considered your dependant, the amount of housing benefit and/or council tax reduction you receive may be impacted.

If you're concerned, contact our Money Matters team:
money.matters@saxonweald.com.



Good neighbour award

Do you have a neighbour who goes above and beyond for your local community? If so, get in touch and let us know!

Email competitions@saxonweald.com with the name of the person you're nominating and why by Friday 29 April. Top prize is a £100 voucher; two runners up will receive a £50 voucher.

T&Cs apply. Head to www.saxonweald.com/news/good-neighbour-award to find out more.



More affordable homes for more people

Here's a round up of some of our new build projects in progress:

New Monks Park, Lancing

Our first homes for affordable rent at New Monks Park in Lancing, are due to handover very soon. This will include a mixture of one and two-bedroom flats and eight, two-bedroom houses. Our first eight shared ownership homes have now all been reserved, with another four, three-bedroom houses due in early 2023. Our remaining homes will then continue to complete in phases until 2025. We look forward to welcoming our first residents into their new homes!



Blenheim Road, Horsham

We're pleased to share that our Blenheim Road development is due to complete this month. 24 garages have been replaced with nine new flats for affordable rent, including three, one-bedroom and six, two-bedroom homes. The new site will provide much needed affordable housing for up to 30 people.



Bennetts Road, Horsham

Our Bennetts Road development is also nearing completion. Once finished it will provide 21 new homes for affordable rent. This will include three, three-bedroom houses and a mixture of one and two-bedroom flats. Some properties will feature private gardens, patios, or balconies, while all residents will benefit from cycle stores, parking spaces, and electrical car charging points.



Page Court, Horsham

The redevelopment of our outdated retirement scheme, Page Court, is progressing well. Working to deliver 48 new homes for affordable rent, the new site will offer a mixture of three and four-bedroom houses and one and two-bedroom flats. This will include two wheelchair accessible flats on the ground floor. These homes are due to complete in September 2022.



Coming soon!



Ecclesden Park, Angmering

Construction is now underway at our upcoming site in Angmering. Built by Barratt Homes, we're working to provide 27 new homes for affordable rent and 26 for shared ownership purchase. This development is being built with sustainability in mind, with all our properties featuring electric car charging points. Keep an eye on our websites and social media channels for more updates in the coming months.



Interested in shared ownership?

A list of our available new homes and resale shared ownership properties can be found on our website: www.wealdliving.com.



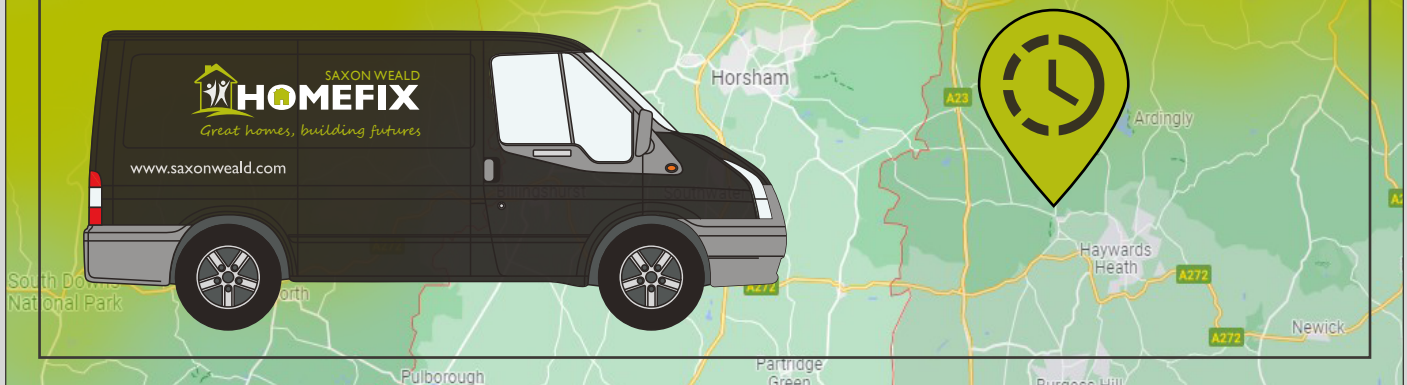
WEALD LIVING

HomeFix Tracker – now available

We understand how frustrating it can be to not know when someone will be attending your property. So, we're excited to introduce HomeFix Tracker.

On the day of your appointment, you'll receive a message with a tracking link. Using Google maps and real-time traffic data, the software allows you to see exactly when we'll be arriving to carry out your repair. Please note, where more than one operative is attending, you will not receive a tracking link, however, you will still receive a message the day before to remind you of your appointment.

To be able to use HomeFix Tracker, head over to mysaxonweald.com to ensure your mobile number is up to date.



Make life easier, get 😊 online!



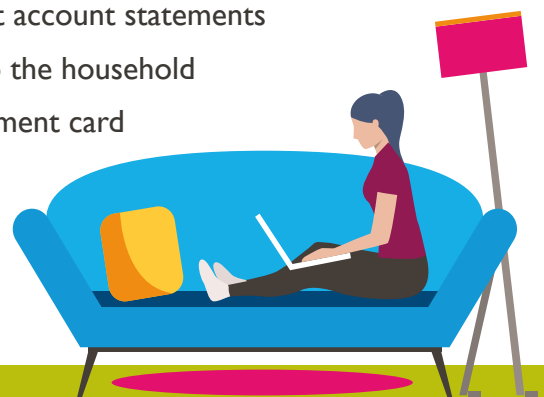
Our easy-to-use, online self-service portals provide secure access to your information and services. They're available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from a desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile.

What can you do once you've registered?

- Make a payment
- Report repairs and book an appointment
- View your rent account and payment history
- Send secure web messages
- View and update your details
- View and print account statements
- Add people to the household
- Request a payment card

Find out how to register for your account and enjoy the benefits of online access here:

www.saxonweald.com/getonline



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