



SAXON
WEALD

Spotlight

The Newsletter for Saxon Weald Residents | Spring / Summer 2019

inside!

Money matters -
Pension credits,
rent changes and
how the 53 week
year may affect you

Gardening
competition - You
could win £50!

Latest advice
about living in
and maintaining
your home



Global Gruffalo latest news...

From the Paris marathon to
Newcastle United F.C. to The
Shard and more...



A fine romance...

Meet the couple who
found love in their 80s at
Highwood Mill



HomeFix turns 10...

John B and John W look back
at how our maintenance
service has grown



Welcome to our new look Spotlight

It's been almost a year since I became Saxon Weald's new Chief Executive and already so much has changed throughout the business.

At the end of 2018, we converted from a limited company to a charitable Community Benefit Society. At the same time, we said goodbye to our wheat sheaf logo of almost 20 years and welcomed a fresh new look to see us into the new year.

2019 is already proving to be an exciting one. In February we celebrated 10 years in action for our HomeFix repairs service. We're also proud to be showing our support for Horsham Council this year by sponsoring a Global Gruffalo in Horsham's Year of Culture.

I've been lucky enough to see several of our developments take shape in recent months, including Winterton Square in Horsham. The development consists of 65 one and two-bedroom homes, including 20 for affordable rent.

Our new vision 'great homes, building futures' is at the heart of everything we do at Saxon Weald, and I look forward to seeing how Saxon Weald can help more families to build their futures this year.

Steven Dennis,

Chief Executive

Helping hands at Age UK



As part of our ongoing series of community projects, Saxon Weald recently lent a helping hand to Age UK's Lavinia House.

Thanks to a generous donation of paint from Concept Design Solutions, and some willing volunteers from across the business, we were able to freshen up various parts of the club that needed a little TLC. The team even spent some time holding activity sessions for the day club members, including musical bingo, flower arranging, and Valentine's crafts.

Sonia Morgan, CEO of Age UK Horsham District was delighted with the outcome of the day.

"You guys were truly amazing and we want to thank you for everything you did for us. Working in the garden, doing handy tasks around the place, painting the kitchen and working with our club members made a difference to us all, and helps even more older people to love later life."

A big thank you to all the volunteers, suppliers and club staff for making the day possible.

A flying start for fundraising

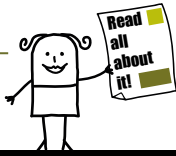
2019 has already been a busy year when it comes to our charity fundraising.

So far, we've supported a number of Saxon Weald staff members in their charitable activities, including HomeFix operative Liam who travelled to Kenya in January to help build two playgrounds for children recovering from trauma in Kenyan rescue centres. We've also raised money for The Sussex Beacon, as Team Pure KLAS (made up of Katie from Finance, Les from Housing, Alex from IT and our very own Chief Exec, Steve) took on the Brighton half marathon, achieving an impressive £1,501 for the charity!

We look forward to supporting more of our staff and more charities as the year goes on.



Our news



A milestone reached and a new look for the future

Late last year, we announced that Saxon Weald was getting a makeover, and we're pleased to say that our fresh new look was officially introduced in January.

To minimise costs, our in-house marketing team worked hard to craft a new logo and branding that represents our values and company vision. It's been exciting to see this new look gradually roll out across our website, social media pages and stationary, as well as on our signage around local neighbourhoods and out and about on our HomeFix vans.

While January saw us unveil our new branding, the celebrations didn't stop there, as HomeFix turned 10 at the start of February. Launching as a team of 20 in 2009, HomeFix has grown hugely over the last decade. The now 100 strong team of internal staff and operatives provide a variety of services to our residents, including plumbing, electrical, gas services, and carpentry.

Of the 70 operatives within the team today, two have been with HomeFix from the start, and they're both called John! We asked both Johns about their time working in HomeFix over the last 10 years.

John W: "The successful venture into the repairs service has led to us bringing in more operatives to reduce the reliance on contractors and has seen levels of service improve."

John B: "HomeFix has become a professional, well run arm of the company. Well trained staff has resulted in more qualified team members and management."

We're very proud of this milestone and look forward to another 10 years of excellent service for our customers.



The Gruffalo goes gallivanting

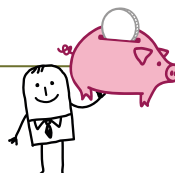
In support of Horsham District Year of Culture 2019, and the patron of the year, Julia Donaldson CBE, we've sponsored one of just 20 Global Gruffalos who have left the woods behind to travel the world on a year-long adventure.

Our Gruffalo has been lucky enough to go 'global' already, after recently soaking up the sun on a trip to Sri Lanka, taking in the sites from the top of the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, posing as the marathon mascot in Brighton and Paris, as well as sight-seeing in Seville. He's also nipped to Newcastle and even been up to the top of The Shard in London!

We look forward to seeing where he ventures to next...



MONEY matters



Pension credit Am I still eligible?



After 15 May 2019, most mixed age couples (where one person is of state pension age and the other is below) will have to claim Universal Credit, as pension credit and pension age housing benefit will only apply to couples where both have reached pensionable age.

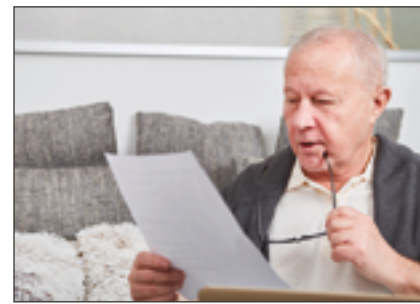
Universal Credit operates on monthly payments, and to eligible mixed age couples, this will now be worth around £499 per month.

If you're in a mixed age couple and already claim pension age benefits, you don't need to do anything; you'll continue to receive this benefit after 15 May 2019, so long as your circumstances remain the same.

If you're in a mixed age couple and don't currently receive pension age benefits, make sure you check if you're eligible before 15 May 2019, to avoid missing out on up to £130 per week.

Find out more by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit>.

Changes to your rent



Earlier this year, we sent out letters to many residents, outlining changes to rent and service charges.

If you receive Universal Credit, don't forget to tell them about any changes to your costs as this could affect your entitlement. Whether your rent has increased or decreased, it's your responsibility to report it.

Simply log into your Universal Credit account online and find the action in your 'to-do' list. This should have appeared in early April, prompting you to answer some questions about any changes to your rent and service charges. No prompt? No problem. You can add a note to your journal detailing your new amount.

If you don't have access to the internet at home, you can access your Universal Credit account for free at your local job centre or library.

For more information or advice on Universal Credit, contact our Money Matters advisers at moneymatters@saxonweald.com.

53-week rent year - will this affect me?

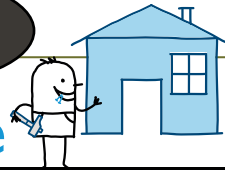
There are 53 Mondays in this financial year, rather than the usual 52, meaning 53 weeks' rent is due.

- If you pay weekly, you will simply have to pay your usual amount, but you will be doing it one extra time this year.
- If you pay by direct debit, you don't need to do anything as we will have worked out the correct amount for you.
- If you pay monthly by ways other than direct debit, you will need to amend the amount you pay.

If you usually calculate the amount to pay by multiplying your weekly rent by 52 and then dividing by 12, you will need to change this. To work out the right amount, multiply your weekly rent by 53 before dividing by 12 as usual.

Example: weekly rent of £70: £70 x 53 weeks / 12 months = £309.17 per month





LIVING in your home

Getting permission

Over time, we understand that you may want to make alterations to your home. However, it's really important that you get our permission before you make any changes. Any alterations will need to be removed, and the property restored to its original condition, before the end of your tenancy.

CAT FLAPS

For us to grant permission for you to install a cat flap, you'll need to make sure your tenancy allows you to keep pets in your home. The cat flap will also need to lead to an outside space, be fitted to a wooden door or UPVC panel, and carried out by an insured tradesperson. Please be aware that some doors cannot have a cat flap installed for fire safety reasons.



SATELLITE DISH

Before we agree to the installation of a satellite dish, there is a possibility that you may require planning permission from your local council. Be sure to read their guidelines to see what you need to consider. We will also need to ensure that there are no objections from your surrounding neighbours and works must be carried out by a competent, insured tradesperson.



SHED

You'll need to ask our permission before you put a shed up in your garden. The shed must be a temporary structure, no larger than 8' x 6' (2.4m x 2m) and cannot be put up in communal gardens. We'll need to check the size of your garden as well as where you intend to put the shed, to make sure it doesn't restrict access to your property when we need to carry out maintenance and repairs.



THERE'S MORE...

You will also need to get our permission if you're thinking of getting a pet, having a lodger or running a business from your home. Permissions for these can be requested via your [My SaxonWeald](#) account. For more information, visit the permissions section of our website.



Green fingers at the ready

It's competition time...

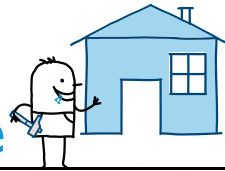
First prize - £50 voucher to spend at your local garden centre.

Whether it's perfectly pruned hedges, a fruitful allotment or beautiful blooms, we want to see your gardens!

If you have a garden you're proud of, simply send a photo to pr@saxonweald.com or post it to us at Saxon Weald House, 38-42 Worthing Road, Horsham, RH12 1DT, for your chance to win a garden centre voucher of your choice*.

*Terms and conditions apply. The closing date for entries is Monday 1 July 2019. Only one entry per household. Entrants must be Saxon Weald residents. Employees of Saxon Weald are not permitted to enter. The winner will be chosen by Saxon Weald staff and notified by telephone, email or in writing within four weeks of the closing date. Photos sent in will not be returned. By entering, entrants automatically agree to their name being published online or in future editions of Spotlight.

LIVING in your home



Checking the condition of your home

Every five years, surveyors from our Asset Management team carry out a stock condition survey to check the condition of your home. This information helps us plan future maintenance work. On average, we complete surveys on 20% of our properties each year.



What is a stock condition survey?

Lasting around 30 minutes, they involve a visual inspection of the inside and outside of the property, including the condition of your kitchen, bathrooms, windows, doors and roof.

Why do Saxon Weald need to do them?

We have over 6500 properties built in different ways, from lots of different materials. The survey helps us plan for future maintenance and improvement programmes over the next five to 30 years.

What will Saxon Weald do with the data?

The data collected will be used to plan future replacements and modernisations to your home. The surveys focus on large scale works needed to the property and won't collect any information about outstanding repairs required. These will need to be reported in the usual way.

What can I do to prepare?

To ensure the survey can be carried out as quickly and conveniently as possible, please make sure the surveyor can access all areas of your home, including the loft if you have one. Photos will be taken during the inspection to update our records, however please be assured that the surveyor will only be capturing the renewable elements of your home and not your personal effects.

Will I get an appointment?

We will usually write to you with an appointment, however, as our surveyors work in geographical areas, they may knock on your door after visiting other properties. This helps us keep our costs down. All our staff carry photographic ID which you can ask to see before allowing them into your home. If it's not a convenient time, please let them know and we'll be in touch to arrange a more suitable visit.

For more information or to arrange a survey of your home, email asset.management@saxonweald.com.

Take the plunge!

Some of the most common repairs calls we receive are about blocked



toilets and sinks. However these jobs usually fall under the list of tenant responsibilities. To help you tackle them yourselves here's a quick guide...

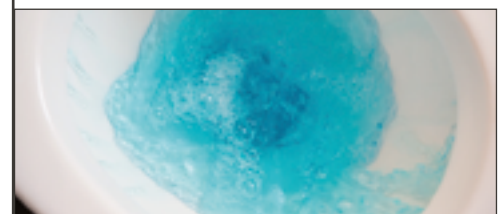
...IN YOUR SINK:

Block the overflow with wet absorbent towel. Plunge the plug hole with a plunger to build pressure; often this is enough to unblock the sink. If the sink still isn't draining, put a bucket under the U-bend in the cupboard below. Remove the U-bend, clear any blockages from it, and put it back on.

...IN YOUR TOILET:

Pop an old towel around the base of the toilet to catch splashes, and pump the toilet with a rodding stick to build pressure. Flush part way through and keep rodding throughout. Failing this, try with a plunger. Flush again to see if it has cleared.

If blockages persist despite trying to clear it yourself, it's time to call HomeFix. How-To videos for common repairs can be found in the 'repairs' section of our website.



Safety in your home

The safety of our residents is incredibly important to us. As a landlord, we are required by law to carry out some basic safety checks in your home. There are also a number of ways that you can help us to keep your home a safe haven.

1. GAS SAFETY

- Ensure gas appliances that belong to you are properly maintained
- Respond promptly when we contact you regarding annual inspections of gas appliances in your home
- Allow access to our engineers when annual inspections are due



2. SOLID FUEL SAFETY

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous gas that's produced when carbon fuels don't burn completely. It has no taste, smell or colour and can kill without warning in a few hours. Here's a few ways that you can help to protect yourself from carbon monoxide.

- Know the signs of CO poisoning (severe headaches, nausea, stomach and chest pains, drowsiness, confusion, memory loss, and/or dizziness)



- If an appliance has soot or staining on or around it, please report it
- Check the flames in your appliance – if they're orange or yellow instead of blue, report it
- Do not block vents as these are needed to allow enough fresh air into the room - similarly, do not block flues or chimneys
- Do not install any gas, oil or solid fuel heating appliances without our written permission
- Do not use portable LPG heaters

3. WATER SAFETY

Domestic hot and cold-water systems provide an ideal environment for legionella bacteria to grow. The risk of contracting legionnaires' disease (a pneumonia-like illness caused by the inhalation of small droplets of contaminated water containing the legionella bacteria) can be reduced by taking the following steps:

- Run all taps and showers in your home at least once a week
- If you are away from home for more than a week, run your taps through for at least five minutes before using them
- Clean your shower head every six months by descaling and disinfecting it (remember to follow the instructions carefully on any de-scaling solution)



Support from Southern Water

If your water bills add up to 3% of your household income, or you're claiming pension credits, you could be eligible for Southern Water's Essentials tariff. This could mean a discount of up to 20% on your water bills.

Southern Water offer this as well as lots of other support for those who may need help managing their water account, such as help with meter reads, water saving home visits, and large print or braille. To find out more, head to www.southernwater.co.uk/services-we-offer:





Wedding bells

We'd like to say a huge congratulations to two of our residents, Michael and Margaret, who tied the knot earlier this year.

Their union is made extra special by the fact they met and fell in love at Highwood Mill, our extra care scheme in Horsham.

Their story has touched the hearts of us all at Saxon Weald, and we wish them many happy years together.

'Paws' for thought at Churchill House

Churchill House in Southampton recently held a coffee morning to raise money for Guide Dogs for the blind.



Lin, a lady who benefits greatly from having a guide dog, came along with members of the charity, John and Lee, and a couple of their furry friends, to explain the importance of their work.

The morning gave residents and staff a real insight into what the charity does for people living with blindness and partial sight, and through a raffle they raised an impressive £176.38 for the charity.

Find out more by visiting www.guidedogs.org.uk.

Show time

A home cinema has been installed at Bentley Grange, thanks to a £6,200 grant from the National Lottery Community Fund.

Film and sound equipment, blackout blinds and a two-year license have created the residents' very own cinema in the lounge. They're looking forward to their grand film opening!



Support when you need it

Over 250 residents have benefited from the help of our devoted floating support workers. Our team are dedicated to alleviating residents' stress by assisting with things like managing household bills, obtaining benefits and filling in forms.

Recently we have supported two separate residents, who had their benefits stopped as they were unable to continue the claim process without support. Mrs S wrote to the team to express her appreciation: "Thank you so much for your kindness and great generosity in everything you did for us and continue to do. Your efforts to make difficult times easier are always appreciated."

If you think that the short-term help of our friendly floating support team could benefit you, contact Julia Taylor-Waller on 07595 651415, or Elaine Sayers on 07595 651519.



A spruce up at Osmund Court

A year of hard work has finally paid off as a fantastic new look for Osmund Court, our extra care scheme in Billingshurst, was unveiled in April.

After consulting residents, we fitted new curtains and flooring, and replaced the furniture in the communal lounge area of the scheme.

The refurb has freshened up the lounge no end, revealing a bright, comfortable and modern living area for residents to enjoy.

Resident, Mrs Carver, is delighted with the results: "It looks really fresh and modern. I love the different colours and it makes us want to sit in the lounge all the time."



Understanding extra care

If you're in need of some extra support with day-to-day living, but still want to live independently in a home of your own, extra care could be an ideal solution.

The benefits of extra care include:

- Maintaining your independence
- Flexible care as and when you need it
- Assistance in the event of an emergency
- A sense of community and the chance to make friends

Our extra care apartments are available to both rent and buy. If you're interested in purchasing, please visit www.wealdliving.com to view our available homes.

If you're interested in renting, the process will vary depending on the scheme you're interested in. For more information and advice, please fill out an enquiry form on our website or give a member of our customer support team a call on 01403 226000.



Serenading from the Sandgate Singers

Back by popular demand, members of the Sandgate Singers community choir recently travelled from Storrington for the fourth time to provide residents of Leggyfield Court with musical entertainment.

Sharing their vocal delights since the 1980's, this community choir can turn their voices to a varied catalogue of music.

Songs were sung from the period of the First World War to commemorate those who fought, as well as popular tunes from the past, which evoked memories of childhood favourites. A few modern songs were also thrown in, which had residents' feet tapping along!

A trip to the theatre

The residents of our Southampton schemes are the lucky recipients of free theatre trips kindly arranged by The Rotary Club. From transport to tickets, and even an ice cream during the interval, the club ensures the full works are included! The trip is a lovely occasion that's put on every year and thoroughly enjoyed by many residents across our Southampton schemes.





Who presses your buttons?

Smoke alarms are the easiest way to alert you and your family to the danger of fire within your home.

To keep your smoke alarm in good working order, you should:

- Change the batteries once a year (unless it's a ten-year alarm)
- Test it every six months by pressing the test button until the alarm sounds (we suggest doing this when the clocks change)
- Clean your smoke alarm when you test it to get rid of any dust or insects that have collected (you can do this using the soft brush of a vacuum cleaner)

*Remember, working smoke alarms save lives.
Don't neglect yours!*

Let's scrap fly-tipping

We often receive reports of people fly-tipping their unwanted belongings outside their home, in bin stores or garage blocks.

What is fly-tipping?

Fly tipping is the illegal dumping of waste and can be anything from a single bag of rubbish to large items of furniture.

What should I do if I see someone fly-tipping?

If you see someone fly-tipping in your neighbourhood, make note of the location, time and date, as well as the type of rubbish being dumped. If it is on Saxon Weald land, please contact us with the details. This will be reported to our Estate Improvement Manager who will investigate further. If it is on public land, please report it to your local council.

How should I dispose of my waste correctly?

Saxon Weald does not offer a collection service. Items that are fly-tipped and in need of collection could lead to an increase in costs to residents. Only bagged waste should be placed in communal bin stores to avoid waste collections being refused by the council due to contamination. Most larger items of household waste can be taken to a local waste and recycling site free of charge. Find out more by visiting www.gov.uk/recycling-collections.



Complaints summary

Saxon Weald encourages all types of feedback and is always keen to use this information to make service improvements for our customers. In 2018/19, we received and responded to 452 expressions of dissatisfaction.

Our aim is to resolve as many complaints as possible at this first stage of the process. We're pleased to say that last year only 18 of these expressions of dissatisfaction needed a formal response.

We aim to learn from mistakes and will be sharing a more detailed review of complaints in our annual report published in September.



Contemporary design, prime locations, affordable prices

Do you dream of owning your own home? We have a range of brand-new homes across West Sussex, available to purchase on a shared ownership basis.

If you enjoy the buzz of town centre living and you're looking for an affordable way of getting on the property ladder, Alden Court could be the answer. Just launched, these stylish one and two-bedroom homes are a stone's throw away from Horsham's wide range of shops, bars, restaurants and leisure facilities - the perfect location for those who relish convenience and modern living.

Looking for somewhere with great transport links? We still have a number of two-bedroom homes available at our Winterton Square development, also in Horsham. Located just moments from Horsham train station, these brand-new apartments and chalet bungalows are ideal for commuters and culture lovers alike.

To purchase one of our shared ownership homes, you'll need to register with your local Help to Buy agent.

Visit www.helptobuyese.org.uk.

To view our range of available properties, visit www.wealdliving.com for more information.

Keep an eye out for updates on our latest development, Saxon Mills in Hassocks. Offering a selection of stunning brand-new two and three-bedroom homes, this ideally located development is due for completion late summer 2019.



Computer generated image of new properties at Alden Court, Horsham



Completed properties at Winterton Square, Horsham



Coming soon: A selection of new homes in the commuter village of Hassocks

Owning your own home could be more affordable than you think...

Shared ownership provides a stepping stone to getting yourself on the property ladder. It allows you to buy a share in a property and pay rent on the rest, meaning you'll need a much smaller deposit, and often works out cheaper than private renting alone.

What are the benefits?

- You'll own part of your own home, rather than paying rent with no return
- Your monthly payments can often work out cheaper than private renting
- You can buy more shares in your home as your financial circumstances improve
- You only buy what you can afford so you don't overstretch yourself financially

Interested in one of our shared ownership homes?

Find out if you're eligible and register your details at www.helptobuyese.org.uk.



WEALD Living

by Saxon Weald



Springing into summer

With the better weather just around the corner, our grounds maintenance contractor is gearing up to head out into our neighbourhoods and tend to the communal areas of our properties. This will include:

- Grass and hedge cutting
- Weed killing
- Plant bedding and maintenance
- Leaf clearing

The service charge you pay reflects the grounds maintenance you have on the estate you live in. It's also worth noting that many grass verges are the responsibility of local Highways teams, and in those cases, you may need to refer to your local council.

Fancy getting your fingers green? Here's a few things you do to get your garden in shape:

- Tidy up flower beds and borders, removing leaves and debris that has collected during winter
- Weed all flower beds and between paving slabs
- Plant up pots to add a splash of colour – why not try pansies or geraniums?
- Refresh and nourish soil by adding compost
- Plant seeds for vegetables - perhaps runner beans, radishes or tomatoes



Are you a keen gardener?

Don't forget to enter our garden competition for your chance to win a £50 garden centre voucher of your choice. See page 5 for details.



MySaxonWeald.com

Not yet signed up to My SaxonWeald?

Join thousands of customers enjoying the convenience of accessing our services online, available 24/7 and accessible on desktops and on mobile.

By registering for My SaxonWeald you'll be able to:

- View your rent account
- Make a payment
- Report a repair and make an appointment
- View and update your details
- View and print account statements



Find out more and register today at mysaxonweald.com



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