



SAXON
WEALD

Spotlight

The Newsletter for Saxon Weald Residents | Summer 2020

Special edition

Keeping you in the loop with our latest news, service updates and support as we all navigate this difficult period.



Supporting you

We're all in this together. A guide to some help that's available should you need it.



Lockdown lowdown

An update on what's been going on with our services since we've had to work under the Covid-19 restrictions.



Tips from our homes to yours

Some of the things we've been doing to keep us busy and entertained while staying at home

A word from our Chief Executive

What extraordinary and unprecedented times we are living through, with the Coronavirus pandemic changing much of what we consider normal and disrupting our lives and behaviours like never before.



As the impact of the virus continues, here at Saxon Weald we are focussing on what matters most – keeping you safe in your home and our staff safe while they work. As you can see in the update on page 3, many of our staff have continued working throughout the lockdown period. This has meant essential services have been kept running. My thanks to all Saxon Weald staff for their dedication and hard work.

Now, as the lock down is gradually eased, we are looking to restore services back to where they were. We will do so only if it is safe for both you and our staff. Inevitably, there will be delays to some things. There will be a backlog of work to get through that has built up over the last few months. The contractors and suppliers that we rely on will also have to get back up to speed. Of course, this all assumes that the country continues to recover.

I want to thank you for your patience. The vast majority of our customers have been understanding and supportive of what we have had to do, and appreciative of the services we have been able to provide. Your kind words have meant so much to our staff who have been doing their best in very challenging circumstances.

We will continue to do what we believe is right, following the guidance and advice set out by the Government. I hope you and your families stay safe and well as we navigate our way through this most demanding of times.

With best wishes,

Steven Dennis,

Chief Executive



Meet our contractors

Many of our customers will be aware that we've recently renewed our cleaning contract with Cleanscapes, and partnered with a new grounds maintenance contractor, idverde.

idverde is Europe's leading provider of grounds maintenance services. Operations Manager for idverde, Darren Pillar, said: "We are looking forward to starting our partnership with Saxon Weald and are committed to providing a great service which is tailored to the organisation and its residents."

We'd like to say a big thank you to all our contractors who've been working hard to keep the services they provide to our customers running, especially the engineers and operatives out and about in our schemes. We're aware there's been some delay to our services, so we'd also like to say thank you to you, our customers, for your patience and understanding. We're working with our contractors to resolve backlogs as quickly as possible, while facing the challenges of Coronavirus.

Saxon Weald are continuously working with our contractors to improve the services our customers receive. Keep an eye out for updates on digital services that will be available soon...



The lockdown on lockdown



Lockdown has of course changed what we can do, but many of our staff have been working away to keep essential services running.

Customer support

Thanks to some hastily bought laptops and a bank of mobile phones, our customer support team have been happily answering your enquiries from home. They have been dealing with around 1000 enquiries a week (and rising). The best way to contact us is by email at hello@saxonweald.com or via secure web message using your mysaxonweald account. If you need to phone us, call 01403 226000 and leave a message. We will get back to you as soon as we can.

HomeFix



A determined band of HomeFix operatives have been working throughout lockdown to fix emergency repairs. We've used social distancing measures and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep everybody safe. We have also been carrying out gas safety checks as these are required by law to keep your home safe.

Since 10 May, we have been reviewing how to reintroduce the rest of our repairs service safely. Challenges include getting enough PPE, getting access to supplies and fittings and having enough staff available (some are shielding due to health issues while others have childcare commitments while schools are closed). We have started doing repairs in communal areas, external jobs and work in empty properties, as well as catching up on all the jobs that were cancelled during lockdown. We hope to resume day to day repairs by 22 June. You will only be able to book repairs online to start with, so make sure you are registered at mySaxonWeald.com. We'll let you know as soon as we can confirm this, so make sure we have your email address.

Retirement and extra care housing



Our housing team have been very busy throughout lockdown, making sure our most vulnerable customers have the support they need. In fact, they have made over 4000 calls! We have had to close restaurants in our extra care schemes, so managers have been helping out with delivering meals to residents' flats to make sure no one goes without.

Grounds maintenance

Our grounds maintenance contractors are still out working,

but things have been taking a bit longer than usual. This is because they have had to work alone, rather than their usual pairs.

Money matters



Our money advice teams have been exceptionally busy helping those who have been affected financially by the crisis. If you are worried about being able to pay your rent and bills, or have lost income and need advice, email moneymatters@saxonweald.com.

Lettings

The Government have relaxed the rules on moving home, so we are now able to let our empty homes, albeit with some new safety systems in place. Most of our homes are let through the relevant local authority, so contact your council if you want to move home. If you want to move to retirement housing, you can apply to us direct. There is an application form on our website or contact hello@saxonweald.com.

Saxon Weald House

Our head office remains closed as we follow Government advice to work from home wherever possible. We are still receiving post, but please email instead if you can.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work our way back to business as usual.

Meet Michael Chinn

At the beginning of April we welcomed Michael Chinn as our new Executive Director – Resources, after the retirement of Norman Hill. Despite not meeting his colleagues face to face due to the government's lockdown guidance, Michael has been getting to know them and fellow Board members through Skype video chats and emails.

Michael has a firm background in housing and worked previously as Director of Finance & Resources at Croydon Churches Housing Association, is Board member at Gateway Housing association, is co-opted onto the Board of Eldon Housing, and has held other roles in the housing sector.

Michael says "It's a bit unusual to start a new role from the comfort of my own home. Thankfully I was able to meet some of my colleagues before I officially joined and I'm looking forward to lockdown easing so I can meet some more people...and for the pubs to open! How everyone at Saxon Weald has coped with the impact of Covid-19 and kept our essential services going is incredible – it really shows that an organisation is made up of the people."



Wash your hands of coronavirus scams

Friends Against Scams aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams.

STOP. Be aware of people offering or selling:

- Virus testing kits
- Vaccines or miracle cures – there is currently no vaccine or cure.
- Overpriced or fake goods to protect yourself from coronavirus such as anti-bacterial products.
- Shopping or medication collection services.
- Home decontamination services.

CHALLENGE. Question communications and encourage others to do the same.

- Don't be rushed into making a decision. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Only buy from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information.
- Don't assume everyone is genuine. It's okay to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you. If in doubt, speak to someone you trust.
- If someone claims to represent a charity, ask them for ID. and be suspicious of requests for money up front.

Be a good Friend, help to protect your family, friends and neighbours from scams.

Read it.
Share it.
Prevent it.

#ScamAware
#Coronavirus



PROTECT. Contact:

If you think you have been scammed, contact your bank first.

For advice on scams, call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0808 223 11 33**.

To report a scam, call Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040**.

**NATIONAL
TRADING
STANDARDS**
Scams Team

To learn more about different types of scams, visit: www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk

Thank you for your support!

The last few months have been incredibly challenging for us all, but the support and feedback we've received from our customers has kept us going.

"Thank you for the telephone calls to us, which show that you care about your tenants."

Mr R

"I was very touched to receive the email asking if my husband and I needed any help of any kind. It was so kind of you to find the time and care to send emails to all of us who are being sheltered due to age and/or illness."

Ms B

"At the start of lock down I received a telephone call from Sam. He was very kind and ensured I was ok and could get shopping etc. Thank you for the support."

Ms J



Social distancing and lockdown rules have been particularly challenging for residents living in our retirement schemes. We'd like to thank Tufnell Primary School in Bognor Regis for sending a fabulous selection of artwork to Abbotswood, our extra care scheme in Rustington, and putting a smile on our residents' faces.



Progress at Page Court

Work should be starting in September to demolish our old retirement scheme, Page Court in Horsham. We are replacing the 42 out-dated bedsits with 48 new homes for affordable rent. There will be a mixture of one, two and three-bedroom properties.

The development should be ready by late summer 2022. It forms part of our partnership with Horsham District Council to provide 84 affordable homes over four small sites in and around Horsham town.

Update on Bennetts Road

Demolition of six of our existing properties at Bennetts Road in Horsham will begin this month, making way for a range of brand-new homes for affordable rent.

Anticipated to take approximately 15 months to complete, the new site will consist of three three-bedroom houses, 14 two-bedroom flats and four one-bedroom flats.

The 21 new properties will have the potential to provide 71 people with much needed affordable housing.



Lockdown tips from us to you

With all of us spending more time at home than ever, we thought we'd share with you some of our favourite lockdown ways to keep ourselves amused. From activities for the youngsters to family fun, keeping our older friends and relatives amused and even chill out aquariums... there's still plenty to do at home.

GREAT FOR KIDS



You don't have to be a scout to join in with the fun at Discover The Great Indoors with the Scouts Association. There's loads of free activities to inspire your youngsters and keep them learning and having fun at home. From designing your own football shirt, to an "I spy something that flies" game, there's a whole range of things to keep them occupied, while learning new skills. Find out more at www.scouts.org.uk/the-great-indoors

GREAT FOR GROWN UPS



If you love the theatre The National Theatre has a treat for you. Since lockdown started they've been streaming free world-class theatre on YouTube. A new full-length play is released every Thursday. To get your fill visit [Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search "National Theatre"

GREAT TO CHILL OUT



If you want a break from all the action, there's nothing more relaxing than watching fish. But for something a little different you could immerse yourself in an experience with sharks and turtles too! This live underwater cam is beneath the Frying Pan Tower, 34 miles off the coast of Cape Fear, North Carolina. Get your sea-life fix here: www.explore.org/livecams/sharks/shark-cam

GREAT FOR EVERYONE

Why not take up or resume a hobby?



One of our IT team has been busy with her needle and thread, making a beautiful "lockdown quilt."

But if this is a bit too ambitious for you, why not try cross-stitch, adult colouring books, or even just start doing crosswords or word search puzzles?

GREAT FOR FAMILIES

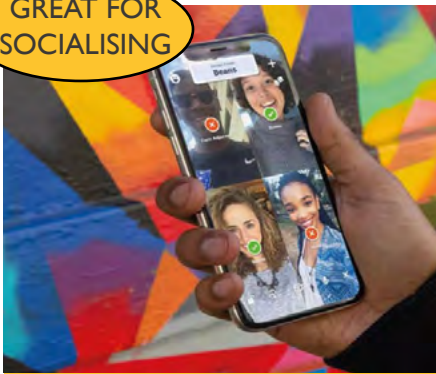


WIN A PRIZE

Crazy golf challenge anyone? One of our colleagues made this course in their garden using all manner of objects as obstacles. No garden? You could do it in the living room, but make sure to use a soft ball / ping pong ball and not a real golf ball!

Can anyone make a better one? Send us your pictures to pr@saxonweald.com and the best will win a £10 prize voucher!

GREAT FOR SOCIALISING



The current lockdown may have put a hold on our usual social get togethers, but there's still plenty of ways to keep in touch with our nearest and dearest.

The Independent has compiled a list of the best apps to play games and have fun with friends and family during this time. Go to: <http://ow.ly/cFqP50zWjUr>

Learn how to touch type

GREAT NEW SKILL

If you or your young ones have got some time on your hands why not put your fingers through their paces and learn how to touch type?

The Typing Club has a range of fun lessons with four levels to play. Just go to www.typingclub.com

GREAT NON SCREEN STUFF activities to do at home



Looking for some non-screen activities for the kids to do whilst they're home? Pobble has put together a list of 25 fun ideas to choose from. Find out more here: www.pobble.com/home-learning-resources

GREAT FOR KIDS



Set up a "treat shop" for the children with a range of 'healthy' snacks of fruit and cheese, and 'naughty' treats of sweets, cakes and biscuits. The treats are priced higher depending on the naughtiness. Children earn money to spend in the shop for being good, doing their lessons and listening well and can then spend the money in the shop. Make sure the opening times in the shop are limited!

Chill out with some top films

GREAT MOVIES

Staying at home isn't all that bad if you've got a good series or list of movies to binge on! If you're struggling to decide on what to watch, check out WIRED UK's top 44 films on Netflix right now. www.wired.co.uk/article/best-films-on-netflix-uk

GREAT FOR EVERYONE



Doing a jigsaw puzzle can while away many an hour, as well as keeping the mind engaged and active. Why not treat a child, friend or relative to a surprise gift? The Works has a wide range of puzzles to choose from: www.theworks.co.uk/c/toys-games/jigsaws

Coronavirus – support services

Anyone can reach a crisis point, and during this exceptionally challenging time, it's more important than ever to know that there are services available to support you.

Samaritans – A safe place to talk

www.samaritans.org
Tel: 116 123

Crisis – Homelessness

www.crisis.org.uk
Tel: 0300 636 1967

The Trussell Trust – Local foodbanks

www.trusselltrust.org
Tel: 01722 580180

Domestic abuse

Please be aware that the current government guidance on staying at home as a result of Coronavirus does not apply if you need to leave your home to escape domestic abuse.

Women's Aid

www.womensaid.org.uk
Tel: 0808 2000 247

Men's Advice Line –

www.mensadvice.org.uk
Tel: 0808 801 0327

Financial support and benefits

A range of extra support and measures are in place to help workers, benefit claimants and businesses that have been affected by Coronavirus.

To find out more go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus

MySaxon Weald

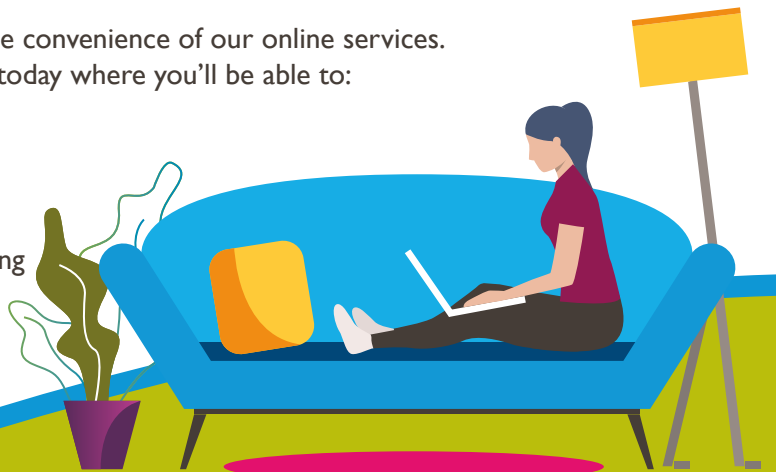
get connected

It's so much easier online

Accessible on your desktop, tablet or mobile, and available online 24 hours a day, My SaxonWeald is the easiest way to manage your account on the go.

Thousands of customers are already enjoying the convenience of our online services. Not yet registered? Sign up to My SaxonWeald today where you'll be able to:

- Check your rent balance
- Make payments
- Report repairs and change your repair booking
(When we re-open our repairs service)
- Request permission to have a lodger, keep a pet or run a business from home
- Send us a secure message



Find out more at mysaxonweald.com

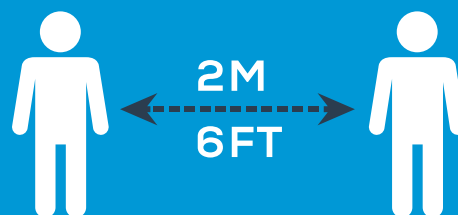
Social distancing

We've recently been contacted by several residents who are concerned about people not complying with social distancing.

Please be aware that while we hope all our residents are following the government's guidelines, Saxon Weald are not able to manage people who ignore them.

The government has advised that the Police have the authority to enforce social distancing where necessary, and members of the public who don't adhere to the guidelines could face hefty fines.

More information can be found on the Sussex or Hampshire Police websites where you can report any breaches of the social distancing measures in place.



HAMPSHIRE
CONSTABULARY

www.hampshire.police.uk



Sussex Police

www.sussex.police.uk



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