



SAXON
WEALD

Spotlight

The newsletter for Saxon Weald residents | Winter 2023



Winter home top tips

Our guide to staying safe and warm in your home this winter



Gorgeous gardens

Congratulations to the worthy winners of our gardening competition



Fraud awareness

Some of the scams doing the rounds and advice on what to do and how to avoid them



A note from our Chair

The first Customer Task and Finish Group recently reported to the Board about the quality of repairs by HomeFix. Thank you to the 70+ customers who expressed an interest in contributing to this and future projects, particularly to the six who worked so hard in this first group.

Their report contained some helpful recommendations, and we will be implementing:

- A focus on quality as part of our post-completion inspection process
- A new process for customers dissatisfied with a repair
- A choice of materials or parts where possible. For example, wall tiles and paint colours. We will continue to match replacement kitchen doors and drawer fronts with existing ones if we can.

A new customer strategy for Saxon Weald was approved at our last board meeting. You can find this on our website: www.saxonweald.com/news/our-new-customer-strategy.html. Our aim is to provide great service to all customers, all of the time. There's a lot to do but we are absolutely committed to moving things forward as

quickly as we can. Alongside this, we will set up a board sub-committee, which will focus on your experiences. The committee will include two board members who are existing Saxon Weald customers, and Jo Boswell will Chair. Jo's specialism is helping organisations to provide excellent customer service.

Finally, I am pleased to report that extra investment in HomeFix has significantly reduced the backlog of outstanding repairs. I very much hope you will experience much shorter waiting times for any work you may need this winter.

Please continue to provide your feedback and let us know how we are doing: www.saxonweald.com/contact-us/.

Simon Hardwick,
Saxon Weald's Chair of the Board



Introducing our newest Board member, Kalwant Grewal

Kalwant Grewal joined our Board as a member on 1 August 2023. He is also Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and was officially appointed at July's Board meeting, having initially joined the Committee as a member back in November 2022.

The Audit and Risk Committee provides assurances to the Board on the systems of internal control, risk management and internal and external audit functions. It also provides assurance that legal and regulatory requirements are met in procurement, business continuity, safeguarding, data protection and IT security.

Kalwant is currently in a senior leadership role for one of the largest NHS Trusts in England. He has considerable sector-specific and cross-sector Board and Committee Chair experience.



Staying safe and warm this winter

As the days grow shorter and temperatures drop, it's important to take steps to stay safe and warm during the winter.

Here are a few tips to help ensure your heating and hot water work efficiently throughout the colder months.

Frozen pipes – low temperatures can cause pipes to freeze, leak or burst. Leaving your heating on low overnight will keep water circulating and prevent pipes from freezing when the weather takes a dive.

Stop tap – knowing where your stop tap (or stopcock) is located can save precious time in an emergency. In most homes, it is located under the sink, but can also be found in the airing cupboard, under the stairs or near the front door.

Boiler pressure – remember to check your boiler pressure to ensure it is working efficiently. On a combi boiler, the pressure should be between 1 and 1.5 bar when the boiler is cold.



Bleeding radiators – this is key to a warm and energy-efficient home. When done regularly, radiators take less time to heat up and waste less energy. Top tip: if your radiator is hot at the top and cold at the bottom, it doesn't need bleeding, but if it's hot at the bottom and cold at the top, then it does!

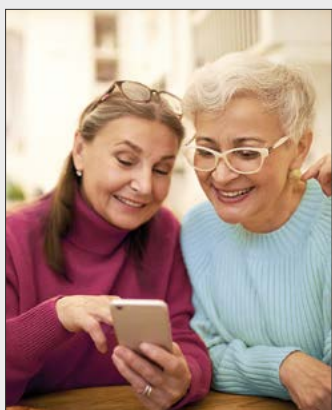
Winter wellbeing – the festive season can be an exciting time, but for many, it brings more stress and anxiety. Please know that there is plenty of support available if you need it. See page 12 of this edition of Spotlight or there's lots of information available on our website: www.saxonweald.com/living-in-your-home/.

Help that can make your web visits a little easier

Would you like to see website text a bit bigger or have the content read to you out loud?

Most mobile phones and web platforms have built-in technology to help with this.

We've put together a handy guide on our website on how to access these features on different web platforms or on your mobile phone. Just visit www.saxonweald.com/accessibility to find out how. It will work on almost all websites whether they show an **Aa** symbol or not.



Safe as houses!

In October, we achieved the certification ISO 45001 from Citation. This is a global standard for occupational health and safety management. To achieve it, our teams worked behind the scenes to ensure our businesses and properties were as safe as possible.

How is ISO 45001 certification achieved?

- Being prepared and having a full documentation audit
- On-site audits at our offices and homes
- Correcting non-conformance issues

We will be audited each year going forward to maintain our certification.





TSG – Customer satisfaction

TSG have been looking after the annual gas inspections, servicing and repairs in our general needs homes for just over three months. We are delighted that the service to our customers has improved significantly as a result of this change.

You told us that you wanted better appointment availability and shorter call wait times, and both have been greatly improved.

We are pleased to report that over 90% of all repairs are being completed within the target time frame, all work has been

completed 'right first time' and over 99% of customers told us that they were satisfied with the work that had been carried out.

98% of customers also reported that the operative was polite, helpful, and fully explained the work they would be undertaking as well as leaving their home clean and tidy at the end of the job.

As a reminder, you can contact TSG if you have a problem with your gas heating or hot water on **0800 781 2739** or email saxonweald@tsgplc.co.uk

If you live in a retirement or extra care scheme, please call **01403 226000** or email hello@saxonweald.com



TSM Tenant Satisfaction Measures - how are we doing?

It's been six months since the government introduced tenant satisfaction measures. These enable customers to see how well their housing association is performing compared to others. Here are some of the key results so far:

QUESTION	SAXON WEALD	AVERAGE SCORE
How satisfied are you with the service provided by Saxon Weald?	78.24%	66.85%
How satisfied are you with the overall repairs service from Saxon Weald over the last 12 months?	75.31%	73.54%
How satisfied are you that Saxon Weald provides a home that is well maintained?	76.69%	71.43%
How satisfied are you that Saxon Weald provides a home that is safe?	84.15%	77.16%
How satisfied are you that Saxon Weald listens to your views and acts upon them?	67.23%	58.25%
How strongly would you agree with the following statement, "I trust Saxon Weald to do what they say they will do"?	68.48%	62.11%
How satisfied are you that Saxon Weald makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood?	66.78%	59.2%

As well as using survey results to monitor performance, we use the information to learn where we can improve our services. We may get in touch with you individually if you report something which needs resolving urgently.

These results are from telephone surveys carried out by IFF-research. They may call you from the telephone number 0203 148 7645.



Go Team Abbotswood!

Residents of Abbotswood Extra Care in Rustington have been a busy bunch this autumn, with an impressive competition win under their belts and a successful fundraiser wrapped up.

Earlier in the year, Rustington Heritage Association launched a competition to mark their 40th birthday and invited locals to build a scarecrow with an historic Rustington theme. The scarecrows were displayed around the village and there was a trail map for villagers to discover them. Awards were offered for both individual and organisation entries, and votes were cast online.

Abbotswood residents chose Peter Pan as the theme for their scarecrows. JM Barrie based his book's well-loved characters on a family from the area. Everyone at Abbotswood was delighted to hear that their impressive collection of scarecrows won them second place in the category for organisations.

Just a month later, Abbotswood hosted a Macmillan Coffee Morning. Residents and their guests raised an incredible £281.19 for the charity, which supports those living with cancer. As well as offering a variety of shop-bought cakes, the homemade selection consisted of a marble cake, a vanilla sponge, lemon fairy cakes and a classic Victoria sandwich, which was the star of the show. A raffle added an extra boost to the money raised, with donations from residents and staff. Well done Abbotswood – what great teamwork!



Following the success of last year's event, we launched our 2023 Youth Awards at the beginning of September. Thank you to everyone who took the time to nominate a young person. It's great to read so many positive and inspiring stories. Good luck to all of the worthy nominees!

The winners will be announced over the coming months on our website and social media platforms, so keep your eyes peeled.



Electric vehicle (EV) charging points

You will need to apply to us for permission before installing an EV charging station.

All charge points must meet the following requirements before we can allow permission:

- The parking space should be off-street, privately allocated and clearly defined.
- You must use an installer approved by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) and should only install OZEV approved chargepoint models. There are different models for residential properties and commercial properties.
- The charging point must be connected to your own electricity supply – not a landlord's or shared supply.

Please note that extension leads must never be used to charge an electric vehicle through an open window.

To apply for permission, please complete the application form on our website: www.saxonweald.com/storage/downloads/ev_chargepoint_application_form-1698666545.pdf.



Cost of living help and advice

The cost of living is still really impacting a lot of people. To try and make things a little easier we've updated our Helping Hand Guide, which is full of useful tips and tricks to make your money go further. We've included the latest information about what government support is available and a guide to energy usage and the associated costs of running your heating and appliances.

There are also details of how you can get help from foodbanks, apps that offer discounted food and products, and loads more helpful tips. It is well worth a read.



How you can get a copy:

- Go online to www.saxonweald.com/storage/downloads/helping_hand_guide-1700126508.pdf to download a copy
- Contact us: hello@saxonweald.com or call 01403 226000 and ask us to post you a copy. Remember to leave your name and address.

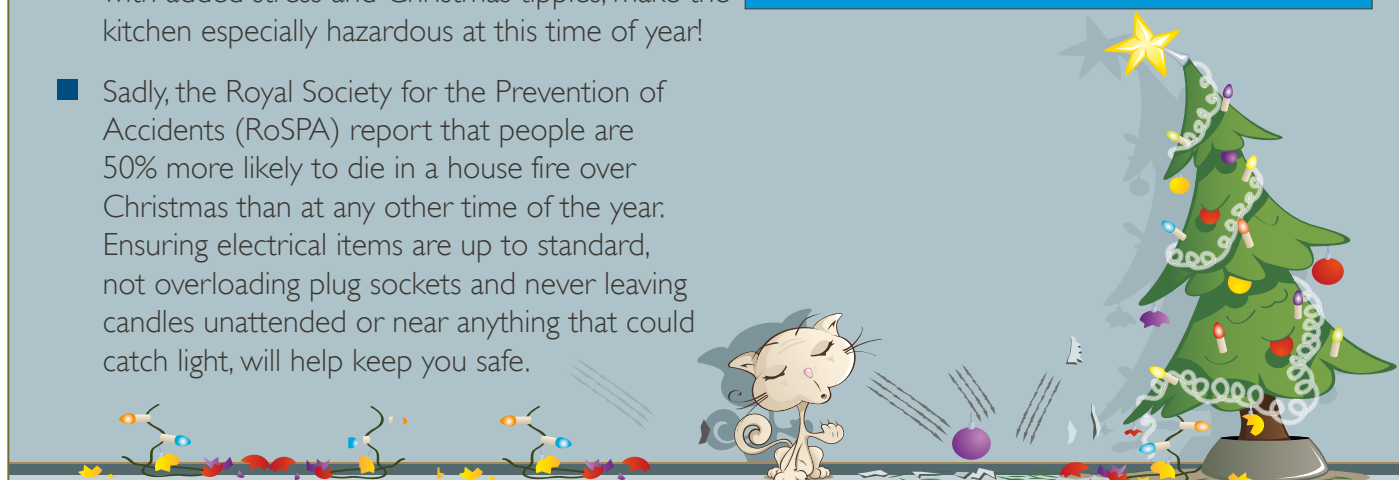
Jingle HELLS

Did you know that more than 80,000 people a year need hospital treatment for injuries during the festive period? In the hustle and bustle of the celebrations, safety can sometimes get overlooked.

- The most common trips to hospital include accidents with glass baubles and up to 1,000 adults a year have a fall when trying to hang decorations.
- Over 350 people each year are injured by fairy lights, with accidents including electric shocks and tripping over wires.
- Nearly half of people preparing Christmas food have suffered an accident. Hot oil and boiling water, heavy turkeys and sharp knives, combined with added stress and Christmas tipples, make the kitchen especially hazardous at this time of year!
- Sadly, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) report that people are 50% more likely to die in a house fire over Christmas than at any other time of the year. Ensuring electrical items are up to standard, not overloading plug sockets and never leaving candles unattended or near anything that could catch light, will help keep you safe.

Children are far more likely to have injuries over the festive period. These range from banged heads, cuts, bruises and broken bones to swallowing or ingesting something they shouldn't. Remember to keep things out of harm's way. Tragically, in the UK, two children a year die as a result of swallowing a button battery.

It is really worth having a good first aid kit at home. St John Ambulance have a range you can look at www.sja.org.uk/first-aid-supplies/first-aid-kits. They also offer practical advice with dealing with all sorts of less serious injuries at home: www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/



A day in the life of a customer support adviser

We asked one of our colleagues, Bex about their role:

Q. What does a typical day look like for you?

A typical day in customer support involves many different tasks. We juggle raising emergency jobs following out-of-hours calls from the previous day, alongside taking incoming calls for all areas of the business. We manage all emails, repair requests, garage tenancies and messages that are sent to Saxon Weald. We also greet any visitors that come to the office. All of the team work super hard to keep on top of all of these tasks, whilst trying to give the best service to our tenants.

Q. What customer issues do you manage?

We process all repair requests, including emergency repairs, help process complaints, advise on what to do following bereavements and deal with rent enquiries, payments, digital contacts such as Facebook and MySaxonWeald, and much more. Some issues are seasonal or weather-related. For example, in the winter there are more issues with leaks and boilers, while in rainy weather we see more issues with roofs and guttering. In summer there are more anti-social behaviour and ground maintenance enquiries. We work hard to keep on top of all these enquiries and, at times, can be extremely busy.

Q. What part of your job do you look forward to the most?

I always look forward to helping our residents. While it can be quite difficult dealing with problems or unhappy calls, when you are able to help somebody in a crisis or resolve an issue for someone, it makes our day! Knowing that we have helped in some way, big or small, makes our job worthwhile.



Q. What is the most challenging aspect of your role?

When we are unable to meet tenants' expectations due to a situation beyond our control, this can be challenging. It could be due to a longer wait time for a repair or needing responses from other departments. We always want to do our best for our tenants and it's challenging to have those difficult conversations. However, when we are able to get these situations resolved, it is a great feeling.

Q. How do you approach difficult customer situations?

We try and approach difficult situations sensitively and with compassion. You have to put yourself in the customers' shoes and understand their point of view. Doing what is right for our customers is always at the forefront of our minds, and we will always try our best to find a resolution for them.

Q. What is the key to being a great customer support adviser?

I think the key is always doing your best for your customers and being kind and understanding of their needs. It doesn't matter if you had a difficult day yesterday. We start every day with a positive outlook and are ready to help. I always try to be there for my colleagues and we help and support each other to do the right thing for our customers.

Last year the team handled 110,052 enquiries and contacts



16,187
Digital
contacts



49,997
Calls



29,117
Emails



14,751
Repairs
logged

Out-of-hours service and repairs

We have recently been receiving a greater number of out-of-hours calls for repairs that wouldn't be considered an emergency, such as a blocked toilet (where you have more than one). We are also experiencing a higher number of 'no access' visits. This is where the resident has called for an out-of-hours repair but doesn't answer the door when the operative calls, at a huge cost to the business.

Before you call, please do check our website to see what constitutes an emergency: www.saxonweald.com/living-in-your-home/repairs/

There are also some handy videos to help you attend to basic repairs around your home, which may be useful: www.saxonweald.com/living-in-your-home/repairs/Guides



Please make sure you are at home when you have asked for a visit. We will need to recharge the costs to you if we are unable to undertake the repair requested. Thank you for your understanding.

Dealing with damp, mould and condensation

When the chilly weather hits, we often see an increase in condensation in our homes, which is to be expected. Keeping your home well-ventilated will reduce condensation and the risk of mould growth, but if the condensation persists or is excessive, we would like to know. We can check for any potential issues and offer solutions to the problem.

If you spot excessive condensation, damp or mould in your home, we want to tackle it. Please get in touch by emailing hello@saxonweald.com, calling 01403 226000, or reporting it via your [My SaxonWeald](#) portal.

Here are five tips to help reduce condensation and the risk of mould growth in your home:

1. Open your windows for 10 minutes every morning and wipe condensation away with a dry cloth.
2. Shut kitchen and bathroom doors when cooking, bathing and showering, and use the extractor fans if you have them.
3. Keep furniture away from walls, and air vents clear and open.
4. When drying clothes inside, use an airer in a room with a window slightly open and the door shut. Avoid drying clothes on radiators.
5. Maintain a temperature of at least 15°C if possible.



Building work next door to you?



Unfortunately, we have seen a rise in cases where we have not been notified about building works taking place in properties that adjoin ours. Types of work include loft conversions and extensions. We want to ensure that your home is safe and secure and is not impacted by alterations or construction at neighbouring properties.

If you receive notification or become aware of your neighbours having work done to their property that may affect your home, please get in touch with our Asset Management team by emailing asset.management@saxonweald.com.



'Tis the season to get baking!

Grab your apron and roll up your sleeves! These chocolate Rice Krispie cakes look just like Christmas puddings and are the perfect festive treat to make with your little ones.

You will need:

- 100g Rice Krispies
- 200g milk chocolate, broken into pieces
- 50g butter
- 180g mini marshmallows
- 80g white chocolate
- Icing holly leaves to decorate

Melt the chocolate and butter slowly in a saucepan on a low heat. Stir regularly so that it doesn't burn. Add in the mini marshmallows and stir until fully melted.

In a large bowl, add the Rice Krispies and stir in your mixture. Allow to cool for a few minutes, then form into balls. Set in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Melt the white chocolate in the microwave or in a saucepan on a low heat. Spoon a little chocolate over the top of each pudding, top with icing holly leaves and enjoy!

© www.bbcgoodfood.com/author/valeriebarrett

Grow for gold!

From vibrant floral arrangements to patio transformations, this year's entries for the Saxon Weald Gardening Competition were certainly impressive! After much deliberation, we're pleased to congratulate our winners:

Best Individual Garden

Becky Jarvis

Best Communal Garden

Kingsfield, Sullington

Runners up

Lionel Mills and Maurice Holden

Two of our winners were kind enough to share some of their words of gardening wisdom!

Q. What do you like most about your garden?

Becky: It's my bit of heaven, the perfect place to get away from everything.

Lionel: Definitely the pond, it makes a great centrepiece. It creates such a peaceful environment and does wonders for your mental health.

Q. Do you have any top tips for gardening on a budget?

Becky: Make sure to water your plants - they dry out so quickly! It takes me a while every evening but it's so important.

Lionel: Try making your own compost to spread on plants during winter months for some extra nutrients.

Q. Do you plan to make any more changes to your garden?

Becky: I'm planning to put in a greenhouse next. I already grow tomatoes and cucumbers, but I'd



Winner - Becky Jarvis



Winner - Kingsfield



Runner up - Lionel Mills

like to start more things off by seed.

Lionel: I love the wildlife that my garden brings, so I'm hoping to get a nesting box and some feeders.

Q. Do you know what you're going to spend your voucher on?

Becky: Probably more flowers and plants - my plan is to start planting more bulbs, as they come up in the spring.

Lionel: A white Japanese anemone. I have a pink one that was a gift from my Dad - it's been growing here for the last 15-20 years!

We're making some changes based on your feedback

Service charges

Our Scheme Managers will be meeting residents to discuss concerns about service charges in the coming weeks. This is for residents with communal heating systems, as their bills have been impacted the most, due to high energy costs.

The mutual exchange process

We will be making a change to the mutual exchange process, to ensure all future exchange applications will result in a visit from one of our surveyors before being processed.

Post-repair inspections

Following in-depth investigations into the quality of our repairs, the Task and Finish group submitted their report to our Board with recommendations.

Moving forward, when we receive a dissatisfied repair survey, we will carry out a post-repair inspection. This will help us identify training needs and learn from any mistakes we have made.



No access survey

Following feedback about missed appointments, we have introduced a 'no access' survey. This will help us to understand why this is happening.

Complaints

Our Customer Support Advisers now complete a standard template when a complaint is reported. This document will make it easier for managers to investigate complaints, by clarifying what the issue is and the outcome sought by the customer.

Have you 'bin' recycling correctly?

We often hear from the local council that recycling bins in our communal bin areas have been contaminated. If you put the wrong items in your bin, it can result in the waste collector rejecting the entire contents. This costs Saxon Weald money to remove and can unfortunately impact your service charge.

To avoid contamination, your recycling should be:

- clean and rinsed, leaving no food waste
- loose and not in black sacks or plastic bags

Here are some examples of items that can typically be recycled in your blue top bin.



	YES ✓	NO ✗
Paper and card	Newspapers, magazines, cereal boxes, catalogues, brochures	Shredded paper, paper towels, tissues, metallic or laminated wrapping paper
Metal cans and aerosols	Food cans, drink cans, pet food cans, empty aerosol cans	Electrical items, batteries, cables
Plastic bottles and cartons	Milk/drink bottles, fruit juice cartons, food pots, tubs and trays	Plastic bags, film, polystyrene, plant pots and seed trays
Glass bottles and jars	Wine bottles, beer bottles, perfume bottles, sauce jars	Pyrex, drinking glasses, crockery

Rules may vary from town to town, so please visit your local council's website for more information.

Festive Fraudsters

Scammers often use the festive season to exploit the vulnerable (and not so vulnerable). Whether it's a delivery text you're unsure about or a last-minute deal that sounds too good to be true, here are some Do's and Don'ts to ensure a scam-free holiday season:

DON'T hand over personal information or bank details on the phone, by email, on social media or in person

DO be wary of online shops you've never heard of, or products advertised on social media

DON'T click on a link from a text or email without checking first – look out for spelling mistakes or an unusual writing style which can be signs of a scam

DO contact the company directly if you receive a call or text that you're unsure about



If you think someone is trying to scam you over the phone, hang up and call 159 to speak directly to your bank. To report a scam text, forward it to 7726, and forward scam emails to report@phishing.gov.uk.

Find more fraud and scam resources here: www.fca.org.uk/consumers/protect-yourself-scams.

Fire safety checklist

Most fires in the home start accidentally, so it's important to understand what you can do to prevent them. Follow these simple steps to keep you and your home safe:

- **Test your smoke alarms:** A working smoke alarm is the easiest way to protect you and your family. Make sure you test your alarms once a month and never disconnect or take the batteries out if they go off by mistake.
- **Cook safely:** Around half of home fires are caused by cooking accidents, so avoid leaving pots and pans unattended and never leave children alone in the kitchen whilst cooking.
- **Take care with electrics:** Make sure any appliances you use are in good working order and turned off when not in use. Never overload electrical sockets and follow the manufacturer's instructions when using extension cables.
- **Use heaters carefully:** Ensure you keep portable heaters well away from clothes, curtains and furniture and never use them if they're damaged or faulty.
- **Stay safe when you go to bed:** You're more at risk from fire at night so make sure candles and cigarettes are put out properly and electrical appliances are turned off. Close all doors to help prevent fire and smoke from spreading and avoid charging mobile phones, e-cigarettes, and scooters overnight.
- **Plan an escape route:** It's important that you and everyone in your household knows how to get out safely. Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them and never leave flammable materials in hallways, landings or on balconies which could obstruct your escape.

For more helpful tips, head over to www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-guidance



Christmas opening hours

We will be closed for Christmas from 1pm on Friday 22 December, until 8.30 am on Tuesday 2 January.

If you need emergency help during this time, please call **01403 226000** and you will be redirected to our out-of-hours service.

Remember, you can access your account anytime at mysaxonweald.com. Please be aware that any payments made or repairs booked during our Christmas shutdown will not be processed until the new year.

We would like to wish all our customers a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, and safe new year.

Support available over the festive period



For many of us, Christmas is a happy and exciting time. For others, it can be a difficult period. For those in need of support, there are services available to you during this time.

The Trussell Trust – local foodbanks:
www.trusselltrust.org T: 0808 208 2138

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

Crisis – if you're homeless or at risk of becoming homeless: www.crisis.org.uk
T: 0300 636 1967

Shelter – housing advice services:
<https://england.shelter.org.uk> T: 0808 800 4444

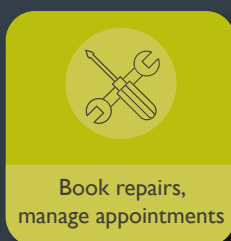
Domestic abuse support services: -
www.saxonweald.com/da-support-services
<https://refuge.org.uk/> T: 0808 2000 247

Online, anytime, anywhere

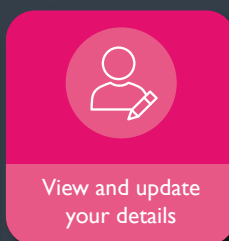
Managing your home has never been easier. My SaxonWeald is our secure and easy-to-use self-service platform that aims to take the stress out of managing your home. It provides secure access to your information and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from a desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile.



Pay your rent,
check your balance



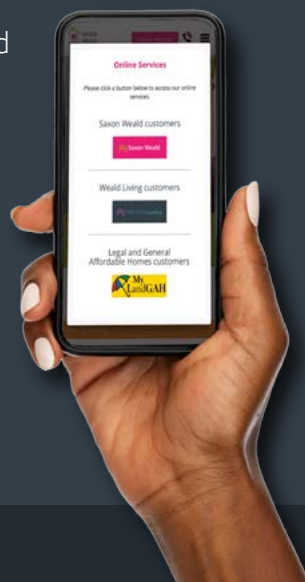
Book repairs,
manage appointments



View and update
your details

Join the thousands of other residents enjoying the benefits of online access

Register for your account today: www.saxonweald.com/getonline



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Tel: 01403 226000 | Email: info@saxonweald.com | www.saxonweald.com

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PlaceShapers
Together we help communities thrive

