

Spotlight



Saxon
Weald

The Newsletter for Saxon Weald Residents | Autumn / Winter 2017



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1900 +
people
now use

My Saxon Weald
sign up now & join them!



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UC Universal Credit

Are you ready
for Universal
Credit?



6

**WIN Hugh's
new book in
our recycle
competition**

Available in
audio format
and large
print

www.saxonweald.com

Celebrating 1500 new homes

We recently celebrated building our 1500th new home following the completion of our development



of affordable rented homes at Alley Groves in Cowfold. We marked the occasion by donating £500 to Cowfold parish council to go towards the cost of the village's new sports pavilion and community centre.

Saxon Weald built its first new home in 2003 at Arun Road in Billingshurst. Since then, properties built include 11 extra care developments for over 55s, shared ownership homes for first-time buyers, Passiv-Haus eco-homes, wheelchair accessible bungalows, and everything from one-bed flats to four-bed houses.

David Standfast, Chief Executive, comments: "We've seen a lot of changes in the last 14 years, with the amount of grant available from the government for building affordable homes declining to almost nothing. While it's becoming more challenging for us to build, we are determined to find ways to continue, because the need for affordable places to live is more acute than ever."



Alison Bennett, Saxon Weald's Head of Programme and Sales, presents the cheque to Jonathan Palling, Chairman of Cowfold Parish Council.

Deck the halls!



We don't want to stop you getting in the Christmas spirit, but health and safety still comes first. So in communal areas, the following rules apply:

YES

- wreaths and decorations hung on doors / door frames
- battery-powered lights



NO

- floor-standing decorations
- mains operated lights
- musical decorations

Please also make sure all decorations are fire retardant.

MySaxonWeald have you registered yet?

More than 1900 households have signed up for a MySaxonWeald account. Why not join them today at <https://my.saxonweald.com?>

Getting set up is simple, and once registered, you'll be able to access your account 24/7.

Whether you want to check your balance, make a payment, or report a repair, MySaxonWeald makes it easy. It's also now mobile-friendly, so you can check in on any device.

We're busy working on a couple of upgrades too – you'll soon be able to choose and book your own repairs appointment slots. Make sure we have your email address and mobile phone number so we can keep you up-to-date.



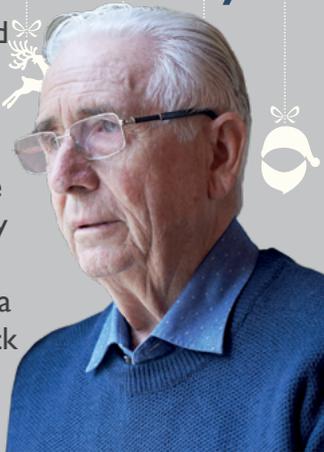
Make a list, and check it twice

You may find planning boring, but Christmas shopping on impulse is dangerous for your wallet. So make an old-fashioned shopping list and stick to it. Remember, shops spend a fortune on targeting your spending impulses – a list helps you beat them. There are also apps you can download on your phone to help you keep track of Christmas spending.



Look out for the lonely

Loneliness and feeling isolated has a hugely negative impact on health, particularly among older people. It's the season of goodwill, so why not make a point to check on an elderly neighbour? If you have more time, you could volunteer as a befriender with Age UK. Check out their [website](#) for details or contact your local branch.



Debt worries over Christmas?

Sadly, Christmas isn't jolly for everyone. Don't try to ignore the problem while worrying yourself sick. Get help from your local Citizens Advice Bureau or go online at www.nationaldebtdline.org or www.stepchange.org/.

Thoughtful gifts for free

Spend time and effort instead of money by promising to do something your friends or family will really value. There are lots of ideas and a free printable cheque template at www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/xmas-gift-cheques. How about baby sitting or taxi driving promises for a friend, or breakfast in bed for a loved one? Kids can join in too, with promises to do chores or helpful jobs.



Chocolate reindeer bark

- 400g milk or dark chocolate, chopped
- Pretzels, halved
- Red smarties or M&Ms
- Flaked almonds
- 1 candy cane, crushed



1. Line a 20.5cm (8-inch) brownie tin with baking parchment. Melt chocolate carefully in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water. While the chocolate is melting, prepare the decorations. Use halved pretzels to create antlers, red m&m's for the noses, and flaked almonds dotted with a little melted chocolate for the eyes.
2. Once melted and smooth, pour the chocolate into the prepared tin – allow to stand for a few minutes until beginning to set, this will make it easier to decorate.
3. Work quickly to decorate, making Rudolph faces. Finally, sprinkle over the crushed candy cane, and chill for 2 hours until set. Chop around the Rudolph faces with a sharp knife to create shards.

Not online? You're missing out!

Many of the best deals and discounts for goods and services are available online. According to research from Lloyds Bank, it's possible to save an average of £744 every year just by being online. Millions of people taking advantage of the money saving opportunities the internet can offer.



It's not only money you can save – it's time too. Whether it's booking a doctor's appointment, checking your bank balance or even reporting a repair to Saxon Weald, going online can save you waiting on the phone or making a visit.

If you don't have the equipment, ask a friend who is online to help you find a bargain. Websites such as Amazon and Ebay often have deals on refurbished machines, while you can buy new tablet computers from as little as £60. If you are on a low income, you may qualify for an affordable computer from GetOnlineatHome.org getonline@home

If you can't afford the equipment just now, or want to try it out first, remember you can use the internet for free at your local library or job centre.

If you are online, but aren't confident, there are numerous free beginners' guides available – try <https://digital.wings.uk.barclays/for-everyone/>

Save your data allowance

If you have a mobile device, remember you can get free wifi access at many coffee shops, some shopping centres (including Swan Walk) and even in large Tesco stores.



Techie teas help silver surfers

A series of 'techie tea parties' in our retirement schemes has been building residents' confidence in using the internet. Our relaxed training sessions have shown people how to get online, how to set up and use an email account, how to do online grocery shopping and even how to stay in touch with loved ones using Skype or social media.

So far we've been to 15 schemes and are planning more sessions in the new year.

Satisfied participant's comments:



"It's amazing what is available now online"

"I've learnt a lot from attending these sessions, everyone should come along"

"I can now talk to my grandchildren in Australia through Facebook"



Top Right: residents at Highwood Mill
Above: residents from Abbotswood



Housing Benefit changes

From June 2018, more working age people who receive Housing Benefit will be moved onto Universal Credit. Universal Credit combines a number of different benefits into one and pays the money to claimants direct, rather than giving the rent straight to us. This means people have to learn to manage their money - this can be really challenging if you've never done it before.

If you receive housing benefit, or think you may need to make a claim in the future, there are a few things you can do to prepare.

1. Get online – Universal Credit can only be claimed and managed online. If you don't have access at home, think about where you will get online, such as your local library or job centre.

2. Get a bank account – if you don't already have one, get a bank account set up. You'll need one to receive your payments.

3. Start budgeting – practice planning how much money you have and where you should spend it. There are lots of free budget planning tools online to help you.

4. Start saving – you may have to wait 6 weeks before you receive any money, so try to build up a small emergency fund.

The first people of a working age to be affected by the changes will be those making new claims, or those already claiming whose circumstances change. All Housing Benefit claimants of a working age will be moved to the new system by 2021 – the Department for Work and Pensions will notify you at the appropriate time.

If you have any questions about how you may be affected by Universal Credit, please email housingmanagers@saxonweald.com.



'How to'
with



HOME
FIX



Our HomeFix team have been working on a series of short films to demonstrate how to do minor jobs that are residents' responsibility. You can watch them on our website at www.saxonweald.com/living-in-your-home/repairs/Guides or search for us on YouTube.

The first three films show:

- how to replace sealant around a sink or bath
- how to replace a bathroom lightbulb or strip light
- what to do in the event of power failure

We're now working on the next set which will include unblocking a sink, easing internal doors and filling minor cracks in plasterwork. Keep an eye on our website for updates.

A helping hand

While HomeFix will take care of the majority of home repairs, there are some maintenance jobs which fall to you as the tenant. We know, however, that sometimes you'd be happy to pay us to help you out, rather than having to find your own tradesperson.



We've been working on a list of jobs we are able to offer. If we get lots of interest, we may be able to add to these services. For now, we're offering:

INSTALLATION ONLY (of appliances provided by you):	ESTIMATED COST
Extra electrical socket	£85
New electric cooker	£50
New washing machine	£50
New gas cooker	£50
New dishwasher	£50
New TV aerial point (adding to existing system)	£50

This new service will be available from Monday 9 January. To book in, email homefix@saxonweald.com or call 01403 226000. On the day, the engineer would confirm the exact price and payment would be required before work starts.

Money saving new look for our vans

From December, some of our HomeFix vans will be getting a new look. Part of our fleet was due to be replaced, so we took the opportunity to look at the livery. By simplifying the design, we are saving hundreds of pounds on production and application costs. We think the vans still look striking, so this seems like a win-win situation.



Recycling reminder

It's not only waistlines that expand at Christmas; household waste can pile up too. No one wants to see increased landfill, so it's important everyone does their bit to recycle as much as possible.

In the run up to Christmas, don't forget to recycle cardboard packaging from online shopping deliveries. And after the festivities, remember to recycle your used wrapping paper and old cards. If you have a real tree, that can be recycled too – look out for details of local arrangements or take it to your nearest household waste recycling site.

What you can recycle in your doorstep collections varies according to your council, so please check local arrangements.



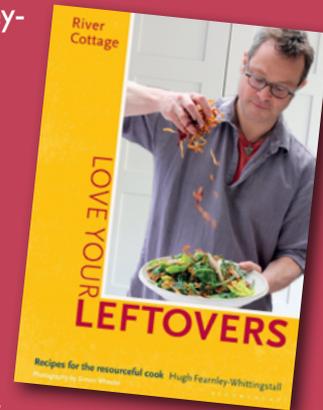
Love your leftovers

Many of us buy too much food at Christmas, and end up with piles of leftovers. Don't bin them – save money as well as preventing waste by turning leftovers into tasty meals and snacks. Find inspiration online at www.lovefoodhatewaste.com.

Recycling is for life, not just for Christmas!

Your chance to win!

We have a copy of Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's book 'Love Your Leftovers' to give away. Filled with practical advice and simple, tasty recipes, this could be the inspiration you need. For your chance to win, simply email your name and contact details to pr@saxonweald.com, putting 'leftovers' in the subject line. Closing date is Friday 19 January. See our website for terms and conditions.



£3,500 raised for Macmillan is the icing on the cake

Around the end of September, many of our staff, residents and their friends from all over our districts got their wooden spoons and mixing bowls out and whipped up batches of tasty treats for Macmillan Cancer Support's World's Biggest Coffee Morning. A massive £3,500 was raised in the sale of cakes, pastries, biscuits and tarts with some of our schemes raising yet more with raffles, a BBQ and sales of other items. Here is breakdown of who raised what:

- At Head Office we raised £205
- Highwood Mill, Horsham £221
- Highdown Court, Worthing £234
- Abbotswood, Rustington £591
- Downlands Court, Peacehaven £132
- Bridges Court, Horsham £197
- Kensington Close, West Chiltington £160
- Osmund Court, Billingshurst £160



And a great big shout out to the residents of Dingemans Court and their friends who raised an impressive £1600 themselves!



Resident bakers at Kensington Close



Saxon Weald's own delicious bakes



The incredible star bakers from Dingemans Court with their cheque to Macmillan for £1600

Rotary House **bakes too!**

On 2 September the residents of Rotary House, Southampton held their own baking event to raise money for the Children's A & E trauma unit and Piam Brown Ward, at Southampton General Hospital. Over £860 was raised and was donated along with a lovely cake for the children to enjoy!

Great start for Home Start

This year's Staff Conference was just the inspiration the Hampshire Team needed to set up a project collecting essential items for new tenants, who may need an extra helping hand.

Gifts of good quality equipment were given to the Home Start team from tenants, their families and colleagues. The donations were cleaned and sorted, and some boxes made up to give to new tenants.

Thank you for all the very generous donations - the response was fantastic. We have plenty of essentials now to ensure new Hampshire tenants needing a Home Start box, get one!

Stephen Rodgers has just moved into one of our Hampshire retirement schemes and Scheme Manager, Lin Keitley was delighted to be able to present him with the first box on behalf of the team.



Stephen Rodgers with Scheme Manager, Lin Keitley

Our green fingered heroes!

Mr John Guppy of Challen Court has been helping to look after the garden on behalf of residents for the last few years ensuring the baskets and flower beds are kept looking colourful. His hard work is really appreciated by other residents and visitors to Challen Court. In view of this the scheme manager presented Mr Guppy with a £40 Sainsbury voucher in recognition of his hard work.

At Leslie Loader House, resident Liam McCall spends much of his time in the garden keeping busy with planting, maintaining and generally making the garden look lovely. His Begonias and Pansies are of particular note.



Glorious hanging baskets at Leslie Loader House



Mr Guppy from Challen Court receiving a voucher for his blooms (seen above right)



Monika Kinrade with her award

Southampton In Bloom winners!

Resident, Monika Kinrade collected a bronze award and a £10 voucher in the Southampton in Bloom competition on behalf of Charles Wyatt House. The category was 'Individual garden/communal area in sheltered housing'. Monica has put an enormous effort into making the garden area beautiful for the residents of Charles Wyatt House to enjoy and says "it has been hard work over the last two years but worth it for the results."

Residents of Rotary House have come up trumps again in the 2017 competition. Ralph was awarded a 'Gold' certificate in the 'Hanging Basket or Wall container' category, while Ed, Tony, Barry, Sue and Jayne, along with Ralph, received a 'Joint Gold' certificate for the category 'Individual Garden/Communal Area in Sheltered Housing'. They also won a 'Commended' certificate for their 'Container Tubs & Window Boxes'.



Residents celebrate at Rotary House



All received cash vouchers. The lovely colourful garden displays at the front and outside areas, brighten up Rotary House and it's evident that the residents take real pride in the place they live.

That's magic!

Residents at Abbotswood in Rustington were thoroughly entertained with a visit from magician/entertainer Robbie Golds. He brought laughter and enjoyment with his quick wit and slight of hand. Everyone present thought it was a fun and engaging show and had a lovely afternoon.



Summer Garden party

Residents at Bentley Grange in Hailsham held a summer garden party back in July, complete with sunshine, strawberries and cream and music from the Wealden Brass Band. Friends, residents, family and staff had a fantastic afternoon and the weather held out. Resident Gary Todd (pictured) got really into the swing of the atmosphere with his Hawaiian shirt and straw hat combo! The hard work of the residents who organised it was well worth the effort, with the fundraising occasion enjoyed by many raising £479 towards the Residents Association fund.



Celebrations Galore!

Ken Chandler from Abbotswood, Rustington recently celebrated his 90th Birthday, his daughter's 60th Birthday and he and his wife's 64th wedding anniversary with a special party thrown for around 60 of their closest friends and family. Mrs Chandler was so touched by the attention to detail and amazing catering she wrote a lovely letter thanking the chef, John and scheme manager Helen, and all the other staff who made the day so special.



Full of life!

On 3 October, Dingemans Court hosted the Age UK "Full of Life, health and wellbeing" event. People were able to have a healthy lunch and experience a wealth of activities including: yoga, food tasting, virtual reality, seated exercise, massage and reflexology. There was also lots of advice on services and activities in the area.



The day was really popular and was very well attended, with just a few who said they suffered some aching muscles after the exercise classes!

Knitting "lest we forget"

The Highwood Mill knitting group were incredibly busy making poppies in the run up to Remembrance Day. In the week running up to November members of the Horsham Royal British Legion came to visit the residents group to say a big thank you for their work and the money they had raised so far.

Eve White said of her visit " Everyone made us very welcome and I hope they enjoyed our visit as much as we did."



Complaints procedure improved

While we do our best to give a great service, unfortunately mistakes do occasionally happen. We've updated our complaints procedure to make it quicker to resolve problems should they arise.

We aim to deal with the majority of complaints with our first response, which you should receive within three working days of reporting an issue to us. In the unlikely event you are not happy with the response, a senior manager will then consider the issue and respond to you within 10 working days. This will be our final response to the matter.

Still dissatisfied?

If you have been through our complaints procedure and are not satisfied, you have the right for your complaint to be considered by a 'designated person'. This could be a local councillor or your MP. This person can either help resolve your complaint, reject your complaint or refer you to the Independent Housing Ombudsman. You can also contact the Ombudsman direct, but must wait until eight weeks from the end of our complaints process.

What we need to know

When reporting a problem, please tell us:

- what the issue is, giving details where possible, such as dates / names
- what you would like to see happen next
- how best to contact you

We ask that you bring any problems to our attention within eight weeks of the issue occurring.

Smell gas?

If you smell gas, phone the 24-hour national gas emergency hotline on 0800 111 999. They will ask you a few questions about where the leak is and who is affected, so that they can give you the correct advice.

If the leak is indoors, generally you should:

- Open doors and windows
- Turn off the gas supply at the meter (unless the meter and smell of gas are in a cellar)
- Put out naked flames and don't smoke
- Don't use any power or light switches

Even if the suspected leak is outdoors, you should still call the hotline.



What next?

Their engineers will attend promptly to ensure the gas escape is made safe. There is no charge for this. This is purely an emergency service, however, and once the property is safe, you will have to arrange for the necessary repair work to be carried out. If the problem is with an appliance owned by you, it is your responsibility. You can find details of Gas Safe registered engineers at gassaferegister.co.uk or by calling 0800 408 5500. If the problem is with your boiler or supply, then contact us at homefix@saxonweald.com or call 01403 226000.

Home safety sessions

Our friendly floating support team will be joined by the Fire Service in a series of talks about home safety. Topics they will be covering include fire safety, electrical appliances and hoarding.

Sessions are aimed at over 60s and take place from 10am – 2pm.

- 29 January: Dingemans Court, Shooting Field, Steyning



- 30 January: Gerald Court, Vincent Close, Horsham
- 31 January: Eyles Close, Horsham

No need to RSVP – just come along on the day.

Surveyors get their hands dirty

Our Asset Management team recently spent the day at St Anthony's, Eastbourne, helping to spruce up the garden for our residents, all of whom have either physical or mental disabilities.

The communal gardens were looking tired and neglected, so the team set to work repairing the shed, tidying up the borders and adding new planting, improving access to the garden and even adding a bird feeder or two. The residents were delighted with the results.

Well done to the team and special thanks to our contractors, BSW, who helped on the day and to Penningtons, Cablesheer and The Warmer Group who donated materials.



Above: pictures of the team in action

CCTV to capture illegal fly-tipping!

Constant fly-tipping problems at the communal bin store on one of our Horsham estates led to us installing temporary CCTV cameras to identify the culprits. We managed to get a vehicle registration which we are following up with the DVLA. Where we can prove who is dumping rubbish or fly-tipping, we will always follow up and charge them the cost of clearing their mess. Fly-tipping is a criminal offence and we appreciate any information you can give us.



Remember, if you have a shared bin store area, please only place rubbish in the bins provided and do not put extra items around the store. Report any problems with the store to info@saxonweald.com.

Henfield Shed gets underway

Do you like a bit of woodwork or tinkering with metal and machinery? Whether you are keen to learn or are experienced and happy to share your skills, you'll be sure of a warm welcome at Henfield's new shed project.



The Henfield Shed team are aiming to open for a couple of mornings each week to get the project started. For more information please email Peter Gumbrell at info@henfieldshed.org.uk or see their website www.henfieldshed.org.uk

Above: Zena, Colin and Peter, founding members of the Henfield Shed project, get the keys to their new premises

MAD award

Bob Cole from David Lockhart Court was presented with a MAD (Make a Difference) award for stepping in to help after the scheme had a new carpet fitted. Armed with a vacuum cleaner and lots of effort he made sure all the post-fitting fluff was removed and all the furniture moved back into place. Thanks to his efforts he saved staff a huge amount of time. Thank you Bob!



Above: Bob Cole



Saxon Weald

Changes to Saxon Weald's charitable status

Like many housing associations, Saxon Weald is registered as a housing provider with the Homes and Communities Agency. We are also a registered charity with the Charity Commission. Both organisations have rules designed to ensure we are properly run and meet set standards.

Up until recently, by meeting the requirements of the Homes and Communities Agency, we were exempt from some of the Charity Commission rules, particularly around housing associations disposing of any unwanted properties. This has now changed. The Homes and Communities Agency has relaxed its controls so we now have to meet the Charity Commission rules instead,

which can be complicated and time consuming.

To reduce this administration, we are considering changing our status by becoming a Community Benefit Society. This means that although we would continue to have charitable status and remain non-profit making, we would not have to be regulated by the Charity Commission. This change would not affect the way we are governed, nor would it affect your tenancy or the services we offer. It would simply relieve us of some red tape.

If you would like to give your views on this change before our Board makes the final decision, please contact Jim Dean, Head of Service Improvement, at jim.dean@saxonweald.com or 01403 226000 by Friday 12 January 2018.

Christmas closure

- We will be closing for the Christmas holidays at 4pm on Friday 22 December. We will re-open on Tuesday 2 January at 9am (8.30am for phone calls)

If you need help in an emergency, please call 01403 226000 and you will be re-directed to our out-of-hours service.

Remember, you can access your account any time at mysaxonweald.com. Make sure you are registered before we close though, as we need to send you a verification code.

Please be aware that any payments you make, or repairs you log, will not be processed until we re-open on 2 January.

*Season's greetings from
all at Saxon Weald*



Saxon Weald

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