



WEALD
LIVING

BY SAXON WEALD

Spotlight

The newsletter for Weald Living customers | Spring 2023



Wellbeing Roadshows

The second of our wellbeing roadshows saw us covering many miles to see our customers.



Scheme manager service

Learn how your survey responses have shaped changes to our service.



Easter holiday fun

Ideas to inspire you to have fun with the younger ones over the school holidays.



A note from our Chair

One of our most important goals is to provide all our customers with a really good repairs service via our inhouse team, HomeFix. Regrettably, we built up an unacceptable backlog of repairs over the past year or so. The board has therefore agreed to invest an additional £250,000 to try to clear more than half the backlog by May. We are regularly monitoring progress and hope you will see a noticeable improvement in this service during the coming months.

It has been great to hear how many of you came to talk to us during our Winter Wellbeing Roadshow. Thank you to all of you who have subsequently agreed to contribute to our customer consultation groups. Your feedback matters and will influence your board's decisions about our priorities for future investment.

As I write, we are about to begin planning the next stage of our roadshow program, with visits to some of our neighbourhoods in the Easter holidays. Details will be sent by email and available on our website and social media channels, so keep an eye out for more information. Do please take the opportunity to come and tell us what you think about Saxon Weald and anything we could do better.



Simon Hardwick,
Saxon Weald's Chair of the Board

Testing your smoke alarms

Throughout the year, thousands of accidental fires happen in the UK, and not having a working smoke alarm can have severe consequences. You should have these installed and test them once a month to ensure they are in good working order by pressing the circular button on the alarm. We also recommend if battery operated, changing the batteries in your alarms each year to keep them working effectively.

Fast connectivity

Openreach have been rolling out full fibre broadband across more than 1000 of our properties. This is part of the Government's drive to ensure everyone has access to the high-speed internet network. The operation has been ongoing for nearly two years and will continue until completion in 2025.

Openreach and its partners are currently concentrating on buildings that contain more than one property. So, at present, 40% of our schemes, including Highwood Mill, are benefiting from the next generation of broadband, at no cost to us or residents.

As Openreach continue their roll out, residents will be notified if there is likely to be any intrusive works. However, as the proposed works are all external, entry into your home is not required. Once the system is live, your internet provider will be able to help you connect to the new broadband, which may include a visit from their engineer.



© Openreach Limited 2023

If you'd like to benefit from an internet service but you're finding technology a bit of a struggle, try visiting your local library. Many have digital volunteers/champions, who can help you master digital skills. You can also contact Age UK on 0800 678 1602 to ask about local training opportunities.



We've been listening...

Last July, we shared our plan with you setting out all the ways we will involve customers and make sure you have a chance to have your say. Here's a quick look at some of the things we've been up to. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to give us their views!



Questionnaires and surveys

We receive around 350 survey responses every month. Some of these are completed over the phone while others are done online. These give us a real flavour of what you do and don't like about our services. But do they make a difference? The answer is a resounding yes!

You said: Grass cutting and grounds maintenance needs improving

We did: Your feedback has led to us ending our contract with Idverde and seeking new, more locally focussed partners.

You said: We don't see enough of you out and about

We did: This was one of the drivers behind our winter wellbeing roadshow. We visited eight estates over October half-term and seven retirement schemes at the end of January.

Domestic abuse policy

Your feedback led to important changes in our domestic abuse policy, including making sure that gaslighting was recognised. You also told us to add more support information to our website.

Repairs service consultation

You told us that our repairs service is the most important area for us to get right. To find out what works and what needs to improve, we have carried out two consultations so far. We used this to help develop an improvement plan which aims to reduce waiting times, increase satisfaction and improve efficiency.

We have also launched a customer consultation group who we will be working with over the coming months. The group will come up with their own set of recommendations which will be reviewed directly by our Board. This started with an open event in our offices before Christmas. We now have seven volunteers who will be more closely involved.

And there's more...

We've also celebrated our first youth awards and reviewed our scheme manager service. You can find articles on these in this newsletter.

Want to know more?

You can find a copy of our customer engagement plan on our website. We share details of events and consultations via email updates, posters in schemes and communal areas, on Facebook, on our website and through this newsletter.

Make life easier, get 😊 online!



Our easy-to-use, online self-service portals provide secure access to your information and services. They're available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from a desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile. Discover the benefits and how to register for your account here:

www.wealdliving.com/getonline





Celebrating young people's contributions to the community

Inspired by the mental health challenges a staff member's son faced during the Covid-19 pandemic, we launched our very first Youth Awards at the end of 2022. Members of the public were invited to nominate young people who are making a positive difference in their communities within our four awards categories. The winners were then selected by members of Saxon Weald staff and Board, as well as Youth Provision Officer for Horsham District Council, Dan Fairchild.



Congratulations to our 2022 winners:

- Caring Young Person Award - Tyler McKean
- Local Community Award - Harry Derby & Jacob Lee
- Sport and Physical Activity Award - Mckenzie Box
- Achievement in Learning Award - Seth Browning

Saxon Weald's Chief Executive, Steven Dennis, was proud to host the awards ceremony evening:

"It was an absolute privilege to meet our inspirational award winners. I would like to congratulate Tyler, Harry, Jacob, Mckenzie and Seth once again, and thank them all for the contributions they've made to their local communities. At Saxon Weald, we are passionate about recognising the personal achievements of young people, so I look forward to celebrating with more worthy winners in 2023."

Ensuring better domestic abuse support for the LGBT+ community

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting customers who are experiencing domestic abuse, members of the team recently received training on how to support survivors within the LGBT+ community.

The session was provided by charity, Galop, who work with and for LGBT+ victims and survivors of abuse and violence in the UK. The training included LGBT+ identities and terminology, barriers to accessing safety and support, plus much more.

If you need support, please call us on 01403 226000. Any disclosures of domestic abuse will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially within 24 hours of the report. More information can also be found on our website: www.saxonweald.com/da.



Scheme manager service – how your views made a difference

Our recent retirement housing survey is a great example of how customer views lead to service changes. We carried out a survey of retirement housing residents in June 2021. Unsurprisingly, given Covid restrictions, customers told us that they simply did not see enough of their scheme manager on site. Respondents also told us that we needed to improve our communication. On the plus side, most people thought their scheme manager was helpful and friendly.

So, what did we do?

- Scheme managers stopped working from home and returned to scheme offices.
- We worked with residents in each scheme to draw up a charter setting out what residents could expect, such as when the manager would be available
- Agreed a schedule of regular meetings or coffee mornings based on customer requirements in each scheme
- Introduced a quarterly scheme newsletter

Has it made a difference?

We did another survey in December 2022 to see whether the changes had made a difference.

- 70% of people were satisfied the agreed times for the manager to be on-site are kept to. We will look to improve this in schemes where this remains an issue.
- 82% of customers said they had received a scheme newsletter.
- 49% of respondents said they were aware of the charter. To improve this, we will send a copy of the relevant charter with the next scheme newsletter and discuss at scheme meetings.

Thanks to everyone who took part – your views count!



Grounds maintenance update

Following customer feedback that their service wasn't up to scratch, you may be aware we made the decision last year to terminate our grounds maintenance contract with idverde. Since then, we've been working to secure new contractors to carry out the work.

The plan moving forward is to split our grounds maintenance contracts into four geographical areas, which we hope will improve the service you receive. We will also have one tree contractor who will cover all of our sites across Sussex and Hampshire.

We've recently completed the tender process where contractors actively bid to take over the grounds maintenance contracts. This involved answering a set of carefully selected questions, and presenting evidence that they have the resources, quality and experience to take on one or two of our areas. A panel then carefully scored each of the bids and assessed the contractors' responses.

The new contractors will be awarded in April and their services will begin in May.



Our well-being roadshow hits the road again

Following the success of our winter well-being roadshow in October, we were delighted to hit the road again in January to offer residents in schemes practical support and advice on managing the current cost of living.

Throughout the week, we visited seven of our retirement schemes across West Sussex and Hampshire to help customers get the support they need. This included income advice, free refreshments, energy-saving tips, giveaways, and prize draws, as well as our own mini food bank.

Residents gave us a warm welcome and were pleased to see us in person. It was great to speak to customers from our schemes and the local community, hear their views and provide support where we could. A few residents took the opportunity to raise concerns and issues, which were taken away by staff and Board members to investigate further. It was also a fantastic opportunity for our residents to socialise with neighbours, all while enjoying a warm cuppa and a selection of sandwiches and sweet treats.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone that came along and hope everyone who attended found it beneficial. We plan to hit the road for a third time in the coming months, so keep your eyes peeled for more information!



MONDAY
ALAN CHUN HOUSE,
SOUTHAMPTON

TUESDAY
GREEN MEADOWS,
PULBOROUGH

THURSDAY
BRIDGES COURT,
HORSHAM

WEDNESDAY
MANOR COURT,
WORTHING

TUESDAY
OSMUND COURT,
BILLINGSHURST

FRIDAY
HORDERN HOUSE,
HORSHAM

MONDAY
MAIDMENT COURT,
HENFIELD

Our support doesn't stop there...

We understand that many people are feeling the effects of the rising cost of living, so if you are struggling, please reach out to us! We have lots of information and advice regarding the current cost of living and energy crisis in our helping hand guide which you can download via the link in your email. If you've received a physical copy of Spotlight, a copy of our helping hand guide has been included.



Easter holidays fun

We all love the Easter holidays and spending time with the family, but keeping the little ones entertained can be a challenge! To help, here are some ideas to keep the boredom at bay:



Easter egg hunts and adventures

Egg hunts are a great way to keep the kids (and adults) entertained, all whilst eggsploring the great outdoors. Head over to “Where To Go With Kids” to find out more about events in the South East: <https://wheretogowithkids.co.uk/easter-events/best-easter-events-south-east>.

These trails can sometimes come with a small fee, so if you’re looking for a cheaper alternative, why not create your own hunt? You could use hard boiled eggs, which the kids can decorate or buy some chocolate eggs from your local supermarket to set up some Easter fun at home.

Easter treats

If the weather isn’t looking great, there are still plenty of things that you can do inside. Curling up with a movie, having a craft morning or baking some Easter themed treats are perfect family activities. Here’s one of our favourite recipes from www.bbcgoodfood.com that the kids can get involved with, and is tasty enough for the adults to enjoy!



Recipe © Immediate Media Company Ltd. 2023

Easy Easter Nests

You’ll need:

- 200g of milk chocolate
- 85g of shredded wheat
- Some chocolate mini eggs

Method

STEP 1

Melt the chocolate in a small bowl placed over a pan of barely simmering water. Pour the chocolate over the shredded wheat and stir well to combine.

STEP 2

Spoon the chocolate wheat into 12 cupcake cases and press the back of a teaspoon in the centre to create a nest shape. Place 3 mini chocolate eggs on top of each nest. Chill the nests in the fridge for 2 hrs until set.

Reducing food waste with community fridges

Community fridges are independent charities that work like foodbanks. They provide food parcels to those in need, whilst also making food that would otherwise be wasted, freely available to anyone who drops by.

Check out our Helping Hand Guide for the locations of a few community fridges.

If you are struggling with the current cost of groceries, The Trussell Trust is a national charity that has a list of foodbanks in your area. To find your nearest, call 01722 580 180 or go to: www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-afoodbank/



Funding secured for Slinfold redevelopment project

In December, Homes England confirmed they will be financially supporting us to redevelop The Cobblers in Slinfold. The Cobblers currently consists of 17 outdated retirement flats which are no longer fit for purpose.

The funding of £660,000 will enable us to replace these flats with 12 modern one and two-bedroom homes for affordable rent. The new properties will also be designed to meet zero net carbon standards.

The demolition of the existing building took place in February and work is now underway with Westridge Construction to complete the redevelopment by the end of the year.



More affordable homes for more people

Ecclesden Park, Angmering

At the end of last year, several properties at Ecclesden Park in Angmering completed for both affordable rent and shared ownership purchase. The properties have been built in partnership with Barratt David Wilson, with more expected to handover in the autumn of this year.



Recently completed properties at Ecclesden Park

New Monks Park, Lancing

In January, we took handover of four new shared ownership homes at New Monks Park, Lancing. We also launched the sales of our latest phase of shared ownership properties in February, which are due to complete in April this year.



Newly built homes at New Monks Park

Interested in shared ownership?

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



WEALD LIVING
BY SAXON WEALD

Saxon Weald House, 38-42 Worthing Road, Horsham, RH12 1DT |

Tel: 01403 226060 | Email: info@wealdliving.com | www.wealdliving.com

Saxon Weald is a charitable Community Benefit Society (reg no. 7971) Registered with the Regulator of Social Housing L4299 • VAT reg 742 3736 34

