

Latest news and
updates on our
services

PLUS

details of
our new
development
properties



Your view

From health and safety to our services and more... how your feedback has helped shape our new corporate plan.



Lockdown penpals

How Alayna helped residents stay in touch with each other through lockdown by setting up a letter writing club.



Gardening competition

Show us your garden pictures for a chance to win a prize. Find out more on page 7.



Your view

We have been working on our corporate plan which sets out our priorities for the next three years. In March, we asked you to give your opinion on what matters most and where we should focus improvement. Here's what you told us.

Who replied?

An incredible 1375 customers gave us their views. This is a much bigger response than we normally receive, so thank you for taking the time to make your voice heard.

I didn't get asked; why not?

The survey was sent out via email and text message, so we needed to have either a mobile number or email address for you. Please let us know if your contact details change so we can keep you involved. We do carry out surveys by other methods such as telephone call, so you won't be excluded if you are not online.

Headline results

Many of you told us we are doing well, but there is room for improvement.

- You would like us to do more communal maintenance works.
- You think we should take more care over the look of our neighbourhoods, with grounds maintenance a main area of concern.
- You have told us we need to improve our day-to-day communication and get better at listening to customers.

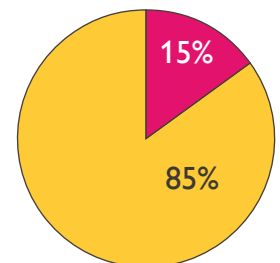
Neighbourhoods

We asked if you felt we contributed enough to your neighbourhood. 71% of respondents agreed that we did. Of those who disagreed, grounds maintenance was a major concern. However, we also received a significant number of comments about our visibility within neighbourhoods and that we should be seen out and about more. There were also lots of comments here about improving our communication, for example, letting you know what is happening about repairs or improvement works.

However, when we asked if you felt we should spend more money on neighbourhoods, most of you disagreed, saying that homes should be the priority.

Should we spend more on neighbourhoods, even if it means spending less on homes?

■ YES ■ NO

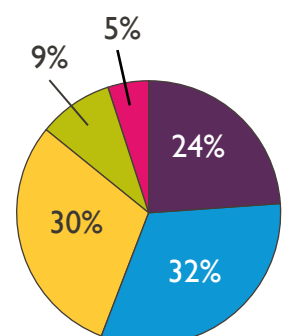


Health and safety

We asked if you were satisfied with the health and safety of your home. Only 55% of Weald Living customers said they were satisfied, but a further 30% were indifferent. Your biggest concerns related to the condition of communal areas, including poor lighting, items left in corridors and issues with door entry systems. Some people also expressed concern about others in their block not following Covid guidelines. Reassuringly, very few people reported any worries in relation to fire safety.

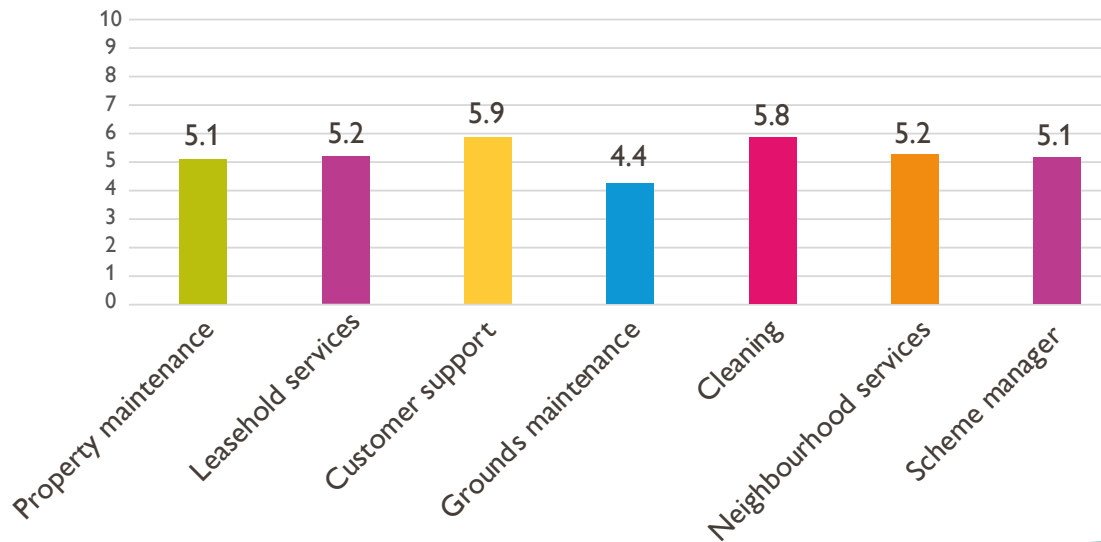
How satisfied Weald Living customers are with the health and safety of their homes

■ Very satisfied
 ■ Fairly satisfied
 ■ Neither/nor
 ■ Fairly unsatisfied
 ■ Unsatisfied



Our services

We asked you to score a number of our service areas out of 10. We know many of our services have been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic but are still disappointed in the average scores we received. We will be looking closely at how we can improve.



On the bright side

Thank you to everyone who took the time to express their appreciation for our services. It really means a lot to us to know that we are making a positive difference to people's lives.

"First class service from a first-class company."

"There is nothing to add, the service has been superb."

What now?

Your feedback has given us really useful information to work on. Some things we are acting on immediately, while other views will be considered by our Board in agreeing our three-year plan.

Immediate action:

- We are contacting around 350 customers who left comments that we thought needed following up. We will work with them to resolve their individual issues or concerns wherever possible.
- We have given detailed information on the scores and customer comments to idverde, our grounds maintenance contractor. They are auditing all the areas where we scored most poorly to find out what action is needed to put the situation right. We will be monitoring their performance extremely closely over the coming months.
- We are arranging training in leasehold services for our customer support team, so they are more confident in answering your queries at first point of contact.

For consideration

Our senior management team and Board are considering all of the feedback and how this should be reflected in our three-year plan. This will include looking at spending priorities and how your feedback fits in with government requirements, such as meeting certain environmental targets.

We know that one of our priorities is to increase our customer feedback and involvement activity and we've already signed up to the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants charter.



Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)

At Saxon Weald, we believe everyone has the right to feel safe in their home, which is why we've signed up to the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation scheme. DAHA is a partnership between three agencies: housing associations Peabody and Gentoo, and London-based charity Standing Together Against Domestic Violence. Their mission is to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards.

We are committed to supporting anyone who is experiencing domestic abuse and will be using information from the scheme to equip our staff with the skills and knowledge they need to effectively handle instances of domestic abuse that arise. Staff will also be educated on how to support victims of domestic abuse, working in partnership with agencies to help keep individuals and families safe in their homes.

If you're experiencing domestic abuse or concerned about someone you know, there are

a range of support networks and services available to you. You are not alone.

If you're in immediate danger, call 999 and ask to speak to the police. If you're unable to talk, listen to the questions from the operator and, if possible, respond by coughing or tapping the headset.

- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge**
Freephone: 0808 200 0247
W: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- **Men's Advice Line**
T: 0808 801 0327
W: www.mensadvice.org.uk
- **For more information and additional support services, visit:**
www.saxonweald.com/news/coronavirus---domestic-abuse.html



EU Settlement Scheme

In January, the UK officially left the European Union (EU). If you're an EU citizen and you've chosen to make the UK your home, you'll need to make an application to the EU Settlement Scheme.

What is the EU Settlement Scheme?

The scheme is a process that every EU citizen living in the UK needs to go through to gain something called 'indefinite leave to remain'. This means that you can stay in the UK for as long as you like.

When do applications need to be submitted by?

The closing date for applications is 30 June 2021. If you don't make your application in time, there is a chance that your social security benefits, social housing, and social care services among other things could be lost.

Am I eligible to apply?

If you have lived in the UK for more than 5 years, you may qualify for settled status.

How can I get help with my application?

If you need some advice and assistance, the government has provided funding to several independent organisations that can help you with your application. You can find a list of these organisations here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-community-support-for-vulnerable-citizens/list-of-organisations.

For more information on the scheme, head over to: www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families





Putting pen to paper in lockdown

Staying connected has been a challenge many of us have faced throughout the pandemic. For our residents at Cranbrook however, many of whom have been shielding, keeping in touch with neighbours was possible thanks to some great thinking from one of our onsite care workers, Alayna.

Alayna, who works for Carewatch, wanted to do something to help tackle isolation and loneliness during this difficult time, so she started a resident pen pals group within the scheme.

The group first came about at the start of the year after a resident received a letter from her neighbour. Alayna saw how happy the letter made the resident and inspired her to start a pen pals group to give more people the chance to keep in contact with their neighbours and friends during lockdown.

After a bit of organisation, the first letters were posted to residents who wanted to take part on Friday 19 February. Alayna worked hard to carefully match people as well as she could, and so far, has had positive feedback from those involved.

Alayna shared her delight at the outcome: "The group gives everyone the opportunity to have someone to write to and to make new friends. Just knowing that something as simple as a letter has helped people feel more connected with each other during this lonely time has been just wonderful, and I hope to get more residents involved. All it took was a cardboard box, some paper and a little of my time! I would love for other places to adopt this idea to help us all feel more connected".

Grounds maintenance update



During the winter, idverde carried out a large scale condition survey on all our communal trees, to identify any requiring work. Trees needing work have been given a risk rating and work will be carried out based on this rating from urgent to low. If you have concerns over a tree that you believe to be dead, diseased or dangerous, let us know so we can arrange for a survey to be carried out.

During the summer, idverde operatives will be increasingly visible in our communities carrying out lots of grounds maintenance jobs including grass cutting and hedge trimming.

March to August is considered nesting season, so before any work is carried out to trees or hedges, idverde will complete a survey to check for any nests. They will not cut within two metres of any nest found to avoid disturbing it. If a safe distance can't be maintained, the work will be rescheduled.

How we monitor performance

idverde's performance is based on the quality of the maintenance provided, rather than the frequency of their visits. Some of our performance measures include; communal grass not exceeding 50mm, shrubs not being overgrown, obstructive or dead, and paved areas being free from a build up of weeds. However, in these busy months please allow for some growth between visits.

Our Housing Managers, Scheme Managers and Neighbourhood Services operatives, will be visiting our sites auditing idverde's work in the coming months and feeding back any concerns. If you notice any areas are missed or require additional attention, please let us know. Alternatively, you can raise your concerns with idverde by emailing saxonweald@idverde.co.uk.

Great homes, building futures!

It's been an exciting year for our Development and Sales teams. With six schemes on site, some recent completions and more plans in the pipeline, we're well on the way to delivering 500 new affordable homes by 2024.

Saxon Mills, Hassocks

In our spring edition of Spotlight, we shared an update on our Saxon Mills development in Hassocks. We're pleased to say that the final phase of 23 new flats is now complete and all properties have been handed over to us.



Newly completed homes in Shermanbury

We're also pleased to share that our seven brand-new two and three-bedroom houses in Shermanbury have also recently completed, all featuring an electric car-charging point. The collection of homes includes three shared ownership properties, which proved to be very popular (attracting 67 enquiries!) and were all allocated within a week of launching. The four affordable rented properties at the site were all let to people with a local connection.

Coming soon – New Monks Park, Lancing

Construction is also progressing well at our upcoming site in Lancing. In partnership with CALA Homes, we're working to deliver 45 new homes for affordable rent and 30 new homes for shared ownership purchase. The completed site will also welcome a brand-new IKEA store, include a 28-hectare country park, and is conveniently located for travel to coastal hotspots such as Worthing and Brighton. Properties on this development will range from one-bedroom flats to three-bedroom houses and will be available on a phased release from Summer 2021 to 2025.



Redevelopment sites

We're currently in the construction phase at four different sites in the Horsham area; to redevelop some of our older properties and garage sites and provide more affordable homes on land we already own. These sites are Page Court (New Street), Blenheim Road and Bennetts Road in Horsham, as well as Pathfield Close in Rudgwick.

Page Court, Horsham

Page Court, an outdated retirement scheme, was previously made up of three bungalows and 42 flats, 17 of which were bedsits with a single communal shower room. We're excited to share that the redeveloped site will deliver 40 contemporary general needs flats, all for affordable rent, and eight, two and three-bedroom houses for social rent. The new homes are due to be ready in spring 2022.



Blenheim Road, Horsham

24 garages off Blenheim Road in Horsham are being replaced with a block of nine new flats for affordable rent. This will include three, one-bedroom and six, two-bedroom homes for up to 30 people. The properties are due to complete in January 2022.

Bennetts Road, Horsham

Our upcoming development on Bennetts Road in Horsham will have the potential to house up to 71 residents in a mixture of one and two-bedroom flats and three, three-bedroom houses. The development replaces six older properties, which were housing just 11 people, enabling us to provide a greater number of homes to people in housing need. These homes are due to be complete in October 2021.

Pathfield Close, Rudgwick

Six bungalows in Pathfield Close, Rudgwick, which were suffering from severe subsidence, are also in the process of being replaced. Construction is well underway with the four new two-bedroom houses and two, three-bedroom houses set to be ready in autumn 2021.



Across our upcoming sites, the total number of affordable homes will increase from 57 to 84, with the potential occupant capacity more than doubling to around 300. All properties will be available for affordable rent (with eight properties for social rent) and will be allocated to those on the housing register, based on nominations received from Horsham District Council.

What's coming up?

We've recently exchanged contracts with Barratt Homes on their Water Lane development in Angmering. The site will provide 53 new homes for affordable rent and shared ownership purchase in the Arun District and will be delivered in phases, with the first completion expected in July 2022.

Ready, steady, GROW!

It's competition time, and this year we have two great prizes up for grabs.

'Best individual garden'

Have a garden of your own that you're keen to show off? Send in a picture to be in with a chance of winning a £50 voucher for a garden centre of your choice.

'Best communal garden'

If you live in an apartment block or one of our retirement or extra care schemes, and have a communal garden you and your neighbours are proud of, why not enter for the chance to win a £100 garden centre voucher for your block/scheme.

To enter, simply send a photo to competitions@saxonweald.com by Friday 30 July 2021. Don't forget to include your name, telephone number and the category you're entering in the subject line or message*.

*Terms & conditions

Entrants must be Saxon Weald or Weald Living residents. Entries are limited to one per household. Employees of Saxon Weald are not permitted to enter. Entries must be submitted by Friday 30 July 2021. The winner will be chosen by Saxon Weald staff and notified by telephone, email or in writing within five weeks of the closing date. Vouchers cannot be exchanged for a cash alternative. By entering, you agree to your name and photo submitted being published online and/or in future editions of Spotlight.



COMPETITION

September service charges

We've recently been contacted by several customers asking whether there will be a reduction in costs for services provided during 2020/21. This will not be the case due to the fact we have incurred additional costs during the pandemic to enable us to maintain these services, including provision of PPE and alternative working arrangements. While we won't be passing these on, we do need to keep these charges at usual levels.

Grounds maintenance

While we accept that grass wasn't cut as often as we would like, particularly during the spring, this was down to circumstances beyond our control. idverde put in measures to make sure they were providing the best service they could in the circumstances. In doing so they incurred significant additional costs due to PPE and additional vans and equipment. They have now caught up on other maintenance tasks such as cutting back hedges etc.

Other services

Catering, cleaning and scheme manager charges will also remain applicable for last year. While services may have been delivered in an adapted format, our scheme managers were working and could be reached by phone when they weren't on site. Additional cleaning measures were put in place and catering teams went the extra mile to make sure meals could be delivered to individual apartments when restaurants were closed.

Thank you for your understanding.

Stay BBQ safe this summer

As we head into the summer months more and more of us will be heading outside for some al fresco cooking and dining! However, it's important to ensure good BBQ safety.

Getting started

- Ensure your BBQ is on level ground and away from anything that could catch fire
- Wear appropriate clothing, avoiding anything too loose or floaty
- **Never have a BBQ on a balcony**
- Have a means of extinguishing a fire in case of an emergency

Gas BBQs

- Make sure the controls and cylinder valves are turned off before you change the cylinder and only do this outside
- Always ensure the LPG regulator is compatible with the cylinder and appliance
- Ensure all appliances are turned off at night



Charcoal BBQs

- Keep charcoal supply away from the fire
- Only use recommended fluids or firelighters - never petrol
- Ensure coals are cool before moving the BBQ and empty ash onto garden soil - never into a bin

Disposable BBQs

- Always ensure your BBQ is fully cooled before disposing of it by pouring cold water on it - BBQs that are still warm and not fully extinguished could re-ignite and cause a fire
- Never take a smouldering or lit BBQ into a tent, caravan or cabin

For more information, head over to:
www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/barbecue/.



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