



WEALD
Living

Spotlight

The Newsletter for Weald Living Customers | Winter 2020

Our latest news and handy tips to make living in your home a little easier as we head into winter.



Complaints

What we're doing to make the process easier and how what you have said to us has made a difference to what we do



It's our 20th anniversary

We look back at some of our milestone moments since Saxon Weald was founded



Grounds maintenance

The latest news on what idverde are doing to keep your communal gardens in shape

Your Voice

We know how important it is to listen to the views of our customers, which is why we've launched a new section on our website dedicated to your voice. We encourage you to get involved and share your views with us, as it helps us learn what we can do better. After all, there's no-one better placed to tell us what's working well and where we need to improve than our customers!

Throughout the year, there may be opportunities for you to get involved and share your views. If you're keen to have your say, head over to our website to register your interest: www.wealdliving.com/your-voice/getting-involved.



Sharing of your information – National Fraud Initiative

Saxon Weald is required by law to protect the public funds we administer. We may share information provided to us with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds, in order to prevent and detect fraud. The Cabinet Office currently requires us to participate in its anti-fraud initiative. For this, we are providing tenancy details so that they can be compared to information provided by other public bodies. This will ensure, for example, that no housing benefit is being paid to persons no longer entitled.

Sometimes wrong payments are made because of a genuine error. Previous exercises have uncovered instances of tenants receiving too little housing benefit. These exercises help promote the best use of public funds. The information is currently collected every two years and we have just submitted our data for the latest exercise. To find out more about the initiative, visit: www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-fraud-initiative.

Service with respect

Many people have shown amazing acts of kindness during the pandemic, going above and beyond to help friends and neighbours. Sadly, while the crisis has brought out the best in many, it has also seen a rise in abuse aimed at customer-facing staff. This has been in all sectors from retail and restaurants to public services.

This has also been the case at Saxon Weald. Our staff have experienced some extremely abusive language and threatening behaviour. We hope you agree that this is simply not on. No one should be abused because they are trying to do their job. To protect our staff, we have adopted an 'unreasonable behaviour' policy. This sets out the action we will take against those few who behave in an unacceptable way. This could mean limiting that person's contact with us, reporting them to the Police or even taking legal action against them. We have also signed up to the national Service with Respect campaign, which is calling for Government to do more to protect front-line workers.

Thankfully, this policy only applies to a small number of customers. We're very grateful to everyone who has shown our staff their support and appreciation during this difficult year.





Welcoming complaints

If something has gone wrong with our service, we are always happy to hear from you. It gives us the chance to put things right for you, but also the chance to improve our services for others too.

Number of complaints received

From April to September Saxon Weald received 184 complaints. Of these, only nine people were not happy with our first response and went to the second stage of our complaints process. This compares to 250 complaints received in the same time frame last year. The drop is largely due to the spring lockdown when we received very few customer complaints.

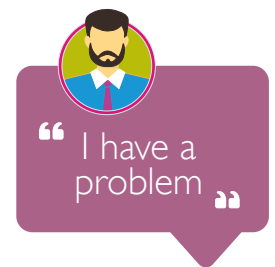
The biggest cause of complaints was people unhappy with the timescales given for repairs. This is perhaps unsurprising in a year where we have had to cope with physical restrictions, staff welfare issues and supply problems brought about by Coronavirus.

Learning from complaints

- A customer complained about the length of time it had taken to fix a drainage issue in a communal area. Our investigation showed we had carried out numerous repairs but had never resolved the cause of the problem. To prevent this happening again, we will always carry out a CCTV survey for communal drainage issues, before we try to fix the problem. This should ensure we deal with the problem correctly first-time round.
- We have had several complaints about our grounds maintenance service. To improve reporting and monitoring of these problems, our contractor has set up an online system which will enable us to keep track of their progress.

How to complain

It's easy! Just get in touch in whatever way suits you best. Tell us what the problem is and what we can do to resolve it. We will get back to you within three days with our response wherever possible. Most complaints are resolved at this stage. If you are still unhappy however, your complaint will be reviewed by our customer experience team. If we are still unable to agree a solution, you have the right to complain to the Independent Housing Ombudsman. Check out their website for details www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk or call them on 0300 111 3000.



Changes to our complaints policy

The Housing Ombudsman has recently introduced a complaints handling code for members. We have made a few minor changes to our policy as a result, including adopting the Ombudsman's official definition of a complaint. This is 'a complaint shall be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.'

The main requirement of the new code was for organisations to adopt a two-stage process, which we already had in place. The code also sets timescales for responding to complaints, but our own timescales are already faster.





Saxon Weald turns 20!

It's been 20 years since Saxon Weald was formed, taking on the majority of Horsham District Council's housing stock. Starting with 4,609 properties and just 100 staff, we have grown to over 6,700 homes and more than double the number of staff.

Over the forthcoming year we will be celebrating this milestone birthday with you and will be letting you know our plans as they develop. For now, here's a recap of some of the key moments of our journey.

2001

Saxon Weald celebrated moving to our new Horsham town centre office



2005

Over 1,000 modernisations and improvements had been completed by 2005 and £28 million invested in homes



2006

Our first extra care scheme, Osmund Court opened and we welcomed 310 homes in Southampton from Rosebrook Housing Association



2007
5,168
Homes

2005

2006

2008

2008

2009

2009

2000
4,609
Homes

In the beginning we had to decommission a lot of older, outdated homes, before rebuilding better modern ones

2001

2002

2003

2003

2004

We received an 'excellent prospects' rating from the Audit Commission



Our first new build homes! Delighted residents moved into our 40 modern new homes in Arun Road, Billingshurst



Do you remember these logos?

**SAXON
WEALD HOMES**



Our in-house repairs service, HomeFix was launched in February 2009



2012

Standings Court in Horsham opened providing 38 new homes, 12 of which were to Passivhaus standard, the most eco efficient in the country



2014
6,086
Homes

2014

1,000 new homes built!
We celebrated our 1,000th new build home at Harvest Meadows, Southwater



2016

We bought 81 market rent properties at Pelham and Waverley Courts in Horsham and established our Weald Living brand for our leaseholders, shared owners and market rent tenants



2013

2015

Our 1,500th new build home was in Alley Groves, Cowfold in 2017

2013

We received two design awards for Standings Court from LABC (Local Authority Building Control) and Horsham Society's Design Award



2012

2016

2017

We now have 11 extra care schemes!

2018

2010

Residents moved into four new completed extra care schemes: Highdown Court, Leggyfield Court, Downlands Court and Margaret House



2010

2018

Our original Chief Executive, David Standfast retired after 18 years and Steven Dennis stepped up in his place



2019

We received our second Investors in People Gold award and residents moved into our 64 new homes at Winterton Square, Horsham



2020
6,761
Homes

2019

2020

Saxon Weald turns 20 in December 2020. Thank you to all our residents for your support along the way

20 Years



SAXON
WEALD

Subletting your home

As a leaseholder, you may be able to sub-let your home. This will depend on your lease, the type of property you live in, and is subject to speaking with our Home Ownership Manager first.



If we grant permission and you decide to sub-let, you'll need to advise us of your new contact details, who the incoming tenant is and when the tenancy will change. Please remember, you are responsible for the tenant and their behaviour, and remain responsible for paying any service charges associated with the property.

To find out more or to request permission to sub-let your home, please email our Home Ownership Manager at homeownership@wealdliving.com.



Making changes to your home

Many of us have spent a lot more time at home over the last nine months, giving us an opportunity to notice the bits and bobs around our properties that we'd like to improve or change. However, it's important to remember that any changes you'd like to make must be approved by us in writing first. This includes alterations to doors, walls, flooring, bathrooms, kitchens, fireplaces and internal room layouts. It also includes putting up sheds, walls or fences outdoors, and the removal of hedges, grass or bushes.

Please be aware that if changes are carried out without our consent, you may be asked to undo the work and return the property to its original condition at your expense.

For more information about alterations and permissions or if you'd like to apply for permission to make a change to your property, please visit www.wealdliving.com/home-owner-services/making-changes-to-your-home/

or email home.ownership@saxonweald.com.

Winter grounds maintenance

Since October, our grounds maintenance contractor, *idverde*, has been moving away from cutting the grass at our schemes and properties. This is because the grass is simply too wet to cut and grows very slowly this time of year.

As a result, you'll likely see operatives from *idverde*, including their grass teams, spending more time on the winter pruning of shrubs and hedges. This will include reducing them all significantly in height.

Please don't be alarmed if it looks as though the greenery has had a good hair cut! This will put them all on the front foot come Spring, when everything begins to blossom once again.



Providing great homes for more people

In October, we were excited to launch our latest collection of two and three-bedroom shared ownership properties at The Meadows in Shermanbury. Built in partnership with Riverdale Developments, The Meadows will also offer four new homes for affordable rent, with handover anticipated in Spring 2022.

Earlier in the year, we also exchanged contracts with CALA Homes for the affordable housing element of their upcoming New Monks Farm development in Lancing. The site will feature a mixture of tenures, with Saxon Weald delivering 75 affordable homes in phases one and two, including 45 for affordable rent and 30 for shared ownership purchase.

Homes at New Monks Farm will be delivered over the next four years, and once completed, will benefit from a brand-new IKEA store and 28-hectare country park on site.



Properties at Shermanbury, near Henfield



The beach at Lancing

Keeping communal areas clear

In the event of a fire, it's essential that residents can evacuate a building safely and without obstruction. It's therefore crucial that communal areas are kept clear at all times.

Items that we typically receive reports about or find left in communal areas include pushchairs, bikes and scooters. Please can we remind residents that absolutely no items should be stored in communal areas under any circumstance. This includes in the hallways, under the stairs, outside your front door and any other communal area.

Any items that are found incorrectly stored in communal areas will be removed by Saxon Weald, and the associated removal costs will be charged back to the residents they belong to.

As a resident, you are also responsible for taking care of the communal areas of your building.



Please remember:

- To dispose of waste appropriately – do not leave rubbish outside your flat
- To keep communal areas tidy and clear of possible obstructions
- Fire doors must not be wedged open
- Smoking is prohibited in any indoor communal area
- During the festive period - a wreath on the door is fine but no lights or Christmas trees please

Christmas Closure

We will be shutting down for the Christmas holidays from 4pm on Wednesday 23 December until Monday 4 January at 8.30am.

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

Remember, you can access your account anytime at mywealdliving.com. To ensure you can access your account as a new user, please ensure that you register before we finish on Wednesday 23 December, as we'll need to send new users a verification code. Please also be aware that any payments made or repairs booked during our Christmas shutdown will not be processed until we return on Monday 4 January.



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

Merry Christmas

Christmas Support

For many of us, the festive season 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 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

The Trussell Trust – local foodbanks: www.trusselltrust.org
T: 01722 580180

Shelter – housing advice services
www.england.shelter.org.uk
T: 0808 800 4444

MyWEALDLiving

get c^onnected

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:

- Report repairs
- Update your personal information
- View upcoming appointments
- Send us a secure message
- View statements



Find out more at mywealdliving.com

 The Institute of
Customer Service

 INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | Gold

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