



WEALD
Living

Spotlight

The Newsletter for Weald Living Customers | Winter 2021

Latest news and updates on our services

PLUS

handy tips to help you through the winter months



Domestic abuse

All the latest on what we are doing to help survivors and how you might be able to help too.



Energy bills

With energy prices rising and increased costs is it time to switch your provider?



Christmas Fire safety

Keep your home safe over the festive period.

www.wealdliving.com

Rounding up the year

And so, we move towards the end of another challenging and difficult year. I think that most of us found the third lockdown that started in January to be the most difficult to get through, and our collective relief as measures were eased was palpable.



Having said that, what we have now found is a world still working hard to get back to normal. Great Britain has had the double whammy of Brexit and the Coronavirus pandemic to deal with of course, and this has put a strain on many businesses and the services being delivered. The fuel shortage at the beginning of October certainly didn't help!

At Saxon Weald, we have been swamped by an increase in calls from our customers, putting additional strain on our HomeFix service who are trying to deal with the backlog of work built up over lockdown. Your patience and understanding as we get back to normal is most welcome.

Whilst that all paints a rather gloomy picture, there are reasons to look ahead with confidence and optimism. Our new Corporate Plan promises to set aside more money to invest in improving services, as well as our existing homes. We are continuing to build more good quality, affordable homes for those who need them, all while supporting the government's aim for the UK to be net carbon zero by 2050.

Although there are challenges ahead, please be assured that our vision, 'great homes, building futures' will remain at the heart of everything we do.

Steven Dennis,

Chief Executive

A great place to work

It's the people at Saxon Weald that make us special. In exchange for their hard work, we make sure our staff get the training and benefits they deserve, including:

- 27 days annual leave, plus bank holidays
- An excellent pension scheme – with Saxon Weald contributing 6-12%
- 4 x salary life assurance
- A wellbeing plan including flexible working, cash back on day-to-day medical expenses, flu jabs, an employee assistance programme and cycle to work scheme

For our available positions, visit www.saxonweald.com/careers.



A warm welcome

We're very pleased to introduce Kay Clough, our new customer engagement manager. Kay's role is all about making it easy for you to have a say in our services and performance. This could be anything from focus groups to online forums, or perhaps estate monitors and mystery shoppers. Kay will try it all out and see what works best for you. She'll also be responsible for letting colleagues know what you think so they can make changes and improvements.

What are you looking forward to most about the job?

Kay: I can't wait to get out and about and start talking to people. Surveys and statistics are very important, but nothing beats having a conversation to really understand how people are feeling.

What can we expect from you?

Kay: Openness and honesty. I'll be all ears in listening to customers so I can work with colleagues on where we can improve. But equally, I won't promise the earth if I don't think we can deliver.

Welcome on-board Kay!



The latest addition to our Board

We'd like to give a warm welcome to Susan Morris, who joined us back in October as a tenant board member, having been a Saxon Weald resident for over a decade.

Susan brings a wealth of experience to Saxon Weald, having previously worked in the charity, education and research sectors, in roles ranging from teaching, special educational needs to youth advisor. She now has shared ownership/directorship of a business that specialises in psychoeducation and coaching for individuals with autism, ADHD, trauma and mental health issues. Susan thrives when working with people from challenging circumstances and takes pleasure in inspiring them to take action and achieve.

We have no doubt Susan's contributions will make a positive difference for our residents.



Domestic abuse update

We want you to feel you can speak to our staff if you're experiencing domestic abuse or have concerns about a neighbour or friend. So, over the last couple of months, we've focused on training our teams to have a better understanding and awareness.

We've also updated our website to include lots of information and set up a focus group to help shape our domestic abuse policy. A big thank you to those customers who volunteered to help, your input moving forward will be invaluable.

We want to support more victims of domestic abuse to come forward. If you're a survivor and want to share your story to encourage others, please email DAHA@saxonweald.com. Your information will be kept confidential and anything we share of your experience will be kept anonymous.



Thanks for taking part!

Thank you to the 331 residents who took part in our scheme manager service survey in the summer. The feedback we received was generally positive, but we know residents would like to see improved communication and increased staff visibility in our schemes. We will be speaking with you in the months ahead about what this will look like for you and your scheme. Stay tuned for more information. We'd also like to congratulate a resident from Bridges Court who won a £100 shopping voucher in our prize draw!

Welcoming you back



We're pleased to announce that

Saxon Weald house will be opening its doors to both staff and customers once again in the new year, though there will be a few changes.

From January, customer visits to our office will be by appointment only. If you need to speak with someone in person, please get in touch with the relevant team to book a time to come in.

We look forward to welcoming you back.

A polite reminder...

Access to your home

If you have an appointment booked which requires access inside your property, it's essential you're available to let us in and be at home during our visit. If you're unable to be in, you must ensure a key holder over the age of 18 is available instead. This is to ensure the safety of you, our operatives, and contractors. Providing our operatives can access the area safely, you do not need to be home when we attend to complete external works.



Keeping communal areas clear

Saxon Weald has a zero-tolerance policy for anything left in communal spaces. This means absolutely nothing should be kept or stored in the communal areas of blocks and schemes, even temporarily. This is to comply with fire regulations and keep our residents safe. If items are found in communal areas, and are deemed a risk, they will be removed, and the cost of removal will be recharged.



Let's put an end to fly-tipping

In 2021 alone, it cost us around £10,000 to dispose of items that were inappropriately discarded by residents. Please remember that communal bin stores are for bagged household waste and recycling only, which is collected by the local council. Larger items, such as furniture or appliances, should be taken to your local household waste recycling site. Alternatively, collection should be arranged via an approved waste carrier. By disposing of waste appropriately, you can help us put that money to better use in future.



How to bleed a radiator

Over time, it's normal for air to build up in your radiators. You can release any trapped air by bleeding them. You will just need a radiator key, which you can pick up from your local DIY store or Amazon for less than a couple of pounds.

What are the signs your radiator needs bleeding?

If your radiator is cold at the top but hot at the bottom, there's a good chance you need to bleed it. You may also be hearing funny noises, such as gulping, gurgling, and rattling.

Bleeding radiators in 7 steps:

1. Turn on the heating and wait for your radiators to warm up.
2. Check each one to identify if they need bleeding (take care as they may be hot).
3. Turn off your heating and wait for the radiators to cool.
4. Locate the bleed valve (a round hole with a square inside, often found at the top of the radiator to the side) and insert the key. *Tip: have a cloth to hand to catch any water that may be released.*
5. Turn the key to open the valve. You'll hear a hissing sound as the air escapes.
6. Keep the valve open until water starts coming out, then close it again.
7. Wipe away any excess water.

You'll need to repeat this process for each radiator that needs bleeding and check the pressure on your boiler once you're done. If it's low, you'll need to repressurise it. Find out how to do that here: www.saxonweald.com/living-in-your-home/repairs/Guides

Rise in energy bills and service charge increases

As you may be aware, current global energy prices have put enormous pressure on the energy market this year, with gas and electricity prices reaching record levels. This has caused some smaller suppliers to cease trading, simply because they cannot afford to purchase energy at the increased costs and provide it to their customers.

This worldwide surge resulted in a price increase back in October when we renewed our communal gas and electricity supply contract and will unfortunately also have a knock-on effect for our customers. The good news is that we managed to obtain a 12-month fixed rate before the peak in prices, giving protection against any further increases over this period. Customers will receive their service charge estimates for April 2022 in February, which



will highlight how much the increase is expected to be.

For gas and electricity in your own home, energy checking sites such as [USwitch](#) and [Compare the Market](#) can help you grab the best deal. It's worth checking as it might save you more than you think.

“In a world where you can be anything, be kind”



– Caroline Flack, December 2019

According to mental health charity, Mind, one in four people will experience a mental health problem of some kind each year in England. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and affects how we think, feel, and act.

Earlier this year, we received a note from one of our residents. She has experienced mental health issues throughout her life and wanted to share with you how this, and how her home, makes her feel.

If you're struggling with your mental wellbeing and need support, there are a range of services available to you. Head over to [mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk) or [mentalhealth.org.uk](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk) to find out more.

“It could be you...”

I am a tenant of Saxon Weald. I have a beautiful and secure home with good neighbours and a great community. Living here has changed my life and given me a happy retirement. A large part of that is down to an exceptional neighbour. You see, I have suffered life long mental health issues, which I have felt unable to discuss with anybody but my one trusted neighbour.

The reason for writing this is to tell you that I have heard every comment and criticism of people with mental health issues – not malicious comments, but they still hurt. Folk just don't understand, especially if they have been blessed with confidence and peace of mind. I would not wish this disability on anyone. It truly is the hidden disability. Most who suffer from it hide it and we are very good at doing that. It is not that we are ashamed, just frightened, because folk don't generally understand.

My appeal to you all is to be aware that this situation is all too common. Having an opinion on anything is fine, but your neighbour or friend could have this hidden disability too, and they deserve understanding. Remember when you are talking to your neighbours, that could be me. Awareness is everything, that goes for staff as well as tenants.

My home makes me so happy – what could be better than that?

– Saxon Weald resident

Tackle condensation this winter

When the cold, wet weather hits, we often see an increase in condensation. If left untreated, condensation can lead to mould growth and cause damage to homes.

Here are a few ways we can reduce the problem:



1 Reducing moisture:

Condensation is caused when warm damp air meets cold surfaces. Cutting down moisture levels in our homes can reduce this. When cooking, keep lids on saucepans where possible and close kitchen doors to stop steam escaping. When taking a bath or a shower, keep the bathroom door closed and wipe down wet surfaces after use. Opening windows and using extractor fans if you have them, can also help damp air escape.



2 Drying laundry:

During the winter, we may be more likely to dry wet clothes inside and on radiators. Unfortunately, this can put moisture back into the air. If possible, hang washing outside to dry. If this is not possible, keeping a window open will help moisture escape.



3 Air circulation:

A lack of ventilation can cause dampness and a musty smell in our homes. We can help air to circulate by keeping furniture away from walls, not blocking radiators or overfilling wardrobes and cupboards. Opening the windows for ten minutes each morning is also great to let in some fresh air.



4 Heating:

We understand that keeping the heating on is not always possible, especially with the current cost of energy. However, maintaining a low temperature of at least 15°C can help reduce condensation in our homes.

For more information, please visit: www.saxonweald.com/living-in-your-home/advice-and-support/condensation/

'Tis the season to be fire safe

Christmas is a time to celebrate. However, sadly, many of the things we enjoy over the festive period can be the cause of fire and accidents. This includes lights, decorations, and Christmas trees. Here are a few tips to ensure festive fire safety:



- Check your lights are in good working order and have the British Safety Standard sign
- Don't overload plug sockets
- Switch your Christmas lights off before going to bed
- Never leave candles burning unattended and keep them away from decorations
- Don't attach decorations to lights or heaters
- Use Christmas as a reminder to test your smoke alarm

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

More affordable homes for more people

Ecclesden Park, Angmering

We are excited to introduce our new development, Ecclesden Park, which is situated in a village location near the south coast and due to complete in summer 2022. Working with Barratt Homes, we will provide 53 affordable new homes, including 26 for shared ownership purchase. Our first selection of shared ownership homes will include one, two and three bedroom houses and maisonettes.

New Monks Park, Lancing

The first three phases at New Monks Park have progressed well this year. Built in partnership with CALA Homes, the first two phases are due to hand over this month, with later phases due from 2022 onwards. In CALA's first phase, we will deliver a total of 45 homes for affordable rent and 30 for shared ownership purchase.



What's coming up?

We are also pleased to share that we will be working with CALA Homes once again on their North Horsham site. Our new homes will include 14 for affordable rent and 11 for shared ownership purchase. The first homes are expected in Autumn 2022, with the rest completing in phases until 2024.

Staircasing

As a shared owner, most of our leases allow you to buy additional shares in your home, as and when you can afford to. This process is known as staircasing. The greater the share you purchase in your home, the less rent you will have to pay.

In most cases, our leases allow you to staircase to 100% of the property value, meaning you can eventually own your home outright. However, in rural areas, there is often a cap on the amount you can own, which is usually 80%. To be eligible to staircase, you must be up to date with your rent and service charge payments.

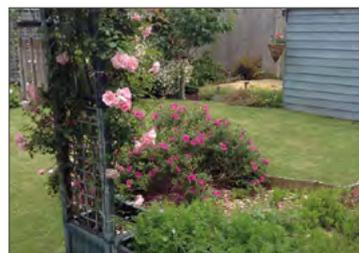
If you're interested in staircasing, you'll need to contact us to arrange an independent valuation which usually costs around £200 + VAT. For more information, or to start your staircasing journey please email sales@wealdiving.com or call us on 01403 226060.

Absolutely radishing

We're delighted to announce that Saxon Weald resident Rebecca was the winner of the "best individual garden" this year, who impressed us with her beautiful rose arch.

We'd also like to congratulate the residents of David Lockhart Court in Southampton, who won the "best communal garden" category. The hard work and effort that goes into the upkeep of their communal garden really helps to make it a lovely place for everyone to enjoy.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part and shared their beautiful gardens with us.



Christmas closure

We will be closed for Christmas from Friday 24 December, until Tuesday 4 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 mywealdliving.com. If you haven't yet signed up, please register before Friday 24 December so we can send you a verification code. 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.

Christmas support

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 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
- Domestic abuse support services: -
www.saxonweald.com/da-support-services

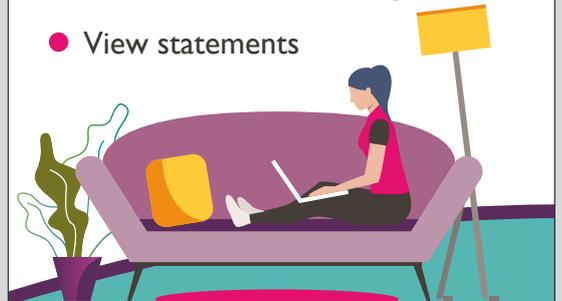


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It's so much easier online

My WealdLiving is our easy to use online service built for you. It's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from a desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile phone.

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



Sign up today at
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