

Sandbourne News

Edition 20, Winter 2018



Welcome to your winter newsletter. The festive season brings cheer and celebration for many of us, as well as the chance to reflect on the year that is drawing to a close.

Nationally the topic of housing remains in the news and the government continues its pledge to provide more affordable homes. Sandbourne will always seek to remain small and independent. However, we also wish to provide, on a small scale, additional high quality affordable homes for local residents.

Sandbourne has now had planning granted to convert the St Kilda lounge, thus creating two additional homes for the 60+ age group in Southbourne. We are also close to completing on the purchase of two houses and building one new house in Poole for the 18+ age group. This is in addition to the 12 extra properties we will have for older people if the takeover of Bournemouth Ace Housing Association goes ahead. Finally, negotiations have started for a small development project next year which will provide homes for six local families in Poole. So, on reflection, it would seem that Sandbourne is moving in the right direction in providing more homes.

I hope you enjoy this Winter edition of the newsletter and find the articles interesting and informative. We look forward to hearing your views and any thoughts about future articles.

On behalf of the Board and all the staff here at Sandbourne, I would like to wish you and your family a very merry festive season and a happy and healthy New Year.



Liz Lees, Chair of the Board

Sandbourne News ... Our primary means of communicating and engaging with all our tenants, leaseholders and shareholders and keeping you informed!

Contacting the office

The only office telephone number for Sandbourne is:

01202 671222

All correspondence should be addressed to:

Sandbourne Housing Association
Beech House, 28-30 Wimborne Road,
Poole, BH15 2BU

Email: info@sandbourne.org.uk
www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk

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A quick guide to who tenants should contact for what

Housing Services Manager/Housing Officer (Simon/Sharon) – housing related queries, ie:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Arrears – rent/service charges
- Car parking
- Complaints
- Direct Debits
- Estate issues
- Grounds maintenance and gardens
- Guest room bookings (60+ Bournemouth)
- Housing Benefit
- Leaseholder queries
- Mutual exchanging with another resident
- Pets
- Rent and rent statements
- Service charges
- Terminating your tenancy
- Transferring to another property
- Universal Credit

Chief Executive and Director of Finance (Steve and Fiona)

By appointment only, via the Administrator, if other channels have been exhausted (for example for complaints)

Maintenance Managers (Brian/Chris) – repairs & maintenance related queries, ie:

- Inspecting empty/vacant properties
- Key replacements (60+/extra care only)
- Lifts (60+ Bournemouth/extra care only)
- Planned maintenance and redecorations to communal areas
- Repairs:
 - reporting for your own property
 - reporting for communal areas
 - reporting faulty communal laundry equipment (60+/extra care)
 - chasing outstanding repairs
 - minor repairs
- Safety checks:
 - electric, gas, fire and water
 - emergency exits and lighting
 - fire alarms and smoke detectors
 - Tunstall equipment (60+/extra care only)

Administrator (Gail)

- General enquiries not covered above
- Newsletter items and articles
- TV screens (60+ Bournemouth/extra care)

Sandbourne's office hours are from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday

(except for English statutory and public holidays and the Christmas/New Year shutdown)

Calls to and from 01202 671222 may be recorded for information and training purposes.

An answer phone service is available outside of office hours or when the lines are busy.

Appointments must be made to guarantee seeing a member of staff at the office.

Bournemouth Careline

The Careline number for our residents to use is: **01202 452795**

Rented 18+ and 60+ without a Sandbourne provided Careline service - only to be used to report 'emergency' repairs when the office is closed and it is something that cannot wait to be dealt with until the next working day.

Rented 60+ and extra care (Craigleith) tenants with a Sandbourne provided Careline service - to be used to summon assistance, for example a fall; an 'emergency' out-of-hours repair; or to notify that you're going away and leaving your flat empty. Remember you can also use your emergency Careline pull cord.

Leaseholders and shared owners - only to be used for communal area 'emergencies', eg a fire that requires attention or a repair affecting the structure of the building.

Important Christmas & New Year office closure



As well as being closed for training on **Wednesday 12 December**, please note that this year the Sandbourne registered office will close at **4pm on Friday 21 December 2018** and will not re-open until **9am on Wednesday 2 January 2019**.

In an emergency (when the office is closed)

If you have an emergency when the office is closed, please report this as you would during normal out-of-office times, ie use your emergency call system if you are a 60+ resident with that facility, or call the out-of-hours service for emergency repairs if you are an 18+ or 60+ resident without a Sandbourne provided Careline service, by ringing 01202 452795.

Craigleith residents will, of course, still have the Council's contracted care and support team operating on site as normal.



**Want to see someone at the registered office?
No appointment?**



Please don't expect to be able to automatically see someone if you call into the office on the off chance.

Staff are often out on pre-arranged appointments or other work matters.

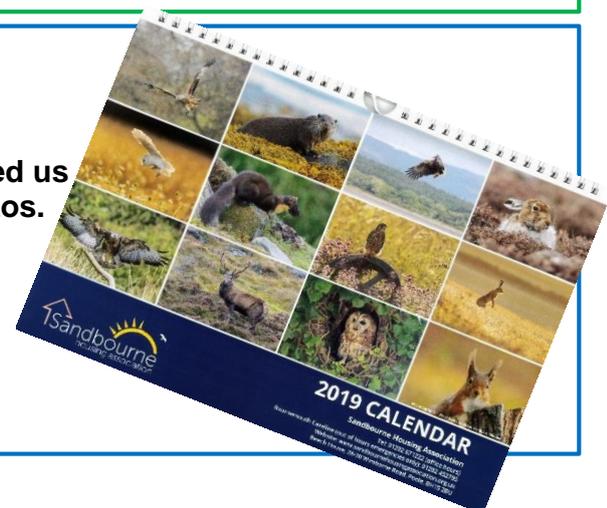
Please telephone us to make an appointment, in advance, on **01202 671222** to avoid a wasted journey/disappointment.

Your 2019 Sandbourne calendar

Following some really good feedback on the 2018 Calendar, **David Joicey, Sandbourne Board Member**, has again provided us (free of charge) with some more of his stunning wildlife photos.

We can only commend David for his patience, as well as his skill, in capturing these images.

We hope that you will find your calendar useful as well and nice to look at and it's interesting that everyone in the office who was asked, selected a different photo as their favourite.



Our other offices

Our 60+ residents at Bournemouth have been used to seeing the housing staff pop in and out of our small offices at Woodlands and Craigleith and may also have noticed that they are no longer at those offices on a regular basis or on set days of the week.

For this reason, we would ask that you don't put anything important through the letter boxes in those offices as we cannot guarantee when our staff will be able to collect them, particularly if one of them happens to be on holiday or is off sick. Here are some examples:

- Guest room booking requests should always be made by telephoning the Poole office and guest room keys should always be returned to the place you collected them from.
- We would never advise putting cash payments through the office doors and we cannot accept liability for loss. You can still put cheques through the door (clearly stating who it's from and what it's for) but obviously there might be a delay in us receiving and banking them at Poole.
- Repairs should always be notified to the Poole office as putting a note through the door could delay the works being reported on our system and being carried out.
- Termination of tenancy notices can only be put through the letter box if you have already notified and agreed this with the housing officer and the same applies to handing back keys at the end of a tenancy.
- Where we have asked you to complete a survey, we are happy to arrange to collect those from the Woodlands or Craigleith offices as we will know what date they need to be picked up by.



If in any doubt, please contact the Poole office for advice on 01202 671222.

Safeguarding/Protection from abuse

If you feel that you are being abused or suspect that another resident is being abused (physical, emotional, sexual, sensory deprivation, neglect, imposed isolation, financial/material, discriminatory), you can contact us for more information about what to do or for a leaflet. [Please note that some new types of abuse have now been added to these examples (forced marriage, modern slavery, self-neglect, exploitation or radicalisation, sexual exploitation, internet/cyber bullying)]. Alternatively, you can report this directly by contacting the relevant safeguarding team for your local authority area:

Bournemouth: 01202 454979

Poole: 01202 633902

East or North Dorset: 01305 221016

Ringwood: 0300 555 1386

Please note, if we receive any reports, we are obliged to notify the safeguarding team.

More changes to our Board ...

Since the last newsletter, we've had more changes to our Board.

In September, Graham Ball, resigned from the Board. He joined the Board at the time of the take-over of Ringwood and District Old People's Housing Society and his support and help has been invaluable and we wish him well.

Also in September, at the Board meeting, Jan Lewis was co-opted as a Board Member. Jan has a wealth of IT experience from a previous senior position with a large housing association. This was an area that the Board felt we should be recruiting for, so Jan should be well placed to offer guidance to Sandbourne.

Finally, at the Board meeting in November, we recruited and co-opted a further Board member, Yogesh Vadgama, who currently works for a large south-west housing association in an asset management role.

Both Jan and Yogesh will be formally recommended to be elected onto the Board at next year's Annual General Meeting (due to take place on 18 September), but as co-opted members they can contribute towards all Board meetings with the same rights as the other Board Members.

This will be the first time for a couple of years that we have 10 non-resident Board Members and two resident Board Members, making our maximum sized Board and we look forward to a settled time knowing that we have all of the skills needed to see Sandbourne successfully through the coming years.

Why it's important for Sandbourne to build ...

We've previously highlighted in the newsletter that we plan to convert the communal lounge at Stourwood Avenue, Bournemouth to provide two new homes for the 60+ age group, and to build a new one-bedroom house for the 18+ age group on adjoining land to one of our Ashley Road, Poole properties.



In her welcome on the front cover, the Chair of our Board also highlighted other developments and purchases we're also involved in.

We are constantly looking for development opportunities, in line with the aims of our Business Plan, to increase the number of homes we provide. We also need to meet government guidelines in addition to taking the pressure off the ever increasing demand for our properties.

With this in mind, we thought we'd share that:

- For our 175 properties for the 60+ age group in Bournemouth (excluding Craigleith), we currently have 143 applicants on our ever changing waiting list and 21 tenants on our transfer list.
- In the last calendar year, we had just eight 60+ Bournemouth properties become vacant (as opposed to the 30 vacancies we reported in our Winter 2017 edition).
- For our 18+ properties, predominantly in Poole, we don't know how many people are waiting to rent because we receive our nominations via Dorset Home Choice, but we do have 14 tenants on our transfer list and demand is always instant when there is a vacancy.
- Our waiting list for our Ringwood 60+ properties is quite small with just four people on it and five tenants wanting to transfer.
- Last year we estimated it would take us 7½ years to rehouse everyone on our waiting list in Bournemouth in our 60+ properties; now it would be more likely to take us 13 years!

There is nearly always something in the pipeline for us to consider to increase the number of homes we provide and we'll update you in coming editions of *Sandbourne News* about where and when anything is likely to come to fruition. In the meantime, hopefully, you can see why it's important for us to continue to grow our housing stock – it's not about the money, it's about housing people in need.

Managing, maintaining and improving your homes is our number one priority

We thought it was important to mention that we will only look to provide new homes when we know we can afford to and it is value for money to do so.

We will only build if it does not adversely affect our ability to provide a service to you, or means that we can still repair your homes and do any planned or improvement works to your homes without putting them off for a while.

Conversion of the St Kilda lounge in Bournemouth

This is to let the residents at Stourwood Avenue, Bournemouth, know that a notification about the St Kilda lounge, together with a questions and answers sheet, will be sent to them before the Christmas break.

This will be to give them details of a meeting to be arranged and held in early January to discuss the closure of the lounge and the start of works.

As always, residents will be able to bring a family member or friend along with them and notes will be available after the meeting for anyone who is unable to attend on the day.





Got a repair to report?

Please don't wait until you see our staff on site to report it - contact the office to ensure that it is logged on our system.

You can either:

Telephone: 01202 671222

Email: info@sandbourne.org.uk

or use the website contact form on:

www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk

Please also make sure that you give us your up-to-date contact details and check your phone for missed calls, messages or updates.

Thank you.

Coming soon ... new texting repairs
service ... see page 11

Security chains on the inside of flat doors

We wanted to remind residents in our 60+ flats that you should not put your own security chain on the inside of your front door.

If you do use a security chain, it could seriously hinder people like the emergency services being able to gain access to your flat if, for example, you have a fall and an ambulance is called. Where this has happened in the past, the fire brigade has had to be called to assist the ambulance crew getting in.

If you are unsure who is at the door, please use the 'spy hole' to see who it is.

Careline response to smoke detectors/alarms going off

Up until recently, Careline's approach to how they dealt with smoke detectors and alarms going off differed between our Bournemouth and Ringwood 60+ residents.

In Ringwood, if Careline was satisfied, after speaking to the tenant, that there wasn't a fire, the fire brigade would not be asked to attend. However, in Bournemouth when an alarm went off Careline would automatically call the fire brigade out, which resulted in many false alarm attendances by them.

After a lot of discussion, it has been agreed with Careline and the fire brigade that, when a smoke detector/fire alarm goes off and it goes through to them (Careline), they will make contact with the resident. If the alarm is no longer sounding and the resident confirms that it was triggered, for example, by burning the toast, then they will not send the fire brigade out. However, if the alarm is still sounding, after speaking to the resident, then the fire brigade will be called.

We are very conscious of not tying up the time of the fire brigade if there is no actual fire but, more importantly, we don't ever want to be in a position whereby a life is lost or the lives of others are endangered by a resident being too frightened to say it is a genuine fire, no matter how small it seems.

On a final note, please don't ever disable or interfere with your smoke detector, particularly when cooking. If your detector/alarm goes off when you burn something, open the windows in your flat to allow the smoke to go out. Don't open your front door to get rid of smoke as that could set off the communal alarms in the building.



Gas canisters ... a cause of destruction?

Our staff were busy working in the Poole office back in October and heard a big bang followed by lots of sirens from the emergency services and a helicopter flying around.

To their surprise, it transpired that a house just a short distance away, which had been converted into two flats, had exploded and although the gas was immediately shut down, it was suspected that the explosion had resulted from gas cylinders kept in one of the properties.

The upstairs of the house was totally destroyed and the person who lived there had to be taken to hospital in Bristol by air ambulance. He was also later arrested as the circumstances of the explosion were suspicious.

So, why are we telling you this if you could have read about it in the Bournemouth Echo? Because we want to remind you of the hazards of keeping flammable and dangerous items in your property. This is particularly important where premises are shared, eg flats and terraced houses, where you could not only endanger your own life but also the lives of others.

Please do **not** keep hazardous items in your property. However, if you do need to keep items such as oxygen cylinders in your home and have a Careline service, you should make them aware in case there is an incident. If you don't have a Careline service, then you will need to inform the emergency services if they are called out to an incident at your property.



An example of the damage that could result from a gas explosion.

Home Contents Insurance

Sandbourne does not insure residents' furnishings or belongings. We strongly advise you to take out your own home contents insurance. This should cover you against damage to your personal belongings, floor coverings, furniture and other contents and decorations, including damage from fire, flood, break-in and vandalism, or accidents caused by you to your neighbour's property or Sandbourne's communal facilities.

When choosing an insurance policy, you should make sure it covers broken glass and locks in doors and windows, as these are repairs you normally have to pay for. Your insurance should also cover items if they are stolen in a break-in.

Second homes ... some interesting facts ...

What is the definition of a 'second home'? The one used by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) last year says: A 'second home' is a property which is not the 'sole or main residence' of any individual for council tax purposes. This may include a 'holiday home'. It may also include a property which the owner does not regularly occupy, but another property is defined as their 'sole or main residence'.

That's the complicated bit! Now for the interesting facts ...

According to a recent article in the Bournemouth Echo, there was an increase to one in five (20%) of homes brought in Dorset last year being second homes.

They say that in Bournemouth the trend was that nearly a third of properties purchased were second homes or investments.

This is despite the government imposing an extra three percent stamp duty charge on additional properties, introduced two years ago to try and deter buy-to-let landlords, property investors and second home owners.

We think you'll agree that, with this sort of increase in people buying to rent, and sellers often preferring to sell to cash buyers rather than those applying for mortgages, it is not surprising that the young, first time, buyers are finding it so hard to become home owners.



Let's hope all governments can continue their efforts to focus on building more affordable housing to reduce the impact of people buying-up lower priced properties as second homes and to enable more local people to have somewhere affordable to live, whether that is to rent or to buy.



New rules for houses in multiple occupation ...

The government announced new rules (governing dangerous and over-crowded properties) from 1 October 2018 for anyone who has a lodger or wants to sub-let part of their property but still share facilities.

We would immediately add that this also needs to be with our consent, so please contact us if you are unsure if this applies to you.

The government requires properties with five or more occupants in two or more households to be licensed by the local council, including houses converted into bedsits where tenants share toilets and cooking facilities. Any such property that does not have an HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation) license is operating illegally and the landlord could face a fine of up to £30,000.

This could mean you! If you take in lodgers or students or sub-let to anyone, then you are the landlord in this case and not Sandbourne.

However, before we would consider giving our consent for you to take in lodgers and/or students, etc, we would always seek to ensure that you understand and comply with the HMO licensing arrangements.

Voluntary Right to Buy - regional pilot

The government has launched a Voluntary Right to Buy regional pilot in the East and West Midlands.

It seeks to test how the scheme will work in practice, with a focus on previously untested aspects including portability. This is where tenants who are eligible to buy under the scheme, but who live in a home that is exempt from the scheme, will be able to transfer their discount to buy a different house.

The Midlands pilot is the first large-scale test of the Voluntary Right to Buy (VRTB) agreement that the sector reached with the government in October 2015. It follows an initial pilot in 2016-17 that involved five housing associations across five different regions in England.

The government has made £200m available to fund the pilot, which will run for two years.

As soon as something is announced that affects our tenants, we will let you know. However, this is likely to be at least a year away.

Use of CCTV

At Sandbourne, we have used CCTV for many years at our schemes, but this has really only been at the entrances to main doors at blocks of 60+ flats and lifts.

We would advise you that we will use CCTV, at our discretion and without prior warning, to monitor situations if it will assist us with the management and maintenance of a site. However, we would stress that this will only relate to and cover communal and public areas.

If you want more information about our use of CCTV, our Policy is available on our website and is also available upon request from the office.



Sandbourne's Annual General Meeting

For those of you who are resident shareholders and attend our Annual General Meeting (AGM), we would like to remind you that this will not take place at the same time as last year, namely in February.

This is because, as previously notified in *Sandbourne News*, we changed our financial year and, in order to be able to present the various accounts and other necessary documents to the shareholders at the AGM, it has meant that we also had to change the date for our AGM.

The date set for this is now Wednesday 18 September 2019. This will again be at the Cumberland Hotel in Bournemouth and all relevant paperwork will be sent to resident shareholders at least four weeks in advance of the meeting.

Changes to floating support visits at our Stourwood Site

Natalie Myles, Floating Support Worker, has asked us to let you know that, with effect from December 2018, the schedule of visits to the Woodlands drop-in room has changed.

She, or Nathalie Kelly, will now be there between 10am and 12noon on the first Tuesday of every month only, ie the service (that has been taken over by Bournemouth Council) has been reduced from fortnightly to monthly.

As always, you can still contact Natalie, during office hours, on her mobile: 07900 703518 or by email at Natalie.Myles@bournemouth.gov.uk.

Our other Bournemouth sites continue with the service as advertised on notice boards/TV screens.



Your top 3 priorities survey

A big thank you to those of you who took the time to send back your survey.

Out of the 467 surveys sent out to all 18+ and 60+ residents (tenants, leaseholders and shared owners), we had a 28.7% response rate. (A survey would normally require a 30% response rate to be statistically viable for an association of our size to rely on the results, but we think this is close enough for us to gain and use some meaningful feedback).

As an incentive to complete the survey, there was a chance to win a £50 High Street voucher - see article on page 11 for the winner.

It took a while to analyse the results of the survey as we also wanted to look to see if responses differed according to the type of property and age of resident, for example, would the priorities of our 18+ tenants be the same as those of our 60+ tenants living in flats. We would add that the questions asked were from well-recognised national surveys used within the housing world and all results have been reviewed by Sandbourne's Board.

We've had quite a few comments to work through with some very useful points made. Where these related to specific tenancy matters or repairs, we acknowledged these and passed them to the relevant member of the housing team to respond to.

So, the results ... what came tops ...

Unsurprisingly, 'Repairs and maintenance to the home' came up as the top priority for both the 18+ and 60+ age groups.

What are we going to do about this? Well, we're already in the process of updating the way we record repairs on our database and also close to the point where we will be able to text or possibly email residents who want to be contacted that way. However, this method of updating residents regarding their repairs request will rely on us having your up-to-date contact details and consent. Therefore, we will write to you to ask for your consent and updated contact details in the New Year before we start this new, optional, service.

The second highest priority differed between the age groups with the 18+ opting for 'Listening to residents' views and acting on them' but the 60+ saying the 'Emergency call system provided by Sandbourne'.

We at Sandbourne try very hard to listen to the views of all residents and take feedback seriously. We have regularly carried out surveys and asked for feedback using the forms in our newsletters and on our website. When carrying out a survey, we have always reported the findings in our newsletters. Sandbourne has no plans to change the emergency call system service we provide.

The third highest priority also differed with the 18+ saying 'Dealing with anti-social behaviour' and the 60+ saying 'Value for money for your rent and/or service charge' (the latter coming in joint third for the 18+, so we know this is important to you all).

Regarding anti-social behaviour, we have leaflets and policies in place and take issues seriously when reported to us. We also feature the subject quite heavily in our newsletters. However, what has become apparent lately, is the number of people reporting anti-social behaviour but not wanting to complete the ASB Incident Diary Sheets to evidence the issues – see article on page 12.

As for 'Value for money' – this is something the Association's Board is keen that we regularly report on and justify. It is also why we carry out surveys periodically to find out what you want, for example, the recent service charge surveys. We are sure that in every walk of life, irrespective of where we live, 'value for money' is key to all our lives in such hard times.



Your top 3 priorities survey continued ...

And what's the least important ...

As for the priorities that are least important, it was pretty even across all age groups with 'Providing opportunities for resident feedback, involvement and participation' and 'Support and advice on claiming welfare benefits and paying rent' coming in last place.

We appreciate that not everyone wants to feedback or become involved with us and we are grateful that there is approximately one-third of residents willing to engage with us. Indeed, we know that some people won't even open their newsletter but all we can do is continue to encourage people to communicate with us.

As for 'Support and advice etc', it is good to know that there are many organisations out there that can now help people, in addition to the wealth of information available on the internet. However, if you think you might need support with your rent, if contact us, we will put you in touch with the relevant agencies that can help. We are still available to try to answer any questions you might have and point you in the right direction if we can't help you ourselves.

Text messaging for repairs updates and appointments

As mentioned in the above article on 'Your top 3 priorities' survey, we are getting very close to now being able to offer a new repairs update service to those residents who want it.

In the New Year, we will write to all residents asking them if they want to receive text messages from Sandbourne. This will be to update them on, for example, when an order has been placed for a repair, who the contractor is and when they are due to call.

We also hope to have a new email address and website form for those residents wanting to report repairs electronically.

However, due to the new data protection requirements, this can only be implemented for residents who have given their express consent and have provided us with their correct contact details.

So, what do you have to do? Nothing until you receive a letter from us in the New Year. We appreciate that not everyone will want to receive this service and it will not be compulsory.



Survey - Prize Draw

As promised when we sent out the survey on 'Your top 3 priorities', all of those people who returned their survey and provided their contact details were put into a prize draw for a £50 High Street shopping voucher.

The draw took place in November and the lucky winner, Mrs S of Mary Mitchell Close in Ringwood, was drawn out of the bag by our Chair of the Board, Liz Lees, in the presence of our Chief Executive, Steve Hayes.

Thanks again to everyone who took part in the survey.

18+ Service Charge Survey

At the time of printing *Sandbourne News*, the closing date for receipt of surveys from the 18+ group, who pay service charges to us, had a few days left to run.

Therefore, we will address any individual issues you have raised (via the housing management or housing maintenance teams) and will report the survey findings in the next edition of the newsletter.

Thank you, in advance, to all those who have returned your form and to those of you who gave feedback.

The importance of ASB Incident Diary Sheets ...

We mentioned on page 10 that Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) featured in your 'top 3 priorities' and we continue to appreciate how important dealing with this is to you.

We therefore wanted to remind you about our approach and expectations of you and why. This is to enable us to help you if you believe you are a victim of ASB or are someone who is being complained about.

Sandbourne do take reports of anti-social behaviour very seriously and have policies, procedures and leaflets available to explain our approach.

Fortunately, ASB is not a very common occurrence but we appreciate that, when it does occur or you think about it possibly occurring, how we respond is very important to you.

ASB can vary from being infrequent, regular, short or lengthy occurrences and can range from being an annoyance or irritation to being considered to be full blown harassment or criminal activity. How it affects individuals can vary according to their own or the other person's lifestyle, levels of tolerance, health, past experience and/or expectations as to what they think is reasonable and what should be done about it etc.

If you believe that you are the victim of ASB you should be aware that, as a landlord, we have to remain objective and consider the matters raised on the actual evidence presented and this has to be based on the details and facts of each case. Quite often there will be denials and almost inevitably there will be counter allegations made which we will also need to consider. We do not normally take sides unless we have evidence of the alleged activity ourselves (such as CCTV recordings – see page 9) or have that evidence provided from another agency eg the Police. We then have to consider if it is 'reasonable and proportionate' (a legal test) for us to become involved and how etc.

We appreciate that when reporting what someone considers to be ASB to us it is natural that people wish to vent their anger and frustration and we are often on the receiving end. However, for us to determine what we can and should do etc, we need to be able to calmly assess the matters in question by considering the actual evidence. For that reason, we would normally require those affected to complete our ASB Incident Diary Sheets. These have been specifically designed to enable the evidence to be collected and then be assessed in a manner that we and, if necessary, a court can use to determine what has occurred and what affect it has had, etc. That is what we and the court need to know before we will normally be able to determine a course of action.

There is currently a growing trend for residents to sound off and vent to us but then decline to provide the relevant evidence in the form of completed ASB Incident Diary Sheets.

We hope you will appreciate that if you do not complete and return these to us promptly, then we will probably not be able to do anything more than make a note of what you have said for future reference.

If you suspect the activity in question is of a criminal nature, then you should also report the matter to the Police.

Please remember that there is the principle that 'people are innocent until proven guilty'. That is why we need your assistance in providing the actual evidence. Simply venting your frustration to us and not co-operating by providing the ASB Incident Diary Sheets may give you a moment or two of satisfaction but it will not normally enable us to consider or do anything to help you.



Bournemouth in Bloom Awards

Well done to those of our Stourwood Avenue residents who entered Bournemouth in Bloom this summer and received rewards and recognition for their efforts.

Several entries were made and there were seven awards received in the various sub-sections of the 'Communal Retirement Accommodation – Residential' category.

This culminated in an awards ceremony at the Carlton Hotel in October, and residents were grateful to Sedcat Community Transport who provided the transport on the night, at "a very reasonable price and at short notice".

You may recall our recent articles about the work on the "Cabbage Patch" - well that was entered into the small flowering tree category (planted in memory of former resident Anne Chapman) and, after a few hic-cups over whose name the entry should be in (it was the residents' entry and hard work and not Sandbourne's), the award was given to resident Marjorie Barrett. This was a Silver Gilt Award but Marjorie again stressed that it "was not down to just her as there were a whole host of others who contributed to the success of the Cabbage Patch".

Unfortunately, we couldn't get hold of an official photo of the residents receiving their awards as this was copyrighted to Bournemouth in Bloom. However, we have included a photo of the cherry trees back in the spring.



Bulky household waste items – please don't dump them

It is sad that, in contrast to the above story, we still have a problem with people 'dumping' their unwanted items in communal bin stores or by dustbins. This is across most of our sites and isn't restricted to any particular age group or type of property.

We've highlighted on many occasions that just dumping your unwanted items is not acceptable and, if Sandbourne can discover who the culprit is, they will be recharged for our costs in removing the items. In the absence of being able to recharge someone, the disposal costs ultimately get added to the scheme's service charges.

We've also advised that councils will not collect bulky household items as part of their weekly collections and we would ask you to report to the office if you see anyone dumping items in the household waste or by bins.

In addition, we continue to ask everyone to make sure that they put the right items into the correct bins, as contaminated recycling will not be collected by the local councils.

To help you, we have previously given you some information about disposing of large household items using local councils, but the costs for some have changed.

For Poole Council we said that they charged £30 for the first item and £6 for each item thereafter. On recently looking at their website, we noticed this has now been increased to £31 for the first item and £6 thereafter.

We think you'll agree that this still seems to represent good value for money if you don't have the means to get your unwanted items to the council tip yourself. Their number is 01202 261700.

For those of you living in Dorset, we don't know what will change when the nine councils in Dorset become two in April 2019.

New Forest District Council has also increased its charges by £1 from £22 to £23 for the first item and £6 for each item thereafter (telephone 023 8028 5000), whereas Bournemouth Council's cost remains at a minimum charge of £36 (01202 451199).

Having said all that, please don't forget the charity shops, some of whom will collect free of charge and can make money for good causes from your unwanted items.



Real Christmas Trees

On a quick look at the various local council websites, it appears that they are no longer doing kerb-side collections of real Christmas trees. Instead, they will have to be taken to recycling centres (or other agreed sites) to be composted.

Volunteers from local charity 'Diverse Abilities' will collect Christmas trees for a minimum £5 donation (on 5, 6 and 7 January but you must book by 3 January). Lewis Manning will also collect for a donation, but you'll need to check this out.

Please, therefore, don't put your Christmas trees out with the general household rubbish.

Are you a 60+ resident with a Sandbourne provided Careline service and planning to go away over the Christmas and New Year period?

If so, please remember to let Careline know if you are going away and advise them of the dates when your property will be left empty (you **don't** need to let Sandbourne know). You should let them know the date you are going away and then let them know when you are back at your flat.

The reason we ask this is in case there is a problem at your property while you are away, for example a burst pipe, that Sandbourne may have to deal with in your absence. Or, it could be that a neighbour is concerned that they haven't seen you around for a while, in which case Careline can check with your next-of-kin that you're okay. It is also important to update your next-of-kin details with both Careline and us.

Don't get caught out this Christmas

In addition to the items listed in the article below, have you:

- checked that your heating is in good working order and told us if it's not
- reported any faulty window or door locks to us to keep your home secure
- made sure your contents insurance is in place and up-to-date
- contacted the housing team if you think you'll have trouble paying your rent or service charges
- checked that you have a valid TV licence
- know where you can find a torch (that works) if there's a power cut.

Remember that many trades close over the Christmas/New Year break, as we do, so please don't leave reporting things like repairs to us until the last minute.

Keeping warm and healthy this winter

There is lots of advice from the government, NHS and other agencies, who generally recommend you:

- Check if you or your family can get your free flu jab, which you're entitled to if you are pregnant, have certain medical conditions, are 65 or over or are a registered carer, etc.
- Before Christmas, or if the weather forecast is bad, check that you have enough medicines and food.
- Keep your home warm; TV/radio NHS adverts are suggesting 18° as a minimum for your lounge.
- If you know your heating isn't working properly, do something about it now and don't wait for it to break down. Heating companies get very busy this time of year.
- If your heating does break down, please ring the registered office to report this (during office hours). However, if you have no other form of heating and the office is closed (over Christmas/New Year), please contact Bournemouth Careline (see page 3).
- Wear lots of layers of clothing to stay warm and wear shoes with a good grip if you go outside.
- Food is a vital source of energy, which helps to keep your body warm, so try to have regular hot meals and hot drinks throughout the day.
- If you can't get out, try to keep active round your home.
- Good hand hygiene can help prevent the spread of germs and viruses.
- Please keep an eye on older and more frail neighbours and relatives.
- Finally, if you're going away and you have a neighbour who you have regular contact with, let them know as they might worry if they don't see you around.

Snow and ice - 'to grit or not to grit?'

This is the question that landlords are faced with each year and so we will repeat previous years' Winter newsletter articles:

As a landlord we are **not** legally obliged to clear snow and/or grit communal footpaths/car parking areas that are in our ownership, even where we may feel that we have a moral responsibility to do as much as we can to ensure the safety of vulnerable residents.

We need to ask ourselves whether we, as a landlord, leave ourselves exposed to greater risk of a claim if we decide to grit an area that we are not responsible for. The answer, according to our insurers, is 'yes' although ultimately it will depend on the facts of any such claim.

In the event of a claim, it would have to be established whether the act of gritting had made the risk worse. For example, if inadequate amounts of grit or salt had been used which then resulted in a partial thaw before subsequently freezing overnight – a particularly treacherous set of conditions if the ice is then covered by a fresh layer of snow.

For these reasons, based on our insurer's updated advice and after some soul searching, we are re-confirming our previous approach. We **will not** grit communal area paths and car parking areas. However, we **will** continue to provide grit bins and do our best to keep them supplied with grit for residents to make use of, should they wish to, but this will be at their own risk.



Surviving Winter – Help Older People in Dorset Stay Warm and Safe This Winter

Last year we published this article on behalf of the Dorset Community Foundation. Their campaign continues ...



"Do you need your winter fuel allowance? If no, you can donate it to help save lives – here in Dorset! Every winter, a local charity, Dorset Community Foundation, is running a Surviving Winter Appeal which recycles unwanted winter fuel allowances to help save lives.

Donations from generous Dorset residents are collected and then dispersed in the form of winter fuel grants through the local Citizens Advice Bureaus.

To Donate: Online at www.dorsetcommunityfoundation.org or send a cheque made out to 'Dorset Community Foundation' to: DCF, The Spire, High Street, Poole, BH15 1DF.

If you need help

Surviving Winter grants of up to £200 are available along with additional help around fuel poverty. Contact your nearest Citizens Advice Bureau or ring 01929 775500."

Each year we feature this service in Sandbourne News and thought it would be useful to include it again, particularly as 66% of our tenants are aged over 60, and life can be difficult and lonely for some people at this time of year.



You can ring them to ask about services in your area, talk in confidence if you are being mis-treated/abused, get some friendly advice or quite simply have a chat.

If you would like further information please go to The Silver Line website (www.thesilverline.org.uk) or ring the helpline on 0800 4 70 80 90.

Do you use the Sandbourne website?

If so, how easy (or difficult) do you find it to use?

Our website provider sends us statistics once a year to tell us how many people visit our website and which pages are most commonly looked at. However, what they don't tell us is what visitors to our site think about the contents and how easy it is to find what they're looking for. Therefore, if you have a few minutes to spare, could you give us your views?

- Do you find it easy to navigate?
- Can you find what you want to look at easily enough?
- Have you looked for information which you haven't been able to find and, if so, what was this?
- Have you used either the website 'contact form' or 'feedback form' to send a message to us and did you find this easy?

We know we're always asking for feedback from you, but look forward to receiving your views.

The website is Sandbourne's public presence to you and the wider world and we want it to be as helpful, informative and user-friendly as we can reasonably make it.

You can email us at info@sandbourne.org.uk or use either of the contact forms on our website: www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk.



Digital inclusion groups

We have been asked to let our residents (all ages) know about a working partnership which is trying to help people who don't feel able to use the new digital age devices/technology and/or online services, for example, the internet.

It appears that some 150,000 Dorset residents lack at least one digital skill.

Citizens Online, Dorset County Council and the Routes to Inclusion Group are working together, with some lottery funding, and hope to help people embrace technology. They highlight the benefits this can bring, such as feeling less alone, finding work, saving money and improving health.

Apparently more than 50 volunteer digital champions offer free support in libraries and other venues across Dorset.

If this is something you would like to find out more about, please call them on 01305 221048.

However, we do not know if this service will still be available when Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole become a new council in April next year, as the existing Dorset County Council will cease to exist.

Power gone off?

Before ringing the office, have you checked with your neighbours to see if they have power or not?

You could also check the www.ssen.co.uk website to see if it is an area fault. Their website gives regular updates and the following numbers: for emergencies 0800 072 7282 and for checking or tracking updates 150.

Remember landlines may not work during power cuts.

Taking data protection seriously (and what our office staff have to deal with) ...

Sandbourne has always taken data protection very seriously and our staff are aware of the need to protect any information we hold about you. Indeed, legislation makes it imperative that we do so.



On occasions we do get asked “Where does Mr live as I’ve got a letter for him and I can drop it round”. It must sound deliberately unhelpful when our office staff say “sorry but under data protection we can’t tell you”. Sometimes we might be able to offer that if the letter is given to us we will deal with it, but we can’t always help.

We also get contacted from outside people asking us to confirm if Mrs ... is still alive or still lives at ... as the person, for example, wants to send a birthday or Christmas card. We can’t run the risk of breaking the law or giving information to a bogus caller or to someone who the resident does not want to hear from or to know where they are so, again, we don’t confirm or deny, quoting data protection.

Recently, we had such a request, through a third party (using a company email address), asking us to confirm if a tenant still lived in one of our properties. This was to send a special birthday card. We used our standard, polite, email response that we could not answer this under data protection but would check and, if they were and it was appropriate, we would forward their details on to a next-of-kin, so that they could get in contact if they wished to. Imagine the shock when the following email came back:

“I’m sick of this kind of response. (*Explanation of why they wanted to contact the person/their relationship*). I’d appreciate it if you could come down from your pedestal for a few minutes, get your finger out, and do something proactive NOW. Who the hell do you think you are? My number is below if you can be bothered.”

This was then followed up with a phone call from the person which was equally rude as we still refused to provide any information.

As the person mentioned in the email was still a tenant of ours, we did forward the contact details on to a next-of-kin so that they could decide what to do. We received a half-hearted apology from the person making the original enquiry but it was still rude.

So, what’s the point of this article? Well, we want to reiterate that even for a simple request, polite or otherwise, we cannot and will not give information out about you. For all we know, the ‘rude’ person above could have been a debt collector, a former violent partner, a scammer targeting people of a certain type or age, or former acquaintance, etc, and we can’t ever run that risk and could also be breaking the law by giving out information.

Therefore, if you get post for another resident and we can’t tell you where they live, or get feedback that we have been unhelpful, we hope you will appreciate why. For legal reasons, we are required to take this stance and our aim is always to protect our residents’ private information.

Parcel deliveries

At this busy time of year, we wanted to remind you that, as your landlord, we have no responsibility for dealing with any parcels left outside of your property.

Also, if you have, or decide to accept, a parcel for a neighbour by mistake or have one left that is wrongly addressed to your property, you should take this up with the Post Office or courier service direct and not contact us.



Christmas cards/letters not for you?

With the increase in post over the Christmas period, please remember that if you receive post that is not for you, you should simply write something like “not known at this address” on the envelope and pop it back in the post box.

If you believe the person lives on the same site as you and it looks like something important (eg a hospital letter), we may be able to offer re-delivering it for you if you drop it in the office and we have someone on site, but we can’t always promise to be able to help.

PayPal, allpay, PayPoint – all very confusing!

One of our residents recently contacted us about a text message they'd received purporting to be from PayPal.

Our advice, as with anything that looks like a scam, was not to respond to it and not to click on or open any links or call back any number given.

We then advised them to find a document with a PayPal number on it and call them to query it.

However, the only account they had that sounded anything like PayPal was 'allpay', which was their rent card and the only number on that was an old office (pre-Sandbourne) number.

There are three points to this article:

1. There is an ever increasing number of scams going round and it is difficult to know exactly how scammers get hold of email/phone details. If in doubt, find a reliable telephone number and call the company to check if they've emailed or texted you.
2. Allpay has confirmed that it has no connections or dealings with Paypal. Paypal is a company and account you can use to pay for goods ordered on-line. Allpay is your rent card and you can make payments, using that card, at any shop or Post Office displaying the PayPoint sign.
3. If you have an older type rent card (from before we became Sandbourne), it will have an old, disconnected, telephone number on the back. The only telephone number you can reach us on is 01202 671222 – no other numbers work. If you would like a new rent card, to avoid confusion, just ring the office and we'll order you one free of charge.



More scams - telephone cold calling

We've featured this before and know how frustrating it is when the phone rings and it's another cold call or there's a cold call voicemail when we get home from work or a day out. Indeed, how many of us now don't even bother answering our phone unless we recognise the number.

We heard of another scam recently – an automated, almost threatening, voicemail message purporting to be from HM Revenue and Customs. We, therefore, just wanted to tell you that HMRC don't ring, text or email - they only ever write letters.

This was backed-up by the Action Fraud Team, who you can contact to check about scams and also to report any to them, particularly if they are upsetting or threatening. They will take the matter seriously and, if pertinent to do so, will forward the matter to the police unit to be investigated and compared with similar calls for compiling cases. They also advised that fraudsters use both automated messages and humans for their scams. The Action Fraud Team can be contacted: via their website (www.actionfraud.police.uk) or you can ring them on 0300 123 2040.

And finally ...

Please stay safe over the Christmas and New Year break and remember it's not just about the new age electronic scammers, there are other fraudsters out there, so:

- don't leave your windows or door open or unlocked
- don't let anyone into your home who you are not expecting or don't know
- always ask callers to your home for ID
- don't leave presents under your Christmas tree in full sight of passers-by in the street
- don't buy dodgy Christmas decorations - make sure that they are in good order, kept away from open flames, and that your lights have the appropriate safety symbols on them.

C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	F	R	N
R	A	E	S	P	R	O	X	D	S	U	E
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C	L	S	E	I	E	Z	U	D	X	O	D
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V	P	T	P	U	E	B	I	T	H	N	Y
Y	S	X	C	H	Z	R	K	V	O	M	Y
E	C	N	V	R	D	Y	P	G	M	E	F

Just for fun - your Winter Word Search

Your words to find:

Christmas
Tree
Crackers
Elves
Baubles
Sleigh
Santa
Turkey
Mistletoe
Presents
Sprouts
Children
Tinsel
Rudolph

Change of contact details ...

Have you changed your contact details recently and forgotten to let us know? If so, there is a form below that you can fill in and return to us.

Want to give feedback or make suggestions ...

You can use the form on the back page of this newsletter to provide us with feedback or to make suggestions. It really doesn't matter if this is positive or negative, as long as it's constructive, as it all helps us shape what we do in the future and the services we provide to you. Alternatively, you can use the feedback page on our website to do this.



CHANGE OF CONTACT DETAILS

Please tear off this slip and return it to the office if you have changed your contact details (or email us at info@sandbourne.org.uk or phone us on 01202 671222).

1 st Line of your address:			
Tenant's details:			
Name: (Mr Mrs Miss Ms)			
Home phone number:			
Mobile number:			
Work's phone number:			
Email address:			
Signed:		Date:	

All articles are correct at the time of publishing (December 2018)

Copies of this newsletter are available, on request, in large print, and can also be downloaded from our website: www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk

Sandbourne registered office:

Address: Sandbourne Housing Association, Beech House, 28-30 Wimborne Road, Poole, BH15 2BU

Tel: 01202 671222

You will always be able to leave a message on the answer phone outside of office hours (which will be dealt with the next working day).

You will also be able to leave a message on the answer phone, after six rings, if staff are away from their desk, or taking another call, or at lunch (they will get back to you as soon as they are free).

Calls may be recorded by Sandbourne for information and training purposes.

Occasionally we may need to close our office but we will aim to tell you this in advance.

Email: info@sandbourne.org.uk

Website: www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk

Office opening times: Normally **9am to 4pm**, Monday to Friday (excluding the Christmas/New Year closure and other English public/statutory holidays).

Note: To ensure that someone is available, appointments should always be made if wanting to see staff in the registered office.



FEEDBACK/SUGGESTIONS FORM

If you would like to give us some feedback on either this newsletter or any other matter relating to your tenancy/lease, or make suggestions, please just return this slip to us.

Name:	
1 st Line of your address:	

Feedback/suggestions:

Signed:		Date:	
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