

# Sandbourne News

Edition 28, Autumn 2020



Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter. I hope that you all managed to enjoy something of the summer in these strange times. Even if you weren't able to actually get away somewhere for a holiday, at least we live in a beautiful part of the world. I have tried to have a daily walk throughout the lockdown period and I have discovered some lovely spots right on my doorstep. I have also particularly enjoyed watching the seasons change this year and I can't believe that we are already heading into the autumn.

At the time of our last newsletter we were still in complete lockdown mode. Since then, in line with the rest of society, we have started restoring the range of services that we provide for you. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find information about our office opening hours, our repairs service, how we are carrying out lettings and the option of having a face-to-face meeting with one of the Sandbourne staff in limited circumstances. In all that we do we are still mindful of the current ongoing pandemic restrictions and our priority is to endeavour to keep everyone, both residents and staff, safe at all times.

September is our time for reviewing the past year, as we hold our AGM. We would normally invite all residents to join us for this, but that is not possible this year. We will, however, produce a summary of the year which will be included with our Winter Newsletter. If you have any questions about any of our services over the last year, please feel free to ask - you can use the comments form with this newsletter or send us an email.

I hope that you continue to find this newsletter useful, informative and interesting. I would also like to thank you all for your support and patience over the last six months, when services have been different and sometimes reduced. With your co-operation and our effort we will continue to look to provide the best service possible whatever the circumstances. Thank you again and keep safe.



Fiona Ferenczy, Chief Executive

## Contacting Sandbourne

The only office telephone number is:

**01202 671222**

**(9 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday)**

All correspondence should be addressed to:

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

Email: [info@sandbourne.org.uk](mailto:info@sandbourne.org.uk)  
[www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk](http://www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk)  
Repairs: [repairs@sandbourne.org.uk](mailto:repairs@sandbourne.org.uk)

**Out-of-Office Hours Emergencies only:**  
**01202 452795**

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**Durdle Door, in the more tranquil autumnal days of 2019 (before the chaos of 2020)**

Photo by David Joicey,  
Sandbourne Board Member

## We're back open 9 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday

As mentioned in our Covid-19 update (7) to residents, leaseholders and shared owners, we are fully opening our telephone lines again and reverting to our normal office hours as from **Monday 14 September**.

You will have got used to our lines only being open from 9 am to 12 noon recently but, although our building in Poole remains closed to the public, it is good that we can take direct calls again until 4 pm.

We still need to protect our staff and allow them to work following social distancing guidelines when in the office, but will be increasing our skeleton team from two to three staff members each working day. This doesn't mean that we're not all still working, as anyone not providing cover at the office will be working from home and any messages for them will still be passed on to them straight away.

However, if the staff member you want to speak to is not in the office, please bear with us whilst we get a message to them. All housing staff have Sandbourne mobiles so are able to call you back. Unfortunately, this may appear as a withheld number so, if you are in the habit of not answering your phone because of cold callers, you may miss a returned call from our team.

### A new 'short' telephone message when you ring the office!

If you ring Sandbourne's office during the normal office opening hours, you will now hear a pre-recorded message before you are connected to one of the team. This is only a very short message, so please be patient.

*Why have we done this?* Because we are obliged to let you know that calls on the 01202 671222 telephone number may be recorded for information and training purposes (as already advised on the bottom of our letters and our website). I'm sure you will have heard this sort of message when ringing other companies as it is standard practice these days.

### We have two other pre-recorded messages:

If you ring during normal office hours and our lines are busy, you will hear a message saying that you can leave a voicemail for us and we'll get back to you as soon as we are free. Hopefully this will be the same morning or afternoon.

If you ring outside of normal office hours, our other message, which many of you will be familiar with, is somewhat longer but it does tell you the different ways that you can contact us both for emergencies and routine enquiries. Any voicemail messages left are normally dealt with the next working day.



### Face-to-face meetings

Please read the Covid-19 update enclosed with this newsletter for the latest information regarding having face-to-face meetings with members of Sandbourne's staff.

## Careline (Bournemouth)

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 communal areas or the structure of the building.



## Have you been holding off reporting a repair or have an outstanding repair?

**If you haven't wanted to report a repair because of the coronavirus lockdown, or you've been self-isolating or shielding, or you reported it but the work hasn't been carried out yet, please let us know.**

We are now back to undertaking a full repairs service again and will chase up anything that is outstanding for you.

If the repair is in a communal area, please let us know: we'd rather be told by several different people than be unaware of the issue.

If you've received a text from our contractor to say they will contact you within three working days and you haven't heard anything, or the contractor said they would return to complete a job and they haven't, again, please let us know so that we can do something about it.

It literally is a case of if we don't know, we can't sort it.

## Not used your heating yet since the Spring!

**Most of us won't have given our heating much thought during the good weather we were recently experiencing.**

However, please check it now so that if it doesn't work properly it can be sorted before it gets too cold. Remember that contractors get busy this time of year as everyone starts turning their heating on only to find out that, in some cases, it isn't working.

## Reporting repairs

**Reporting repairs couldn't be easier ...**

If you use email, just email [repairs@sandbourne.org.uk](mailto:repairs@sandbourne.org.uk). Your email will go straight to our two Maintenance Managers who cover for each other if one of them is not in.

If you have access to our website, [www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk](http://www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk), you can use our contact form on the 'Repairs' tab. This also goes direct to our Maintenance Managers.

In both of these cases, if you could use the first line of your address in the heading, that would be really helpful.

If you don't have email and don't use the internet, please just call us in the usual way on 01202 671222 and speak to one of our staff in the office or leave a message if calling outside of office hours.

Please don't call Careline unless it is an emergency and cannot wait until the office is open. Careline really is for genuine emergencies only.

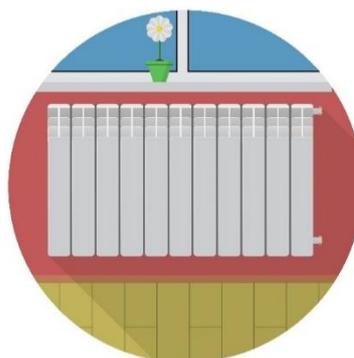
Please also avoid telling staff about a repair if you happen to be talking to them or you see them on site. We are all human and can forget to forward your repair on if it is mentioned in passing.

Finally, if you want to receive a text message to confirm that your repair is in the hands of one of our contractors, please contact the office and sign up to that service.

## Communal heating in blocks of flats

**When will the communal heating go on? Our policy, where Sandbourne has to set it, is to turn the communal heating on at the beginning of October and turn it off in May, subject to the weather at the time.**

We would, however, remind you that our staff will be responsible for setting the communal radiators to control the temperature. You may think you are helping to save money by turning it off because you personally don't like it too hot, but you are only adding to staff time in dealing with telephone calls and arranging for the heating to be re-set. In addition, the communal area then has to be brought back up to the correct temperature and this then adds to the cost of heating which ultimately forms part of the service charges for that block.



We would add that the heating in communal lounges, when these are eventually opened back up again, is usually left on so that the temperature is comfortable for residents to use them and/or drop in, etc, so should **not** be turned off. Some tenants need adequate heating for health reasons.

## Good news – letting empty homes again

You may remember that in the last edition of *Sandbourne News* we explained that shortly following the announcement of the lockdown the government issued guidance to social landlords that all but 'essential lettings' should be suspended until further notice.

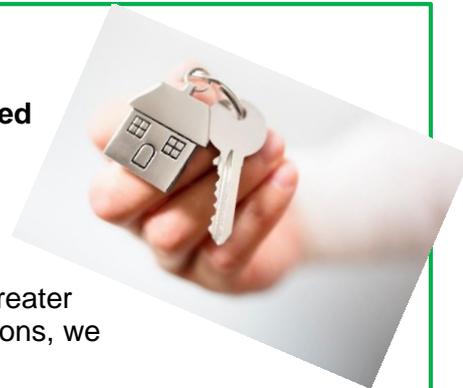
This advice changed on 23 May and we were able to begin letting empty homes again. However, given the fact that by then it was known that coronavirus had greater potential consequences for older people and those with underlying health conditions, we decided to take a phased approach to this.

We have changed our lettings and allocation processes so that face-to-face contact between applicants and members of the team is kept to a minimum during interviews, viewings and lettings. In addition, all empty flats are deep cleaned prior to occupation and care is taken to ensure that any communal areas are thoroughly cleaned as soon as possible after the property has been let.

This is in line with current government guidance and we hope contributes to limiting the potential spread of infection, whilst ensuring that we are able to provide homes for those who most need them.

We have now let all of the general needs (18+) properties that were empty and from August have been focusing on the 60+ and our extra care development, Craigleith. We have adopted the same principles in terms of letting and cleaning at these schemes and worked closely with Sage Care, the care provider at Craigleith, to minimise the risk of infection and protect the health and well-being of existing residents. We will continue in this way for the foreseeable future.

Unfortunately, as we all know, coronavirus has not 'gone away' and we are therefore keeping this under close and regular review.



## An increase in housing enquiries

**Sandbourne holds its own waiting list for 60+ properties and we now have a waiting list for our shared ownership properties.**

The volume of applicants applying to us has really picked up over recent months and both our transfers list and waiting list are quite long with very few vacancies arising this year.

One of the main reasons for people wanting to go on our 60+ waiting list for our Bournemouth and Ringwood properties appears to be people needing or wanting to be closer to family and relocate from other parts of the country. Perhaps this is a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic and the growing importance of living near family and friends – but we really don't know.

We only have 21 shared ownership properties in Poole which are one and two-bed flats and there certainly has been an increase in enquiries from the young, and not so young, wanting to go down this route.

For our general needs (18+) properties, we don't hold a waiting list but instead refer these callers to the Dorset Home Choice website where any vacant properties are advertised. They then provide us with nominations for us to consider.

## Checking the right for EU Citizens to stay in the UK

The Immigration Act 2014 required that from 1 February 2016 we check the immigration status of our **prospective** tenants at the outset of a **new** tenancy. We will only ask for proof if and when we are in a position to consider someone for a tenancy.

**How are Sandbourne required to check the occupiers?**

The process for carrying out initial 'right to rent' checks is as follows:

1. Establish the adults (18+) who will live in the property as their only or main home.
2. Obtain **original** versions of one or more of the **acceptable** documents for all adult occupiers.
3. Check the documents in the presence of the document holder.
4. Keep a copy of the original document(s), signed and dated, and keep it for a year after the person leaves their property.

**As a tenant, leaseholder or shared owner, you are now also responsible for checking the immigration status of any lodgers that you take in. If we give you permission to take in a lodger it will be on the assumption that you have complied with this legal requirement.**

## Raising money for Macmillan

**We wanted to share this very heart-warming story with you.**

One of our Stourwood Avenue residents, Pat Mills, bravely had her head shaved by her daughter Rebekah to raise funds for Macmillan.

Pat said:

"I decided to brave the shave to support my sister-in-law who is currently undergoing a second round of chemotherapy and my brother-in-law who passed away two years ago from prostate cancer. He had his head shaved to raise money when I was having chemo in 2011 for breast cancer, so I felt I should try and raise some money for Macmillan.

I am completely overwhelmed by the generosity of people. On the Macmillan page, £610 was raised by friends and relatives, and on Sunday 30th August a further £211 which was incredible as it came from the residents of flats in the Sandbourne site in Stourwood Avenue, Bournemouth.

Everyone was so generous and I have to say, when we counted the money in front of all the people there I cried, it was so emotional."

A massive well done to Pat.



## And an update on fund raising

In the last edition of *Sandbourne News*, we told you about John Duffy a resident at our Stourwood Avenue site in Bournemouth, who was shielding but was walking five miles a day around the communal gardens and grounds to raise money for "Reaching The Unreached" (RTU), a charity supporting an area of South India which had the second highest incidence of Covid-19 in that country.



John's aim was to walk 350 miles in total with a target of raising £3,500. It took a while to complete his mission but it gave him lots of time to raise the funds. The total was more than he could have hoped for with the final amount being £8,000. Sandbourne residents raised at least £400 of this total but it might well have been more as there were anonymous donations to the website.

He and Jackie wanted to say "many thanks to all those who supported John's walk as this has saved many hundreds of lives".

## Strange times!

**What is the strangest item you haven't been able to get hold of during the lockdown?**

We thought we'd heard it all when you couldn't get hold of a toilet roll or a bag of flour because of shortages in shops back in March this year.

However, months on, the strangest of shortages are coming to light. Apparently, it is not only difficult to get hold of an outside tap (people doing DIY and gardening during the lockdown and when being furloughed, etc), but some specialist skateboard companies can't produce the complete boards because they can't get hold of the ball bearings for the wheels!

We certainly are living in strange times!

## Having your flu jab

**We remind you every year about having your NHS flu jab and understand that doctors' surgeries are urging people this year to make sure that they have this not only to protect against the flu but also in light of the coronavirus.**

It's all going to be rather strange this year and we are already being told that some surgeries are starting to make appointments for the flu jabs to be given in church halls rather than in the practices themselves.

Hopefully, you should get a text message if you usually qualify to receive a free NHS flu jab, so keep an eye out for that.

In the meantime, the NHS website says this year's flu vaccine is being offered to:

- Adults 60 and over
- People with certain medical conditions (including children in at-risk groups from 6 months of age)
- Pregnant women
- People living with someone who's at high risk from coronavirus (on the NHS shielded patient list)
- Children age 2 and 3 on 31 August 2020
- Children in primary school
- Children in year 7 (secondary school)
- Frontline health or social care workers

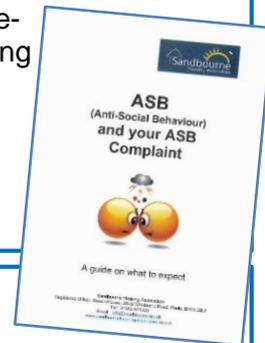
They go on to say that "later in the year, the flu vaccine may be given to people aged 50 to 64. More information will be available later in the autumn. However, if you're aged 50-64 and in an at-risk group, you should not delay having your flu vaccine".

## Anti-Social Behaviour

**The last six months have been very testing and trying times for everyone and many people have, understandably, been experiencing frazzled nerves. Indeed, working from home when major building works are going on next door has certainly tested the patience of a couple of our staff over the last few months.**

What we would say is that we do want to take your concerns seriously and have covered this subject many times in depth in previous newsletters. However, we want to stress again the importance of completing Anti-Social Behaviour diary sheets when you are asked to do so. Our hands are tied and we often cannot do anything without evidence to support what you are telling us. You should also have witnessed things for yourselves and not report something third-hand.

If you are unsure if something you are experiencing constitutes anti-social behaviour, please refer to our leaflets on the subject or contact us and ask the question.



## Behaviour towards Sandbourne's staff and contractors

**We all have times when we are angry or frustrated and we need to vent but occasionally this spills over and can be demonstrated towards our staff and contractors in addition to your neighbours or visitors to our sites.**

We are pleased to say that the vast majority of people we have contact with are pleasant, polite and friendly in their dealings with us. On the rare occasion when someone has rung the office and 'vented' with our staff, it has been apparent that there is a reason behind it and often an apology has followed (from either side). However, we would remind you that certain types of behaviour cannot be tolerated towards our staff and contractors or to your neighbours or visitors to your site.

If you are dissatisfied with one of our contractors, please let us know so that we can look into it – if we don't know, we can't do anything.

If you are unhappy with the way a member of our staff has spoken to you or dealt with your query, again please let us know but there are channels you need to go through if you want to make a formal complaint.

Likewise, if you have a complaint against your neighbour or a visitor to the site where you live, please let us know so that you can go through the proper channels. Please don't take the law into your own hands and possibly then be accused of being the perpetrator to the incident.

Whatever the issue, we would ask that when reporting anything to us either by email, letter or on the telephone, you make it clear, concise and constructive. Please refrain from making any personal comments or attacks on individuals, whether this relates to our staff, contractors, your neighbours or visitors.

Telephone calls to and from our registered office are recorded and our staff do have the right to end a call if the person is being abusive to them or becomes personal or threatening. Such behaviour may also contravene the conditions of your tenancy agreement or lease.

Leaflets are available on our website, or upon request from our office, on a range of topics surrounding complaints, anti-social and unacceptable behaviour.

## Quarterly Rent Statements

We are sorry that it has not been practical to produce our normal quarterly rent statements during the coronavirus lockdown. However, we hope to resume the provision of these in the next few weeks, although this will need to be phased as we have nearly 500 properties to provide these to.

In the meantime, please remember that you can email or ring us and request a rent statement at any time and we will provide this.



## Sandbourne's 2020 AGM

**This year's Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 23 September.**

In recent years, we have been able to invite our tenants, leaseholders and shared owners to our Annual General Meeting. However, this year, due to government restrictions on numbers for gatherings, we are sorry but we are unable to do so as the limited spaces will need to be reserved for our shareholders.

We will hopefully be able to extend an invite to you all again in 2021 but, in the meantime, will update you on anything relevant in our Winter Newsletter.

## Resident (General Needs Housing) Board Membership - Results

**Ann Schofield is one of our two Resident Board Members and was elected to serve on Sandbourne's Board in 2017 as the General Needs (18+) Housing Resident Board Member. Having served a three-year term of office, as allowed under our rules, she is now eligible for re-election.**

Following normal practice, we wrote to all 18+ residents outlining what the role involved and asking if anyone from that group of residents would be interested in standing for election onto the Board in her place. However, no other expressions of interest or nominations were received by the August closing date.

Ann has expressed her willingness to stand for re-election at Sandbourne's AGM on 23 September so, once re-elected, will continue to represent the 18+ residents for another three years. Further updates and information will be given on Board Member elections and the role of Resident Board Members in our Winter Newsletter.



We consulted with you through our Summer 2020 Newsletter (Edition 27) on our new **Fire Safety Policy**. As explained, this is an interim policy, pending the long awaited final findings of the Grenfell Tower report. No feedback was received from residents and the policy was therefore approved by Sandbourne's Board at its July meeting. A copy of this Policy can be found on our website or obtained via the office.



## FEEDBACK/SUGGESTIONS/CONTACT DETAILS FORM

If you would like to give us some feedback on either this newsletter or any other matter relating to your tenancy/lease, make a suggestion, or let us know your new telephone number, please just return this slip to us.

Name:	
1 <sup>st</sup> Line of your address:	

Feedback/suggestions/change of contact details (eg telephone number):


Signed:		Date:	
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## 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 other types of abuse have 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.

## Sandbourne registered office:

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

**Telephone:** 01202 671222

When calling you will:

- hear a short pre-recorded message before being connected to one of the team (when ringing during office hours) advising that calls may be recorded for information and training purposes
- be able to leave a message on the answer phone, 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)
- be able to leave a message on the answer phone outside of office hours (which will be dealt with the next working day).

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

**Email:** [info@sandbourne.org.uk](mailto:info@sandbourne.org.uk)

**Repairs:** [repairs@sandbourne.org.uk](mailto:repairs@sandbourne.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk](http://www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk)

**Office opening times:** Normally **9 am to 4 pm**, 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.

**(Face-to-face meetings are only available by appointment during the lockdown)**

## Out-of-hours emergency repairs

For genuine out-of-hours emergency repairs, Careline's number is: **01202 452795**.

All non-emergency repairs should be reported to the office during normal office hours: by ringing 01202 671222 (messages can be left on the answerphone when we're closed); emailing [repairs@sandbourne.org.uk](mailto:repairs@sandbourne.org.uk), or using the contact form on our website: [www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk](http://www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk).

All articles are correct at the time of publishing (September 2020)

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