



Welcome to the Winter 2024 Newsletter

As 2024 draws to a close it is a time to reflect on the events of the year and make plans for the future. Nationally we have elected a new government and await the changes that their policies will have for us – hopefully for the good of all. We have also experienced more extreme and unusual weather including several storms in the local area and, maybe most surprisingly, snow in Dorset in November! Is that a first do you think? Maybe our older residents could let me know.

For Sandbourne the year has been one of many changes including office moves, staff changes and IT upgrades. We are hoping for a quieter 2025.

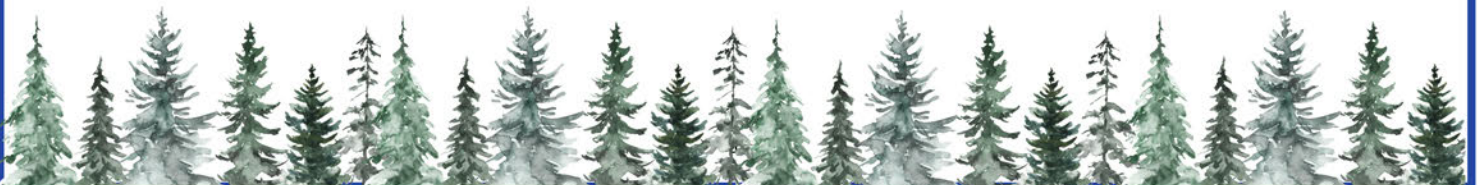
We recognise that Christmas is a busy and expensive time for many of you, so we have included in this Newsletter lots of information that we hope you will find useful and interesting. One of the first changes introduced by the new government was to remove the universal payment of the Winter Fuel Allowance, which was disappointing. However, there are other forms of help available to many of our residents and we have included some of them here.

There is also some basic advice on preparing for Christmas and the winter which will be of interest to everyone. We have also included information on fire safety with this installment, including a revised version of the 'In Event of a Fire' notice. Please ensure that you cut this page out of the Newsletter and store it somewhere safe so that you can access it if you need it in an emergency. The safety of you and your neighbours is paramount.

The Newsletter is Sandbourne's main means of communication with all our residents, so please do tell us if there is anything that you would like to see in it. We are always looking for ideas for new content.

I hope that this Newsletter finds you well and looking forward to the festive season. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and I look forward to working with you again in 2025.

Best wishes
Fiona Ferenczy
Chief Executive



The Sandbourne Team

Fiona Ferenczy - Chief Executive

David Hall - Head of Housing

Colette Robson - Housing Officer

Molly Witherington - Housing Officer

Brian Griffiths - Maintenance Manager

Chris Wilce - Maintenance Manager

Katy Ferenczy-Dakin - Finance & Admin Officer

Sharon Doran - Housing Admin Assistant

Susan Poulton - Admin Assistant

Contacting Sandbourne

The only office telephone number is:

01202 671 222

(9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday)

All correspondence should be addressed to:

Sandbourne Housing Association,

Craisleith First Floor Office, 9 Derby Road, Bournemouth, BH1 3PX

Email: info@sandbourne.org.uk

Repairs: repairs@sandbourne.org.uk

Website: www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk

Out-of-Office hours emergencies only:

01202 392 322

Careline (Bournemouth)

The Careline number for our residents to use is:

01202 392 322

Rented 60+ and extra care (Craisleith) 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-chord.

Rented 18+ and 60+ without 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.

Leaseholders and shared owners - only to be used for communal area 'emergencies' e.g. a fire/flood or an essential repair affecting the communal areas or the structure of the building.

Out-of-Office Emergency Repairs

You should only report a repair to Careline if it is an 'emergency' and the office is closed.

For genuine out-of-hours emergency repairs, Careline's number is [01202 392 322](tel:01202392322). If you can't lay your hands on this number when we are closed, you can always ring the office number and listen to our pre-recorded message which gives you the number to call.

All non-emergency repairs should be reported to the office during working hours. You can ring us on 01202 671 222 (voicemail messages can be left when we are closed), email repairs@sandbourne.org.uk, or use the repairs contact form on our website www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk.

Please note that by ringing Careline during normal hours, or at other times when it could wait until the next working day, you could be preventing them from dealing with someone who needs their immediate help.

Policy consultations

The Housing Ombudsman's determination of a complaint against Sandbourne that is referred to elsewhere in this edition of Sandbourne News, included a recommendation that we should adopt a Good Neighbourhood Management Policy.

This new Policy is intended to clarify what behaviours or actions do and do not constitute anti-social behaviour and how these will be addressed differently. The Policy was considered by our Board on 27th November and will be approved subject to consultation with residents.

Other policies similarly approved by the Board, since the Autumn edition of the newsletter, subject to consultation include:

- Asbestos Management
- Damp and Mould
- Hate Crime

If you would like to see a copy of any of these policies, please contact us either at the office or via info@sandbourne.org.uk.

Any comments or observations should reach us no later than 2nd January 2025.

Christmas Holiday Closure

The Sandbourne office will be closed from 12pm on Tuesday 24th December 2024 and will reopen at 9am on Thursday 2nd January 2025.

All of our emergency contact details are shown in this newsletter and can also be accessed from our out-of-office hours' voicemail message.

We would, however, remind you only to contact Careline for genuine emergencies as it could be a very busy time for them. Anything that can wait until the office is open again, for example routine repairs which can be emailed to repairs@sandbourne.org.uk or rent or housing queries which can be emailed to info@sandbourne.org.uk, should **not** go through to Careline.

As always, those residents with emergency pull cords should use them in the usual way.

Non-urgent messages can also be left on our voicemail, to be dealt with on our return.



Keeping warm and healthy this winter

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

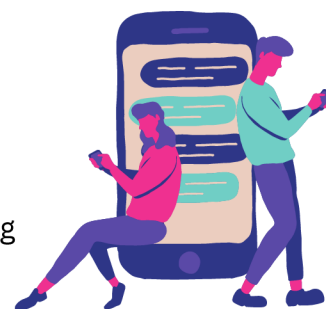
- Check if you or your family can get your free flue jab. You are entitled to this if you are pregnant, have certain medical conditions, are 65 or over or are a registered carer etc.
- Before Christmas, or if the weather forecast is bad, check you have enough medicines and food.
- Keep your home warm. The NHS suggests 18 degrees 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 office to report this (during office hours). If you have no other form of heating and the office is closed (over Christmas/New Year), please contact Careline (see p2 for number).
- 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're going away and you have a neighbour who you have regular contact with, let them know as they may worry if they don't see you around
- If you can't get out, try to keep active around 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.



Social tariffs: cheaper broadband and phone packages

Social tariffs are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits. Some providers call them 'essential' or 'basic' broadband.

They are delivered in the same way as normal packages, just at a lower price. Whichever provider you choose you could save money by switching to a social tariff. It's available to those on a variety of benefits.



If you or someone in your household claims Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Income Support or Employment Support you could switch to any of the tariffs available. Some providers include additional benefits, like Personal Independence Payment and Attendance Allowance. The person receiving the benefit needs to be the main person on the contract.

It's cheaper than a regular package

Current prices range from £10 to £23 a month.

Fast, unlimited broadband

Most tariffs offer superfast broadband at speeds over 30 Mbit/s – fast enough for you to keep in touch with friends and family, stream HD films or shop online.

You'll pay next-to-nothing to get set up

If you do have to pay any setup costs, these should only be small. Your provider should tell you before you sign up.

It could cost nothing to switch

If your provider offers a social tariff, you can switch to it at any time, free of charge.

The price won't go up mid-contract.

You won't pay any more than what you agree to at the start of the contract.

It costs nothing to leave.

You won't pay a fee to leave the tariff before the end of your contract. Some providers offer cheaper broadband packages that are only available to customers on certain benefits.

How to apply

First, check if your current provider offers a social tariff. You can apply for most tariffs online or call your provider and ask to switch. If your provider doesn't offer a social tariff, you can switch to one that does. Your provider might let you leave your current contract without paying a penalty fee.

Providers currently offering social tariffs include:

BT	0800 800 150	4th Utility	0800 066 2388
Hyperoptic	0333 242 0232	KCOM	01482 602 555
Plusnet	0330 1239 123	Quickline	01482 247 365

The BCP Handyvan Service to the rescue

BCP Council has expanded the BCP Handyvan Service, so now it covers Poole and Christchurch as well as Bournemouth.

This is a fantastic FREE service for over 60s or people who have a long-term health condition or disability and are on a qualifying benefit or Attendance Allowance. It does not matter if you live in your own home or in a rented property, the service is still available.



The types of jobs the service provides ranges from changing a lightbulb to putting up pictures, new curtain rails or grabrails. For your own safety, we don't want you climbing up ladders, so if you need anything doing, let the service know. They can allocate up to nearly 2 hours for the visit.

Just pick up the phone to speak to a friendly member of the team who will check your eligibility and arrange an appointment. Or you can send an email.

The handypersons are kind, friendly and helpful. For your safety and peace of mind, all staff are vetted and DBS checked. When visiting your home they will show photo ID at the door.

For more details, call: [01202 942 331](tel:01202942331) or email: referrals@handyvanservice.co.uk

Determination by The Housing Ombudsman Service

In October we received a determination from the Housing Ombudsman Service in relation to a complaint that had previously exhausted our complaints process.

The complaint was that the resident had been subject to persistent noise nuisance by two of her neighbours, one of whom is a Sandbourne tenant and that Sandbourne had failed to either address the situation or investigate it in accordance with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

The Housing Ombudsman determined that there was maladministration by Sandbourne in relation to the complaint and we were ordered within 4 weeks of the date of the determination to:

- Apologise to the resident for the failings identified in the report.
- Pay the resident £300.00 for the distress and inconvenience caused by our handling of her noise nuisance reports.
- Contact the resident to check the current position in respect of the noise and whether she has any current concerns. This discussion is to be confirmed in writing and any further action agreed, including any planned investigation, with a clear explanation of any decisions. A copy of this is to be provided to the HOS.

We have since complied with the determination, apologising to the resident, paying her compensation and meeting with her to discuss the best way forward for her. We have updated the Housing Ombudsman accordingly. We remain committed to doing what we can to support her with the issues that she is experiencing.

This is a rather unusual case, and we would like to reassure everyone that we will continue to take complaints of anti-social behaviour seriously and investigate these where there is evidence of a breach of tenancy occurring.

Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT) is an independent energy advice and advocacy service. A dedicated Energy mentor will contact you by telephone to discuss what assistance can be provided.

This assistance includes:

- Advice on how to control your household energy usage
- Support taking meter readings to monitor your costs
- Assistance switching energy supplier and tariff
- Help applying for support such as warm home discount and supplier priority services
- Support accessing eligible hardship funding

You can contact HEAT via email: heat@thewisegroup.co.uk or by phone: **0800 092 9002**

HEAT's top tips to save money on your energy bills

In the kitchen

- Use the right-sized pot or pan and hob ring for the job
- Pre-boil water in a kettle before adding to your pot
- Keep the oven door shut as much as possible when cooking
- Let warm food cool down before putting it in the fridge



Doing the washing

- Most clothes don't need to be washed after every wear - try airing them instead
- Spin clothes on the machine's highest spin cycle to reduce time in a tumble dryer
- Wait until you have a full load before putting on a wash

Your doors

- Fit draught excluders around the front door
- Close all internal doors to help build up heat quicker



In the bathroom

- Have a quick shower - it uses less energy than a bath
- Turn off taps while you brush your teeth, shave or wash your face
- If you have a hot water tank, set your programme to the times of day when you use hot water - this will avoid heating water you don't need

Windows

- Use heavy or lined curtains to help reduce losing up to a third of energy through the window
- In the winter, close your curtains at dusk to help keep the heat in
- In summer, close curtains in rooms you aren't using to help keep them cool

Lights

- Replace your bulbs with LED equivalents to save around 50% of your annual lighting costs
- Turn off lights when you're not using them
- Place lamps in the corners of your room to allow light to bounce off two walls to reduce how many lamps you need
- Use automatic timers to turn your lights on as it gets dark and to turn off at the time you go to bed

Plugs and appliances

- Avoid leaving your TV, games consoles and kitchen appliances (such as toasters) plugged in and switched on when you're not using them
- Don't leave your phone plugged in to charge all night long - it should only take a few hours!
- Check the wattage of an electrical appliance - the higher the wattage the more it will cost to run

Boilers and timers

- Set the heating to come on just a little before you wake up in the morning
- Set the heating to turn off shortly before you go to bed so it won't be on after you go to sleep.
- Use your timer/programmer for your heating and hot water, so it's ready when you need, rather than using the 'boost' function

Bills and tariffs

- Compare available tariffs to make sure you are getting the best deal for your energy
- A 'Fixed Rate' or 'Fixed Price' tariff means that the unit prices for gas and electricity are fixed - not the direct debit or your bill amount
- If you don't have a smart meter, try to provide your supplier with meter readings at least once a month to ensure accurate bills

Stock condition survey - *your help needed*

RIDGE

We like to think that most of our homes are in a good or satisfactory condition, which based on what you told us last year when we asked how satisfied you were that your home was well maintained and 87% of those that replied said that they were either very or fairly satisfied suggests that most residents agree with us.

We have achieved this, in part due to the detailed knowledge that our two Maintenance Managers, Chris and Brian have of our housing stock. However, the Regulator of Social Housing now expects all housing associations and local authorities to prove that they have current, independent information about the condition and quality of all their homes.

To achieve this, we have recently commissioned Ridge and Partners to undertake a stock condition survey of each of our 429 rented homes. The surveys are expected to start in December, and you will receive (or may have already received) a letter from Ridge letting you know the day that they intend to visit. Their surveyors will have appropriate identification with them, and the visual survey of your home will take around 30 – 45 minutes to complete.

We are really keen that Ridge gain access to as many homes as possible, so that the information that they are collecting for us is as accurate as it can be. If you cannot be available when you know that they are calling, just let us know so that they can make another appointment that is more convenient.

When the stock condition survey has been completed, Ridge will produce a 5-year planned maintenance programme, a 30-year stock profile and identify any homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard. We will use these to drive the investment decisions that we make in future years to help us maintain and improve on how satisfied residents are that their homes are well maintained.

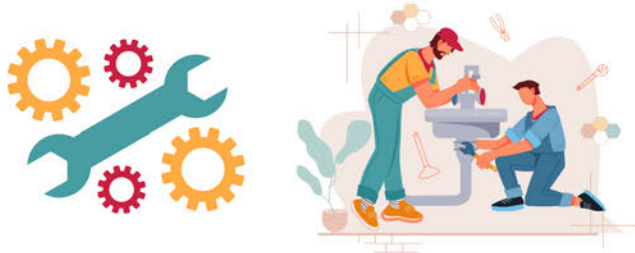
Your help in being available to give the surveyor access to your home when they call is very much appreciated. Should you have any queries or questions either before or after the surveyor has called then don't hesitate to contact us in the usual way.

Is your home Christmas ready?

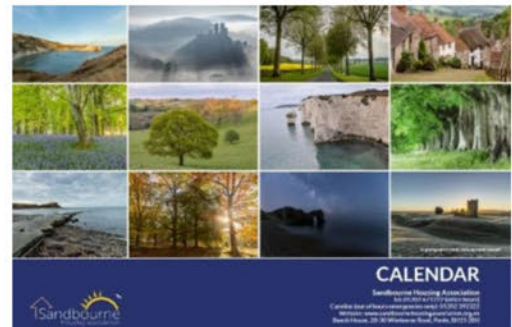
Before the Christmas period we recommend you do the following:

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



Your 2025 Sandbourne Calendar



We would like to thank David Joicey, Sandbourne Shareholder, for sharing his passion for photography with us and allowing us to use his photographs to make another beautiful calendar.

We hope that you will enjoy looking at the calendar as well as finding it useful.



Creativity at Stourwood Avenue

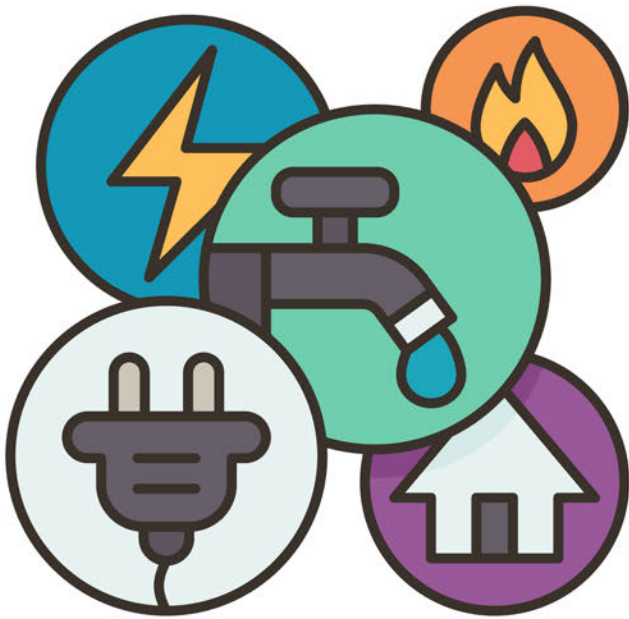
We clearly have some creative and talented people living at Stourwood Avenue. A group of residents meets regularly to share their ideas and create some fantastic paintings. We and they thought it would be good to showcase their abilities to a wider audience and we are happy to share a selection of their work here.

The Art Class has recently made a successful application to the Community Fund for a display board so that their work can be seen for others to appreciate in the communal lounge at Woodlands.

We look forward to seeing more examples of their great work in the future.



Interruption to utility supplies



Because we received several calls from residents last month when the water supply in the Poole area was temporarily interrupted, we thought it was worth reminding everyone about the Priority Services Register.

This is a free UK-wide service which provides extra advice and support, including if you experience an interruption to your electricity, gas, or water supply.

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is free and easy to join. It helps utility companies, including energy suppliers, electricity, gas, and water networks look after customers who have extra communication, access, or safety needs.

You only need to tell PSR once, they will update your request with your energy supplier (the company you pay your bills to) and your regional network companies including electricity, gas, and water.

You will qualify for the PSR if for example you:

- have reached your State Pension age
- don't speak or read English well
- have children under 5 or are pregnant
- have no sense of smell or would struggle to smell gas
- would struggle to answer the door or get help in an emergency
- are recovering from an injury

If your situation isn't listed, you might still be able to sign up for priority services for other reasons - for example, if you're recently bereaved or you've returned to living independently after some time in residential care.

If you qualify and already know which company delivers and bills you for your electricity or gas, just contact them and ask to be added to PSR.

Or if you are unsure, enter your postcode at <https://www.thepsr.co.uk/> to find out and be directed to your electricity and gas company.

From 31st March 2023 electricity companies are, where possible, sharing PSR information with water companies, so you can also get vital help and support from them too if there's a break in your water supply.

So how did Sandbourne perform?

You may recall that in our Annual Report to Residents last year, we published the results of our Tenant Satisfaction Survey (TSM). At the time we explained that all housing associations and local authorities were required to ask their residents the same questions. When we published our results, few other organisations had completed their TSMs, and we were therefore unable to show how we were performing in comparison to other landlords.

The government has published the TSM results this week for all providers, so that we and you can see how Sandbourne performed in comparison. The results below in the “other landlords” column show how on average social housing providers with more than 1000 homes performed, and the “Sandbourne” column shows the results that we first published last year as a reminder.

Question	(%) of residents very or fairly satisfied	
	Sandbourne	Other landlords
Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by your landlord?	83	71
If your landlord has carried out a repair to your home in the last 12 months, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall repair service from your landlord?	89	72
If your landlord has carried out a repair to your home in the last 12 months, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the time taken to complete your most recent repair?	87	67
How satisfied are you that your landlord provides a home that is well maintained?	85	71
Thinking about the condition of the property or building that you live in, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your landlord provides a home that is safe?	87	77
How satisfied are you that your landlord listens to your views and acts upon them?	73	60
How satisfied are you that your landlord keeps you informed about things that matter to you?	82	70
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord’s approach to complaint handling?	46	30
How satisfied are you that your landlord keeps any communal areas clean and well maintained?	79	65
How satisfied are you that your landlord makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood?	63	63
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord’s approach to handling anti-social behaviour?	63	58

Whilst we will never be complacent and always look for ways to improve, it is good to see that based on the recently published national TSM results, the service that Sandbourne provides achieves greater satisfaction from tenants across all of the 11 TSM indicators.

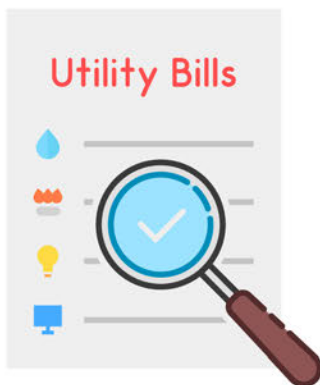
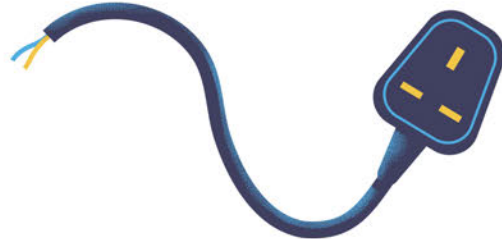
Once again, thank you to those who participated last time, we will be repeating the survey in September 2025, and as before will be looking for as many responses as possible.

Struggling with energy debt?

Several of the larger utility suppliers, including British Gas, OVO, Boost, Eon, EDF, Scottish Power, Octopus, Shell Energy, SSE, and Utilita, now have grants available to help customers who are struggling with energy debt. If you are a customer of one of these companies, you should approach them directly for assistance in the first instance.

The suppliers will all have different criteria for assessing applications for grants and will be able to tell you more when you contact them. Our own enquiries indicate that most suppliers will expect that you have already sought debt advice from one of the organisations that we regularly feature in Sandbourne News such as:

- www.turn2us.org.uk
- www.StepChange.org
- [Citizens Advice](#)
- <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk>



Getting advice within 6 months before making a grant application will help your chances of success.

It is also worth knowing that the Individual and Families Fund run by the British Gas Energy Trust is open to their pre-payment meter and credit customers but also makes grants to non – British Gas customers.

The criteria that must be met to receive a grant from the British Gas Energy Trust include:

- Pre-payment meter customers must have between £50 and £1,700 of energy debt
- Credit customers must have between £250 and £1,700 of energy debt
- You have not received a grant from the British Gas Energy Trust within the last 2 years
- You must be seeking a grant to clear an outstanding debt on a current or open gas, electricity or dual fuel energy account. The account must be in your name and relate to your main residence
- The Trust does not consider awarding grants to closed accounts (e.g., if you have moved home)
- If your application is successful, your energy account will be credited with the grant. Please note the British Gas Energy Trust does not award cash payments
- You must be in or facing fuel poverty
- You have received help from a money advice agency within the last 6 months

For more information about grants, please contact your own utility supplier first, but remember that help may also be available from the British Gas Energy Trust. You, or someone you know and trust, will have to apply online on your behalf at <https://bget.org.uk/login.php>

This year the British Gas Energy Trust is open for grant applications from 4 November



Saving money for Christmas

After the fun of Christmas is over, many of us can be left facing a hefty bill in the New Year. It can be hard to avoid using credit to pay for the festive season but saving in the run-up will help soften the blow in January.

We hope that the following may help you prepare for the festive season and avoid a financial hangover in January. So:

Talk to your friends and family

Pressure to please loved ones and to give children the perfect Christmas tops the list of reasons people overspend during the festive season. When you've worked out how much you can afford to spend on presents, talk to the people you plan to give gifts to about how much you plan to spend.

It might help to remember that many people will be struggling this Christmas. If you're spending too much on presents for loved ones, they might feel the pressure to spend the same amount on you, even if they can't afford to.

Set a budget

To begin your budget, make a list of family and friends you will be buying presents for and allocate an amount for each person.

Budget planner

If you are hosting Christmas dinner, then consider how many people will be coming over and how much you will need to spend on food and drink. From there, you should be able to work out how much money you would need to put away each month. For example, saving £20 a month from the start of the year will get you £240 to spend at Christmas.

Saving for Christmas

It's difficult to pay for Christmas out of December's pay packet alone, so it makes sense to save up as much as you can beforehand. The earlier you start saving, the less you need to put aside each month. Even a small amount over a few months can make a big difference.

Treat saving in the same way as you would a bill. Committing to saving a regular sum each month or week is more effective than simply saying you'll save whatever you have left over, which might be nothing. Try to be realistic – it's better to commit to a manageable amount than to aim too high and give up. Not sure how much you can afford to save? Start small – put your spare £1 or £2 coins into a jar each week. If that works, try setting aside a bit more on a regular basis.

Borrowing for Christmas

Borrowing money to cover your Christmas spend could come at a price in interest and fees. Paying back the debt could be expensive and if you miss payments, it could affect your future ability to get any type of credit at all.

Consider starting some new Christmas traditions

Start some new Christmas traditions that the whole family can join in with and save some money along the way. Picking up Christmas essentials like crackers or decorations in the sales can mean big savings, sometimes around 50%. If you know what gifts you need to buy, it can help to pick up an item a month to help spread the cost and save you the hassle of shopping when everyone else is. You could also embrace the digital age and email Christmas cards to save on postage. There are lots of free websites that let you create your own cards, with family photos and videos.

A pre-Christmas clear out with the family will help you get ready for the festive season but could also put some money back in your pocket. Once you've put aside anything you no longer want, make some extra cash by selling it online or at a local sale. If you time it right, you'll find plenty of people looking for second-hand gifts.

Don't be afraid to share your worries

Feeling down can make it tough to manage money and worrying about it can make you feel even worse. There are lots of organisations out there who can help with financial planning and debt advice. Some of those that we have previously featured in Sandbourne News are:

- **MoneyHelper** 0800 138 7777
- **National Debt Line** 0808 808 4000
- **Step Change** 0800 138 1111



Don't be afraid to pick up the phone and give one of these organisations a call.

Above all we wish you a safe, enjoyable, and affordable Christmas.

IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

On discovering a fire in your home



If the fire is in your home:

- Leave immediately, closing the door behind you, and make your way out of the building – do not stop to collect personal belongings.
- If you live in a flat, follow the 'fire escape' signs.
- Again, if you live in a flat break the nearest 'break glass' point on your way out of the building.
- Once you are safe, dial 999 and ask for the Fire Service.
- Under no circumstances re-enter the building.

If you live in a flat and the fire is not in your home:

- It is safe to remain in your home, but if you wish to evacuate the building and can safely do so, please follow the 'fire escape' signs and go to the designated fire assembly point.
- Keep all doors and windows closed.

All rented flats are fitted with smoke and heat detectors and have fire alarms in communal areas.

In the event of a minor smoke incident occurring in your flat, where smoke can safely be dispersed and there is no risk of fire, please allow the smoke to escape via an open window and not by opening your door into the main corridor.

To reduce the risk of fire:

- Do not overload the electrical sockets
- Make sure that appliances are switched off at night
- Do not place clothes, towels etc on heaters or cookers
- Do not prop doors open, which are specifically designed to stop fire spreading, i.e. the front door to your flat (or guest room) and fire doors in the corridors.
- Always use an ashtray when smoking in your home and make sure that you put cigarettes out properly.
- Never smoke in bed or within enclosed communal areas of a block of flats.
- Remember to test the smoke alarm (s) in your home once a month.



RESIDENTS' DAY - A big thank you

We would like to thank the 18 residents who joined us on 20 November for our annual residents' day. We hope that you enjoyed the event and were able to take something from it.

This year's theme was related to the Repairs and Maintenance service, and how much these costs in relation to the rent income that we receive. As well asking residents to estimate the cost of a basket of repairs, we also asked people to rank a range of repairs in what they thought were the most and least important to them – and promised to share the results.

We deliberately chose a range of the less obvious repairs and some that are actually either the resident's responsibility, or those like small adaptations that are very much related to the needs of the individual.

Having collated the responses, we received on the day, and the priorities, in order of importance were:

Repair / renewal of paths	1
Repair to misted double glazing	2
Redecorating communal areas	3
Clearing moss from rooves / cleaning gutters	4
Small adaptations	5
Replacing window locks	6
Maintenance of trees	7
Replacing communal floor coverings / furniture	8
External Render Cleaning	9
Replacing sink / basin plugs	10
Replacing Damaged Fence Panels	11
Marking of parking bays	12
External ornamental walls	13



This is really helpful in telling us generally which of these repairs are most important to people and will influence the way that we look to spend on repairs and maintenance in the future.

Thanks again to everyone who attended and participated so enthusiastically, it was really good to see. We hope that we will see you and others at our residents' day next year.

A haunting time at Craigleith

On 31st October the residents of Craigleith got together to celebrate Halloween. As you can see from the photos, everyone made a real effort to dress up and get into the spirit of the day - and had a great time enjoying the refreshments organised by the Sage Care Team.

Looks like it was a haunting experience for all concerned.



How can The Housing Ombudsman Service help you?

Housing
Ombudsman Service

How we can help

The Housing Ombudsman Service was set up by law to investigate complaints from residents about housing organisations that are registered with us - including all social providers (housing associations and local authorities).

Who can use the service

We can consider a complaint from an individual that is, or has been, in a landlord and tenant relationship with a landlord that is a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme.

Complaining to your landlord

In the first instance you must let your landlord know about the issues you are having in your home. If you do not think it has taken the right action, or are unhappy with the service provided, you can make a complaint to it. The landlord must respond to your complaint via its dedicated process.

Assistance through your landlord's complaints process

The Ombudsman's statutory Complaint Handling Code sets out requirements for how your landlord must handle a complaint, including timescales it should take to respond to you at both stages of its complaints process.

If you have made a complaint to your landlord and it has not responded, or you need assistance navigating your landlord's complaints process we can help

Can the Housing Ombudsman complain to my landlord for me?

Our role is to remain impartial. We cannot represent a resident to make a complaint or advocate on your behalf. We believe that the best way to resolve a dispute is for you to work with your landlord and be clear about why you are unhappy and what you would like it to do to put things right.

When can you investigate my complaint?

We can only investigate a complaint which has been through both stages of a landlord's complaint procedure. We will need to see a copy of the stage 2 response before we can consider a complaint.

How will you investigate my complaint?

We will need to check that we can consider the issues raised in the complaint. In some cases we may advise you to contact a different organisation that are better placed to resolve your complaint. If we are able to investigate, we will ask both parties for any evidence we need to do so. We will assess whether the landlord acted fairly, taking all circumstances of the case into consideration.

How do I bring a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service?

The best way to contact us is via our online webform as we will ask you a series of questions to help us understand what assistance you require. Alternatively, you can send us an email, call us, or write to us via the contact details below.

Call: **0300 111 3000** or email: **info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk**
You can find more information at: **www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk**

Misted double glazed windows

From time to time, we receive reports from residents that one or more of their double-glazed windows has become misted and needs attention.

Unfortunately, if we replaced every window that is misted when it is reported this would be very expensive, and result in us having insufficient funds to be able to carry out essential planned maintenance work to for example roofs, kitchens and bathrooms.



For several years now we have assessed each report of misted windows individually as it is reported, and prioritised those that are located in living rooms, rather than bedrooms.

We will always try to fix or replace a failed double-glazed window in a living room as soon as we can, but those that fail in bedrooms or other parts of your home may take rather longer – perhaps until the new financial year.

We understand that this is not ideal, but doing so ensures that we are able to budget effectively and prioritise repairs / improvements that make a real difference to the comfort and safety of our homes. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.

Don't forget that you can use the feedback form below to:

- Give us suggestions for this newsletter. Perhaps there's something you'd like to see that we're not currently covering.
- Give us feedback on/or suggestions for any other issues relating to Sandbourne and/or it's services.
- Tell us if you've changed your contact details, e.g. your mobile number, email address or if you no longer have a landline.
- Tell us that we keep spelling your name wrong.
- Update your next-of-kin details, where we hold these.



FEEDBACK/SUGGESTIONS/CONTACT DETAILS FORM

If you would like to give us some feedback on either the 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:	
1st line of your address:	

Feedback/suggestions/change of contact details (e.g. email address/telephone number)

All articles are correct at the time of publishing.

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