



## Letter to the Editor

### *From a tenant in Bunwell*



Dear CAP,

Blue sky, wild flowers, buzzards circling and coppiced ash art were all in their shining glory as I took a stroll through an ancient woodland in April. Being new to the area, I stumbled upon quite accidentally, Lower Wood Ashwellthorpe, a Norfolk Wildlife Trust woodland. Located in Ashwellthorpe NR16 1HB, the car park was a little difficult to find, but well worth the search once you start down the path. It is a great place for a short, no hill climbing, stroll. I would have to say the rocks and muddy paths would make it cumbersome for pushchairs and wheelchairs, but children would love to explore the different coppiced art structures and little meandering trails.

In the future, I would love to visit more of these natural gems around Norfolk. Would it be a possibility for your newsletter to do an article in each publication on local places such as this? I'm sure other readers would be interested in finding out what is on their doorstep, also.

If you have any questions you would like to ask the editor about CAP or Saffron, or know of any other places out and about in our area, why not share this with other readers by writing to us.

Our contact details are on the bottom of this newsletter.

## CAP Garden 2017 Competition

This year we are holding a garden competition, so if your front or back garden is blooming with colour, or you have some beautiful baskets which you are proud of, why not enter one of the categories below? We also have a category for the under 16s to see who has grown the tallest sunflower, so the whole family can get involved.

Win a  
Voucher!

### Categories

- Best Garden
- Best Eco Garden
- Best Basket or Container
- Tallest Sunflower (Under 16s)



You don't have to enter your own garden, you can nominate a friend or neighbour who is a Saffron tenant, if you think they deserve some recognition! To enter please contact us using the details at the bottom of this newsletter. Entries will have to be in by the 31st August.

New CAPChat  
Member  
Katie  
Carpenter

### CAPChat Winners...

Find out how you can become a CAPchatter by getting in touch with us! Find our contact details at the bottom of the newsletter.

CAP  
Newsletter  
Survey  
Susan  
Swanston

# Affordable Rents Explained



Several tenants have asked us what 'affordable rent' is so hopefully you will find this article helpful!

The use of affordable rent is linked to the funding of Saffron's development programme for new housing, enabling more homes to be built for those in housing need. Since 2011 Saffron have used both 'social' and 'affordable rents' when letting homes. Affordable rents are set at 80% of the level of 'market rents' (the rent for an equivalent property of its size and location, including properties in the private rented sector) and are inclusive of any service charges, whilst social rents generally tend to be around 60% of market rents, and where applicable have an additional service charge.

Rents for many new developments are set at affordable rent levels and a number of Saffron's existing homes are also converted to affordable rents at re-let (this does not include our sheltered or supported housing schemes).

In 2016/17 102 homes were converted to affordable rents out of 385 properties relet.

## What happens when existing tenants move?

**Exchange** - If existing tenants exchange their homes they take on the rent of the property they are exchanging to/swapping with (and this may be at a social or affordable rent level) *[If exchanging with a tenant from another social landlord please also check with them.]*

**Transfer** - If existing tenants who currently pay a social rent transfer to another Saffron property, the rent of the new tenancy won't be converted to an affordable rent (if already set at an affordable rent then it remains as such). This 'protection' doesn't extend to existing tenants who currently have an affordable rent.



## New CAP Facebook Group

Join our group  
and chat to  
other tenants!

Many of you may know that CAP already have a Facebook page but, as the pages are not very user friendly/interactive we have created a group for you. Please feel free to join the group and have a chat with us. We look forward to seeing you there! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1868217766786858/>



## CAPChat Annual Event

We will be holding a 'Country & Western' themed event for CAPChatters on Saturday 9th September between 12pm and 3pm at Wreningham. We will be sending out invites, with more details on, to CAPChatters in July.



"Your Home Your Say"

# CAPChat Newsletter Survey Feedback...



Thank you to all you lovely CAPChatters who responded to our last survey and congratulations to Susan Swanston selected at random from all those who responded to win a £25 Love2Shop Voucher!

We had 68 responses which gives us really good information about how to move CAP News forward without you all losing interest! 88% of you want us to continue to produce CAP News, with 75% saying that someone in the house always reads it. Only one in three of you read Kids Corner, so we may look at stopping this as the demand for Saffron Tenant information and general information seems to be more popular - around three quarters of you opted for this. Only half of you want to see competitions, so you may see fewer of these in future. As for the frequency you have favoured three to four times a year, so that's what we have put in place. From now on your CAP News will be produced in March, June, September and December. We at CAP News are always mindful that the surveys go out just to our CAPChatters whereas the newsletter goes to every Saffron tenant, so if you have any comments about these results please join CAPChat so that you have your say in future, or if you don't fancy that just let us know what you think and we can take it into account. We are always interested in what you have to say and what you want, so feel free to let us know.

## Tenants' Question Time

**Ask us!**

You can come and talk to us about anything relating to your home or tenancy at one of our events below or if you can't make it you can contact us by email or phone. You can find our contact details at the bottom of this newsletter.

**Tuesday 27th June at Smokey Joes 8 Norwich Road, Ditchingham Norfolk NR35 2JL**

**Monday 11th September at The Bell, 31 High Street, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 1AF**

### Tenants' Question Time - Some of your questions

Q) "My neighbour's garden is really overgrown and an eyesore, can Saffron do something about it?"

We passed the query to the Area Housing Officer who was able to speak to their neighbour in a tactful way, causing no uncomfortable feelings between both parties. Since then there have been no further issues and the garden is much tidier.

Q) "My immersion heater has been faulty for three months, this is a high priority job but it hasn't been fixed!"

Saffron agreed with this tenant and were happy to look at their utility bills to see if compensation was due. The immersion heater is now fixed and although Saffron reviewed the bills it was decided there was no case for reimbursement.

Q) "Why do Saffron not check contractors work?"

Saffron checks 10% of all works that are carried out and this includes contractor work.

# Editor's interview with Saffron's new CEO

## Francesco Elia - Part 1



### What is your background?

I originate from Sicily in Italy, I have lived in Norfolk for over 27 years, I am married to Julie and we have three grown up children. I have worked in social housing for the past 8 years, I started at Circle as a finance director but I have also worked as a consultant in senior roles for other housing associations, predominantly in London and across East Anglia.

### In your short time with us you have already attended two CAP Meetings, how do you see yourself working with us in future?

There are huge potentials for Saffron and its customers by CAP and Saffron working in a joined up way. I consider CAP as a sounding board, that critical friend whose interest is in good housing services, fairness and equality across all customers. In future I see CAP and Saffron working together on a number of pre-planned projects and when new initiatives affecting customers are considered. CAP could be involved from the start to ensure we put the needs of our customers first. In the private and for-profit sector, a group of volunteer customers willing to give up their free time to help the success of the company would be seen as 'gold dust', in my view at Saffron we are extremely lucky.

### What do you think is the right balance between investments in housing services to existing customers versus the new development of homes?

Another great question! I am very clear, we are here to focus our activities on the needs of existing customers and to reach more customers in housing need - when you think about it, it is a very simple and successful formula. Existing customers are the back bone of Saffron, without them Saffron cannot grow and prosper, which is what is necessary to reach more people in housing need. Saffron has had a phenomenal growth spurt over the past few years, which is great news from a new customer's point of view, however we now need to refocus some of our investments in the existing homes whilst still developing a modest number of new affordable homes. I am very lucky that the Board share the same values and principles that I do, only very recently the Board approved a new business plan which prioritises investments in existing homes and infrastructures, and then use the balance of money to build new homes. This will ensure that the future growth of Saffron remains sustainable.

**...Part 2 of this interview will be featured in our September Newsletter**

Contact us by phone 01508 531816/ 07514423988  
or [customeradvisorypanel@outlook.com](mailto:customeradvisorypanel@outlook.com)

The CAP Office, Victory House, Chequers Road, Tharston, NR15 2YA



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