



May 2023

# Saffron E-News

The magazine for Saffron tenants

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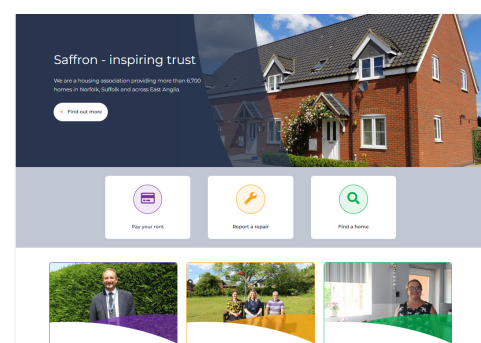


Events





## Key topics inside this issue...



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# Welcome to Saffron E-News



James Francis, CEO

Welcome to the May issue of Saffron E-News.

In our January bumper issue of Saffron news, I outlined the new legislation the Regulator of Social Housing will be putting in place. This includes 22 new Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which aims to make landlords' performance more visible to tenants and identifies areas where we could improve. We have now started the process of collecting the data for these measures. You can read more about them on page 5.

I am pleased to announce we have launched our new website. The project started last summer and has been a successful collaboration between colleagues, tenants and Board Members. I hope you agree the website has an improved design, enabling you to find the information and services you need more easily. You can find out more on page 4.

On the subject of collaboration, Independent East our informal partnership with 4 other Housing Associations across Norfolk and Suffolk has managed to secure almost £9m in funding to improve the energy efficiency of hundreds of your homes. We hope to improve living conditions and minimise living costs in 434 homes over the next two years. You can find out more on page 11.

It is great to see so many Community Triangles have taken place over the past year, proving that partnership working is fundamental in helping the communities tenants live in. You

can find out where they have taken place, and the actions we have taken as a result, on page 13.

If you think you would like to be involved in the next Community Triangle, have your say, and help make a difference at Saffron, have you thought about joining one of our tenant groups? On page 8, we provide information and how you can join either our Tenant Scrutiny Group or Tenant Communication & Support Group.

We understand that the cost of living continues to affect many people, and at Saffron we want to support tenants as much as we can. We have been working with partners to secure extra funding, including our Tenant Sustainment Fund (more on pages 6-7) which can help to offer financial help to those who receive little or no Housing Benefit/Universal Credit.

We are always looking at ways to improve our services, so if there is anything you wish to raise with us about the quality of your home, the service you are receiving from Saffron or support we might be able to provide, please email [info@saffronhousing.co.uk](mailto:info@saffronhousing.co.uk) or call 01508 532000.

Wishing you all the very best.

*James*


## Key dates and keeping up to date

Keep an eye out on our social media channels below, for useful tips, information and ways to get involved.


Facebook page - Saffron Housing Trust  
Twitter page - @saffronhousing  
Instagram page - saffronhousingtrust

### May

1st - 7th - Volunteers Week 

 15th - 21st - Mental Health Awareness Week


### July/August

New issue of Saffron E-News 

### September

 11th - 17th - Gas Safety Week

### October

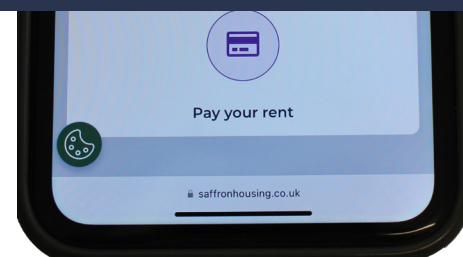
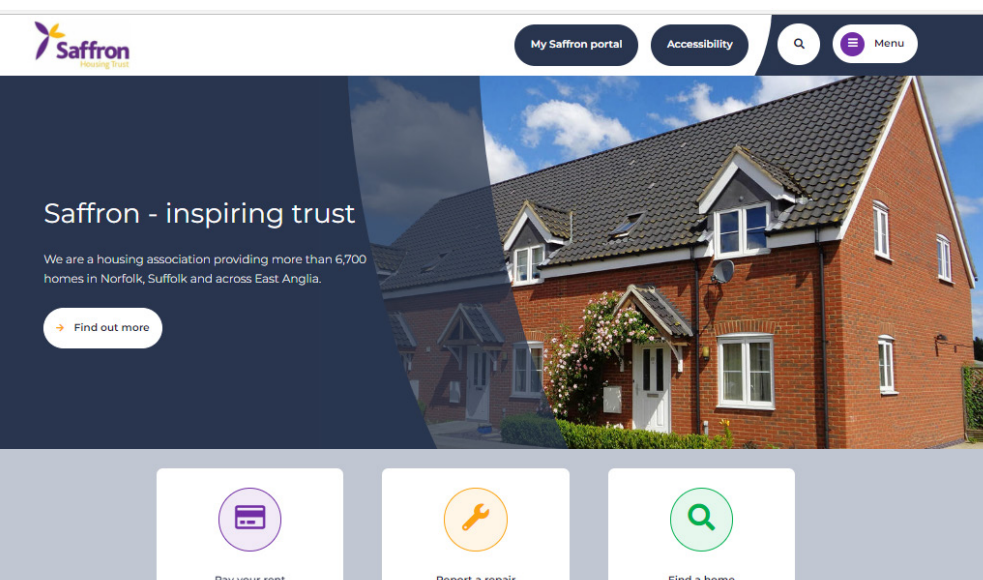
New issue of Saffron E-News 

### November

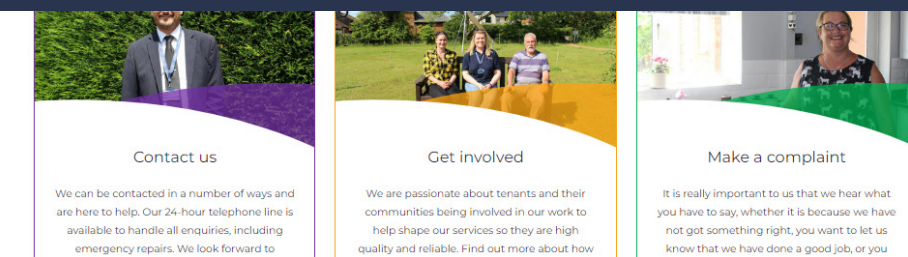
 1st - 30th - Movember

6th - National Stress Awareness Day 





## Our new website is now live!



Last month we officially launched our new website.

We hope that the new design will make it easier for you to find what you need and complete the things you need to do.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in the project to help us get it completed. We received some really valuable feedback from tenants, staff

and Board Members which has helped shape how the site looks and feels.

[Click here](#) to take a look.

Although the new site is live, we will continue to review it and make any improvements based on feedback from tenants and other people using it.

## Have you signed up to our tenant portal 'My Saffron'?

The portal allows you to pay your rent, amend your personal details when you need to, raise an enquiry and receive updates over a secure link which has advantages over sending an email. You also have access to information and resources such as our Tenant Support & Wellbeing Service.

We no longer post your rent statements, but you can view your balance and transaction

history in the portal whenever you want.

If you would like to receive a hard copy of your rent statement, we can provide them upon request.

For more information including how to sign up to My Saffron [click here](#).



## Tenant Satisfaction Measures

We are working with a company called TLF Research who will be calling tenants to ask a few questions in a short survey. They will call different tenants every three months, so you shouldn't receive a call more than once.

The survey is part of a new system the government (Regulator of Social Housing) has introduced to assess how well social housing landlords, which includes Saffron, are doing at providing good quality homes and services.

They have introduced 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) which aim to make landlords' performance more visible to tenants, and help tenants hold their landlords to account. The TSMs should therefore:



Let tenants see how well their landlord is doing.



Regulator of Social Housing

Give the Regulator of Social Housing an idea of which landlords might need to improve things.

Some of the data for the TSMs we are collecting via telephone surveys which (if you are called) will ask you how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with a particular service. The other data is information we already hold about our homes.

The full list of measures can be found on the government's website by [clicking here](#).

The first year of Tenant Satisfaction measures data will be published in autumn 2024.







# Cost of living – tenant support

The cost of living crisis is still continuing to affect many people who are struggling to pay their bills. We are working with partners to help tenants secure extra funding and support, where possible.

On our 'Extra help with living costs' website page details different funds and workshops which you may find helpful, including:



The government has announced it is extending support on energy bills for another 3 months in the Spring Budget 2023. Typical household energy bills had been due to rise to £3,000 a year from April, but now they will be kept at £2,500 until the end of June. More can be found on the government's website, by [clicking here](#).



This includes the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme which can help with household furniture and white goods, fuel vouchers (electricity and gas top-ups), supermarket vouchers, and contributions towards increasing costs during the winter months. For more information by [clicking here](#).



ThinkingFuel is Community Action Norfolk's community oil buying scheme. Members order fuel together – saving time and money. It is free to register to be part of the scheme. You can order oil on any working day of the month and still get a competitive price. To find out more [click here](#).



Available to help those facing hardship during the cost of living crisis. Applications can be made online by [clicking here](#) or by calling the Norfolk County Council Customer Contact Centre on 0344 800 8020.

## Cost of Living & Rent Increase Support' drop-in session

We recently hosted 4 'Cost of Living & Rent Increase Support' drop-in sessions, for all tenants at our Independent Community Living schemes:

- Depwade Court in Long Stratton
- Ogden Close in Wymondham
- Thomas Manning Road in Diss
- Mendham Close in Harleston



Our staff were on hand to help tenants with any questions or concerns they may be having and also signpost them to any relevant agencies for further support.

Don't forget we also have our 'Extra help with living costs' website page, which you may find useful. [Click here](#) to find out more.



## Tenancy Sustainment Fund

We have a Tenancy Sustainment Fund to offer financial help to tenants who get little or no Housing Benefit/Universal Credit Housing Element towards their rent and find themselves facing difficulties funding the additional amount of rent to pay this year, following the 2023/24 rent increase of up to 11.1%.

For tenants who apply and have their applications approved, we will credit their rent account with a payment of up to £500. The Tenancy Sustainment Fund payment will be made directly to tenants rent accounts.

To apply for this fund, you will need to:

- Be a Saffron tenant before 1st March 2023
- Not be in receipt of Full Housing Benefit or Full Universal Credit Housing Element
- Not have more than £6,000 in savings

To find out more, please visit our 'Rent advice' website page by [clicking here](#).

## Warm Packs

In January we received some lovely feedback from tenants about our 'Warm Packs', which staff handed out to tenants to help them during the colder months.

The Warm Packs, kindly funded by Crocus Homes, include - a fleece blanket, woollen hat, microwavable heat pack and a small flask.

Remember also if you are struggling, we might be able to help in another way. Please contact your Neighbourhood Officer or Wellbeing Co-ordinator or if you have any concerns about paying your rent, please contact your Income Officer.

They can be contacted by calling 01508 532000 or emailing [info@saffronhousing.co.uk](mailto:info@saffronhousing.co.uk).

"That will come in very handy, thank you."

"What a lovely thought, thank you."

"Thank you, I get really cold working from home and now being less mobile. This will certainly help keep me warm."

"Oh, what an absolute darling you are, this is very welcome and I'll use it all. Thank you Saffron."

"I'm quite unwell and had phoned my friend to come and make me tea and toast for breakfast. Now he can now fill the flask so I can have a hot drink when he goes. The other things will help keep me snuggly too, thank you."



# Join our Tenant Communication & Support Group or Tenant Scrutiny Group

Make changes to Saffron



Tenant Scrutiny Group

The group look at tenant feedback from our monthly Customer Satisfaction Surveys, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and also review complaints. Using this information, they decide what areas they would like to scrutinise.

Support and help other tenants



Tenant Communication & Support Group

The group is involved with making sure Saffron's communication with tenants is fair and open, along with input on outgoing publications and tenant related policies. The group also supports other tenants with advice, with the ability to liaise with Saffron on service failures and to look in depth at trending issues.

Receive thank you vouchers

Laptop and training provided

Child care and travel costs provided

**The only experience you need is being a Saffron tenant.**  
**We are looking for:**

- Motivated people who care about making positive changes to Saffron for the benefit of all our tenants.
- To be able to work in a group and listen to the views of others, as well as being happy to share your experiences.

We provide support, training and development opportunities for volunteers on both of these groups.

The groups meet 8 times a year, 4 virtual meetings on MS Teams and 4 face to face meetings where lunch is provided. They also have the opportunity to visit Saffron developments, empty properties, community living schemes and attend pop up events and roadshows.

To apply or for an informal chat, email the Customer Engagement Team [getinvolved@saffronhousing.co.uk](mailto:getinvolved@saffronhousing.co.uk) or call us on 01508 532000. You can also download a form on our Be a Saffron Community Member website page by [clicking here](#).



## Do you have Home Contents Insurance?

At Saffron, we have teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks to offer the 'My Home Contents Insurance Scheme' to tenants. It is important to make sure that you insure your home and contents to help provide peace of mind should the worst happen.

This is a specialist scheme which covers the contents and personal belongings for tenants in social housing, against loss and damage from specific events such as a fire, theft or escape of water.

You can find out more by [clicking here](#).



## Missed appointments

Please help us to help you by ensuring you keep to your booked appointment times for any maintenance, servicing and/or surveys that we need to complete on your home.

Since January 2023 we have had:

1,027 missed repairs appointments

52 missed TPM\* surveys

We understand sometimes appointments need to be changed due to unforeseen circumstances. Please call our Customer Contact Team on 01508 532000 if you need to rearrange a booking and we can reschedule this for a better time for you. We can then use that time slot for another tenant.

### \*TPM – Total Property Maintenance surveys

We carry out TPM surveys on all our properties every 6 years, which allows us to spot property issues before they become a problem and deal with minor repairs quickly.

The survey also means we can pick up, and budget more effectively for bigger issues, such as where we need to install new kitchens and bathrooms.

We will let you know by letter when your home is due a TPM survey and will contact you by phone (or letter if that is your preferred method of contact) to organise a date and time to visit. The average TPM survey will take between 1½ to 2 hours, and we will need to be able to access every area of the property.

To find out more about our TPM surveys, visit our website by [clicking here](#).



## Local MPs visit Swallowtail Place

Two Norfolk MPs have recently visited Swallowtail Place in Acle to find out more about our newest Independent Community Living Plus scheme.

Jerome Mayhew, MP for Broadland and Richard Bacon, MP for South Norfolk had a tour and met Saffron

staff including CEO James Francis. They had a look at the facilities, including the café, lounge area, activity room, garden and a one and two-bedroom apartment.

The scheme, for people over 55, includes Shared Ownership properties and apartments available for rent. On-site care is available 24/7, giving residents and their families peace of mind that support is close to hand if needed. Close to facilities in Acle, and with communal spaces, residents can remain active in the community.

Jerome Mayhew MP said: "It is great to see provision locally for people who do not want to take the step into care but want that extra little bit of assurance and a place that can follow their needs as they get older.

"The building is warm, bright, and light, with lots of sunshine, and the apartments are spacious and look comfortable. The best thing about this place is it's open to the community. Right here you are in the heart of the village, but you have also brought the village into the building with the café open to the public. When I walked in, I was met by the sound of a busy and enjoyable shared space."



73-year-old Jenny Rath moved into her Shared Ownership property in February. She has Scoliosis and previously lived in a 2-bed terrace house which was becoming unsuitable. She needed to live on one level but wanted space for her daughter to visit. She currently only has minimal care but is reassured to know that care is available if needed in the future.

She said: "Before you would wake up and all you would see is cars. Now, to wake up and look at the trees, it is lovely. And I can now enjoy a cup of tea in bed, which I could not do before. And it is so quiet. I love it."

Richard Bacon, MP said: "The building itself is really impressive and what is clear is it's already becoming a central place within Acle. Not just for the people who have moved here but for the people who live in the area coming to use the facilities. It is a great step forward if you want to integrate a place like this into the community.

"I've known Saffron for many years, and I have always been impressed with the high quality of homes that they produce. Saffron is shining a light of what is possible and I'm very proud that they are within my area."



James Francis, CEO of Saffron, said: "It was a pleasure to meet Jerome and Richard and show them around Swallowtail Place. Independent Community Living Plus schemes like this are vital in preventing social isolation as people get older. We are proud to offer homes which allow tenants to keep their independence, with the comfort of knowing there is help on hand should they need it."



## Funding successful to improve energy efficiency for hundreds of homes

Independent East\*, an informal alliance of housing associations based in Norfolk and Suffolk including Saffron, has secured almost £9m in funding to boost energy efficiency in hundreds of homes.

The funding from Wave 2 of the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will mean energy-saving measures can be put in place in 800 homes such as loft insulation and new windows. The upgrades will mean homes currently below Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) 'C' will be brought up to that standard and will help to:

- Deliver warm, energy efficient homes
- Reduce carbon emissions
- Tackle fuel poverty
- Support green jobs
- Develop the retrofit sector (retrofit is the introduction of new materials, products, and technologies into an existing building to reduce the energy needed to occupy that building)
- Improve the comfort, health, and wellbeing of tenants

We will improve the standard of 434 homes over the next two years making them more energy efficient and cheaper to heat and includes improvements to 'D rated' homes.

Jason McCormick, Director of Sustainability at Saffron, said: "We are really pleased to have received this funding alongside our partners in

Independent East. We have learnt a lot from what we were able to carry out with the Wave 1 funding, as we work with the latest technology to provide quality and sustainable homes for our tenants. As the cost of living continues to rise, this new funding will benefit hundreds more of our tenants and their families, giving them warmer homes, which will be cheaper, more efficient and produce less carbon dioxide to heat."

\*Independent East is an informal alliance of five



community-focused housing associations in the East of England – Broadland Housing, Freebridge Community Housing, Havebury Housing Partnership, Saffron Housing Trust and Orwell Housing Association. The group's purpose is to share ideas and best practice to continually improve services and better the lives of their tenants.

Four  
Million  
Homes

## Free webinars for tenants

The Four Million Homes programme has recently been set up by the government to help drive action and change in social housing. They will provide free advice and knowledge via webinars, guidance and training so that tenants know their rights and how to access the Housing Ombudsman Service.

They will cover a range of topics from damp and mould to how to complain about Anti-Social Behaviour. To find out more and how you can join each webinar and subscribe to their newsletter, [click here](#).





This is a national project funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities.



# You said, we did

Each month we carry out Customer Satisfaction surveys which are a great way of gaining feedback from our tenants so we can see where we are doing things well or perhaps where we can improve. The surveys ask questions about our key frontline services, such as our Customer Contact Centre, Anti-Social Behaviour and Housing Management.

In the table below there is some of your feedback from those surveys and the actions we have taken as a result. We always like to hear from our tenants, so if you would like to send us feedback, including a compliment, please fill out the feedback form on the 'Contact us' website page, by [clicking here](#).

You said...	...We did.
 I feel the solution to stop Anti-Social Behaviour from happening again, in the flat block I live in, was not good enough.	A letter has been sent to all tenants and our Health & Safety Team have reviewed the entrance of the doors. A visit is being arranged with the police and the South Norfolk Council Early Help Hub to consider security of block.
 Tenants do not check the 'My Saffron' tenant portal for a response to an enquiry they might have.	We have a 'how to' video on our website, which you can view by clicking here. We will also work with our Communications Team to discuss putting the video on our social media channels as a reminder for tenants.
 I have recently had a kitchen upgrade and the workers are brilliant, but I don't feel however, that Saffron informed us of some of the things to expect when they were in my home. For example the smell of the latex or how long I was going to be without a cooker or washing machine.	We have reviewed the letters that are being sent to tenants and made sure they include everything that could be expected when we attend a repair in their home.
 The gap between a home inspection and when the job has then been complete seems a long time.	We have reviewed the letters sent to tenants and we will now include potential timescales of when they can expect jobs to be completed after they have had an inspection.

## Community Triangles

We have now held 9 Community Triangles across Norfolk and Suffolk:

- Geldeson
- Loddon
- Saxmundham
- Wymondham
- Brooke
- Poringland (twice)
- Pulham Market
- Bunwell

Community Triangles (CT) are a great way for us to engage with tenants and the local community.



Members of Saffron walk around the local area and talk to tenants about any issues or concerns they may have.



Some of the feedback we received from our Loddon CT and the actions we have taken as a result are:

**You said** – you would like Saffron to have more of presence in your neighbourhood  
**We did** – we arranged a community clear up day and Community Triangle with representatives from Saffron, the police and parish council attending.

**You said** - there is a lack of pride in the community.  
**We did** - Saffron have completed several home

visits to tenants in the Loddon area, to discuss how to keep their community clean, gardens tidy and neighbourhood a safe place to live.

We have feedback from other Community Triangles which we are looking into. Any updated points will be posted on our 'You said, we did' website page which you can view by [clicking here](#).

Keep an eye out on our social media channels ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#)) and website for more Community Triangles happening in your area.





# Where we are building updates

## New homes nearly complete in Wymondham

In January 2022 we started work on land at the old Wymondham Rugby Club to provide much needed affordable homes. Each month we visit the site to capture new pictures and videos and it has been great to see how the site progresses, keep an eye out on our social media channels to view the different stages of the development.

With the support from Homes England, there will be 90 affordable homes. They will consist of 1, 2 and 3 bed houses and bungalows and 4 bed houses, all fitted with Air Source Heat Pumps. They will provide enough heat for the home as well as the water and produces lower carbon emission meaning lower fuel bills.

By the end of this summer phase 1 and 2 of the development will be complete, where the first 23 homes will be handed over.

The development is due for completion in February 2024.



for people over 55. There will be a number of facilities on site so residents can keep their independence and remain active within the community.

There will be public green areas for residents to enjoy including an equipped play area, community orchard and walking routes.

It is anticipated construction will start in the summer and it will be completed in 2029.



## New development in Rackheath a step closer

We are excited to be a step closer in providing dozens of new homes in Rackheath at Green Lane East.



Saffron's Head of Land & Planning Joe Bootman said: "We are delighted to be able to deliver a new site in Rackheath. We have been working with the original landowner and Broadland District Council for a number of years to try and bring this site to the point where it can be delivered and, it is an important part of our delivery programme.

"We are grateful to Broadland District Council for their assistance in bringing forward this important site. The local Wroxham Ward members, Councillors Martin Murrell and Fran Whymark, have been instrumental in the success of this project having worked with the NHS and other partners over many years to ensure Rackheath gets the infrastructure it needs, now and in the future. We look forward to inviting them to cut the ribbon of the new facilities in the future as Saffron ensures they become a reality."

There will be 130 affordable homes as well as a new Independent Community Living scheme and a new medical centre.

The Independent Community Living scheme will have up to 92 one and two-bedroom homes for people over 55. There will be a number of facilities on site for residents, including a restaurant and hair salon, enabling them to keep their independence and remain active in the community.

## Our new development in Harleston has been granted planning permission



We are pleased to announce we have been granted planning permission by South Norfolk Council for 461 new homes in Harleston.

The site, which will be delivered with the help of funding from Homes England, will include 354 affordable properties and 203 for sale. There will be a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses

available, all fitted with Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP). The ASHPs will provide enough heat for the home and water and produces lower carbon emissions leading to lower fuel bills.

The new Independent Community Living scheme will be developed in partnership with Norfolk County Council and will have 107 one and two-bedroom self-contained flats and bungalows,





## Contact us

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