



November 2023

Saffron E-News

The magazine for Saffron tenants

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Welcome to Saffron E-News



James Francis, CEO

Image of James Francis, Saffron's CEO

Welcome to the November edition of Saffron E-News.

In this issue, we would like to start by again apologising for the way our letter about service charges was sent to you on 25th September. We are aware of the distress and confusion this caused and, since then, we have provided an update about what we have decided to do about service charges. You should have received an updated letter explaining what is happening next. This information can also be found on page 9.

We will also provide an insight into our performance and highlights from the 2022/23 financial year with the launch of our Bitesize Annual Report, the unveiling of a new portal for our Tenant Support & Wellbeing Service, along with some useful updates and reminders.

We have recently published our Annual Report and Financial Statements, including a new Bitesize version to offer you an 'at a glance' overview of key points. You can find out more on page 4.

Are you interested in finding out more about our tenant groups? On page 6, you can learn about the members and what they are working on, along with details about how you can get involved.

Over the summer months, we have hosted a range of events such as Community Fun Days and Skip Days to connect with tenants and local communities. Take a look at our gallery on page 16.

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 or call 01508 532000.

Wishing you all the very best.

James

Key dates and keeping up to date

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

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

November



1st - 30th - November

2nd - National Stress Awareness Day



December



2nd - 8th - National Grief Awareness Week

10th - Human Rights Day



Christmas opening hours

Saffron will be closed from 12.30pm on Friday 22nd December 2023 and will re-open at 8.45am on Tuesday 2nd January 2024.

If you need emergency repairs during this period, please call 01508 532000.

Read our new Bitesize Annual Report



Image of our Bitesize Annual Report

Our Annual Reports for 2022/23 are now available on our website.

This year we hope you enjoy reading our new Bitesize version which can be found alongside the full report on the Reports and Policies page on our website.

We worked together with our Tenant Communication & Support Group and Service Quality Committee to create this shorter version which is designed to be an 'at a glance' overview. It still includes all the key information about our performance and highlights, such as how our staff have supported tenants and how we are working to continue to improve our services.

→ [Click here to visit our Reports and Policies page.](#)

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
- 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.

You can view your balance and transaction history in the portal whenever you need.

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

Become a Saffron Community Member

If you are looking for an opportunity to get involved and make a positive difference, you can become a Saffron Community Member.

You can take part in as little or as much as you like, such as:

- Attending six-monthly meetings with our Board and Senior Leadership team
- Taking part in workshops or completing online surveys
- Getting involved in our Community Triangles
- Becoming a member of our Tenant Scrutiny Group or Tenant Communication & Support Group



Tenant
Scrutiny
Group

The group looks 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.



Tenant
Communication &
Support Group

The group is involved with making sure Saffron's communication with tenants is fair and open. 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.

Find out more on our [Be a Saffron Community Member](#) webpage by [clicking here.](#)

Learn more about our tenant groups



You can now find out more about the members of Saffron's tenant groups.

We have recently launched two new webpages dedicated to the Tenant Communication & Support Group, and the Tenant Scrutiny Group – committees made up of tenants who aim to represent your local community and improve the Saffron experience for everyone.



These new pages will tell you more about each group, what it aims to do, and updates on the issues we are currently working on together. We will be continuing to update these pages with short biographies for our group members to introduce them and give you some background.

There will be a blog post every few months written by the tenant group members, where you can read about what they discussed with us in their meetings, in their own words.



You can also use those pages to contact the groups and raise any issues you might have and offer any suggestions or feedback about your tenant experience. Your comments will then be fed back to us during the group meetings.

This is also a great opportunity to let the tenant groups know what you would like to read about in future newsletters.

Look out for this image throughout the E-News to find out which content was suggested through the Tenant Communication & Support Group.



You can read more about the tenant group meetings on the new webpages, and see what was discussed at their last meeting on the next pages.

→ [Click here to visit the new Tenant Scrutiny Group webpage.](#)

→ [Click here to visit the new Tenant Communication & Support Group webpage.](#)



Highlights from the Tenant Scrutiny Group report

Aim:

To understand more about the service failures and recognise where the areas of concern are.

We met with 2 schedulers and spent an hour learning about what they do, day to day. We then met with the Contact Centre Manager and the Complaints Manager to ask further questions.

Key findings:

- There is not always sufficient detail in inspectors' reports after an initial craftworker visit. The subsequent report is missing essential areas i.e. measurements of materials required, photos etc. It still requires another craftworker visit to get the additional information to be able to order materials and stock. This results in wasted time and money from unnecessary reworking.
- Craftworkers only have a daily view of their calendar, they get the next working day at lunch time. This gives less time to plan and load their vehicle for the working week. Give craftworkers the responsibility for their own working day rather than the schedulers being responsible for managing their workload.
- Concerns over booked and confirmed appointments where a craftworker turns up to nobody at home. This is a waste of craftworkers' time which then knocks on to the rest of their day.

Key recommendations:

- Review quality of inspectors' role and update training to include necessary information required to remove the additional rework and duplicate attendance.
- Improved inter-management between craftworkers and schedulers. This would create better working between staff and reduce diary cancellations. The improvement in output and reduced costs in wasted manpower and revisits could be put back into the business.
- Consideration to the possibility of fining tenants who are not there for booked appointments. Exceptions for genuine reasons but serial offenders should be easy to spot. Compensation for tenants when Saffron fail to make an appointment as agreed.

Overall thoughts:

We found the new scheduling team to be very professional, keen, proactive and enjoying their role. With some gentle tweaking it could make everyone much more efficient, proactive and less pressured which should benefit all, from Saffron through to tenants, and thus reduce the number of complaints.

→ [Click here to read the full report on the new Tenant Scrutiny Group webpage.](#)



Highlights from the Tenant Communication & Support Group report

Our first meeting was held on 13th August. We looked at what the role of the group was, and a few of the group members felt that it was important to look at the 'Support' element of the group name.

We felt it was a crucial part of what we do, as we can look at communication all the time, but we need to make sure we are also supporting other tenants. This is something we will develop over time as the group gets to know each other and finds its feet.

Income letters

We wanted to start with Income letters as we have had a lot of feedback from tenants.

The Income Manager explained the process from the first letter to court applications and presented 9 letters to us. We looked through each letter and made a number of changes.

Communications Team

We met with the Communications Team virtually regarding their upcoming projects and how the group can be involved. These included Service Standards, newsletters and the Accessibility Review.

Service charges letters

We were made aware that tenants will be receiving a service charge letter from the Rents and Service Charges Team. Frustratingly, the letters had already been sent to the printer before the Tenants and Communities Team were made aware of the letters. This means our group did not have the opportunity to review and provide feedback. This also makes it very difficult for us to offer support on the Saffron Tenant Facebook Group as we do not know the content of the letter or what it relates to.

Staff should be seeing tenant engagement as positive and a real opportunity to ensure that the letters being sent are understandable and meaningful to tenants. This needs to be embedded in all staff and be at the forefront of their minds and not an afterthought.

→ [Click here to read full report on the new Tenant Communication & Support Group webpage.](#)

Saffron E-News has spoken to CEO James Francis about the delivery of the service charges letters. He said:

“We want Saffron to be an organisation that works with you to improve your tenant experience, and on this occasion we have clearly failed to do this. We are truly sorry for any distress we have caused. We are committed to learning from what we did wrong and will be working to rebuild your trust in us.”

You can read a further update on the service charges and how these may apply to you on the next page.

Service charges letter

As you may be aware, we sent a letter dated 25th September 2023 to a number of tenants and homeowners about service charges. We acknowledge the letter was not sent in the right way and understand the distress it has caused, and we are very sorry for this.

We have listened to feedback from tenants, tenant groups, homeowners, and tenant Board members and this was used to inform our Board's decision on what we do now, and the steps we are taking to start putting this right.

We can confirm that at Board's meeting on 16th October 2023, it was agreed that:

- Tenants who have never been charged for a service charge before can disregard the letter dated 25th September 2023 and will not be required to pay the amount stated.
- Tenants who have always paid service charges do not need to make a payment now, as the amount stated in the letter dated 25th September 2023 will be included in the 2024-2025 rent and service charge letter, which you will receive in February 2024.
- Homeowners who have always been charged a service charge; the amount shown in the letter dated 25th September 2023 has been added to your service charge account with Saffron. It has been agreed that on this occasion you have until 31st March 2024 to pay the balance as outlined in the invoice you received with that letter.

We want to reassure all tenants and homeowners that we are committed to building an organisation that instils your trust in Saffron. We recognise that Saffron has failed you and we have been conducting a review to ensure we understand why this happened and to ensure this does not happen again.

Tenants and homeowners who have previously received a letter should have received a further letter clarifying what it means for you.

If you would like to speak to us about service charges, please contact the Rents and Service Charges Team as below:

@ rentsandservicecharges@saffronhousing.co.uk

📞 01508 532000


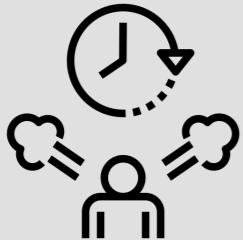

If you live on an Independent Community Living or Independent Community Living Plus scheme, you can speak to your Wellbeing Coordinator.



Each month we carry out Customer Satisfaction surveys which are a great way of gaining tenant feedback 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. We also collect feedback from complaints and from our Community Triangles.

The table below contains some of your comments and the actions we have taken as a result. We always welcome your feedback, so if you would like to get in touch, please fill out the feedback form on the 'Contact us' page on our website by [clicking here](#).

You said...		...We did
<p>"It is difficult to get through to the person you need to speak to, or it can take weeks to get a response to emails."</p> 		<p>Saffron has begun a Service Standards Review which includes all teams understanding clearly how long they have to respond to each other and to you.</p> <p>It is very important that information flows well through the organisation.</p> <p>This is a large project and we will inform you as soon as the outcomes are clear and agreed.</p>
<p>"My repair responsibilities are not clear following a mutual exchange."</p> 		<p>We have improved our mutual exchange acceptance/sign up form.</p> <p>This now gives much more detail to clearly explain repair responsibilities for non-standard components fitted by the previous tenant.</p> <p>This is to prevent any confusion at the point of exchange and to ensure you are clear on how we can support you.</p>



New look portal!

Online Chat

Image of the Life & Progress website

We offer a free, completely confidential Tenant Support & Wellbeing Service, through **Life & Progress**, which is available for you to use 24/7.

Through this service you can access professional telephone counselling, support and advice on a variety of topics, including:


- Mental health and wellbeing
- Tackling stress and anxiety
- Managing debt and budgeting
- Relationships and family matters
- Workplace issues
- Your rights as a consumer

We have recently launched a new look for our online portal, making it even more accessible for you. It is designed to provide you with more insight and guidance on the issues you may be facing from reliable and trusted sources.

The portal provides contact options including a Live Chat feature, so you can get the support you need, whenever you need it.

You can access the new portal by [clicking here](#) and using the below login details:

Username: saffronhousingtrust
Password: tenantsupport

 [Click here to find out more about the Tenant Support & Wellbeing Service.](#)

Find your Neighbourhood Officer

There are lots of different departments working together at Saffron to maintain our homes and communities, including our Neighbourhood Officers.

As part of their role they:



Help manage tenancies, from moving in to moving out, and mutual exchanges.

Work closely with other partner agencies such as local councils and the police on things like tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). [Click here](#) to find out more.



Check gardens and communal areas are well maintained.

Make sure fire safety and health and safety in all communal areas is maintained.



Help refer you and sign post you to supporting agencies to assist with mental health and wellbeing, help with paying your bills and support to manage your tenancy and home. Learn more by [clicking here](#).

Deal with any safeguarding issues for our most vulnerable tenants.



Carry out tenancy audits.

You can find your Neighbourhood Officer using this list, or [click here](#) for more information.

If you have an enquiry, please email us at info@saffronhousing.co.uk or call us on 01508 532000, providing as much information as possible so that we can direct you to the most relevant department and respond in the best way.



For any queries please email info@saffronhousing.co.uk or call 01508 532000

Acle	Debs Johnson	Fundenhall	Liz Ross	Rockland St Mary	Sally-Anne Bennett
Alburgh	Zoe Ebbage	Geldeston	Debs Johnson	Roydon	Paul Quick
Aldeby	Debs Johnson	Gillingham	Debs Johnson	Runhall	John Gibson
Alpington	Sally-Anne Bennett	Gissing	Paul Quick	Rushall	Paul Quick
Arminghall/Bixley	Sally-Anne Bennett	Great Melton	John Gibson	Saxlingham Nethergate/Thorpe	Sally-Anne Bennett
Ashill	John Gibson	Great Moulton	Judy Pike	Saxmundham	Zoe Ebbage
Ashwellthorpe	Liz Ross	Great Yarmouth	Debs Johnson	Scole	Paul Quick
Aslacton	Judy Pike	Hackford	John Gibson	Seething	Debs Johnson
Attleborough	John Gibson	Haddiscoe	Debs Johnson	Shelfanger	Paul Quick
Aylsham	Dean Park	Hainford	Dean Park	Shimpling	Debs Johnson
Barford	Dean Park	Hales	Debs Johnson	Shipdham	John Gibson
Barnham Broom	Dean Park	Hapton	Judy Pike	Shotesham	Sally-Anne Bennett
Bawburgh	Dean Park	Hardwick	Judy Pike	Spixworth	Dean Park
Beccles	Debs Johnson	Harleston	Zoe Ebbage	Spooner Row	Liz Ross
Bergh Apton	Debs Johnson	Heartsease	Sally-Anne Bennett	Sprowston	Dean Park
Blofield	Sally-Anne Bennett	Heckingham	Debs Johnson	Stalham	Sally-Anne Bennett
Bracon Ash	Judy Pike	Hedenham	Judy Pike	Starston	Judy Pike
Bradwell	Debs Johnson	Hellesdon	Dean Park	Stockton	Debs Johnson
Bramerton	Sally-Anne Bennett	Hellington	Sally-Anne Bennett	Stoke Holy Cross	Sally-Anne Bennett
Bressingham	Paul Quick	Hempnall	Judy Pike	Surlingham	Sally-Anne Bennett
Brockdish	Paul Quick	Hethersett	John Gibson	Suton	Liz Ross
Brooke	Debs Johnson	Hevingham	Dean Park	Swaffham	John Gibson
Broome	Debs Johnson	Heywood	Paul Quick	Swainsthorpe	Sally-Anne Bennett
Brundall	Sally-Anne Bennett	Hingham	John Gibson	Swanton Morley	John Gibson
Bunwell	Liz Ross	Hopton	Debs Johnson	Swardeston	Sally-Anne Bennett
Burgh St Peter	Debs Johnson	Keswick	Sally-Anne Bennett	Tacolneston	Liz Ross
Burston	Paul Quick	Ketteringham	Sally-Anne Bennett	Tasburgh	Judy Pike
Cantley	Debs Johnson	Kimberley	John Gibson	Tharston	Judy Pike
Carbrooke	John Gibson	Kirby Bedon	John Gibson	Thetford	Paul Quick
Carleton Rode	Liz Ross	Kirstead	Debs Johnson	Thurlton	Debs Johnson
Catton (Norwich)	Sally-Anne Bennett	Lakenham	Sally-Anne Bennett	Thurton	Debs Johnson
Chedgrave	Debs Johnson	Langley with Hardley	Debs Johnson	Tibenham	Judy Pike
Claxton	Sally-Anne Bennett	Leiston	Zoe Ebbage	Tivetshall St Margaret	Judy Pike
Costessey	Dean Park	Little Melton	Dean Park	Tivetshall St Mary	Judy Pike
Cringleford	Sally-Anne Bennett	Little Plumstead	Sally-Anne Bennett	Toft Monks	Debs Johnson
Darsham	Zoe Ebbage	Loddon	Debs Johnson	Topcroft	Judy Pike
Denton	Zoe Ebbage	Long Stratton	Judy Pike	Trowse	Sally-Anne Bennett
Deopham	John Gibson	Lowestoft	Zoe Ebbage	Wacton	Judy Pike
Dereham	John Gibson	Marlingford	Dean Park	Walberswick	Zoe Ebbage
Dickleburgh	Paul Quick	Morley	John Gibson	Watton	John Gibson
Diss	Paul Quick	Morningthorpe	Judy Pike	Welborne	John Gibson
Ditchingham	Judy Pike	Mulbarton	Sally-Anne Bennett	Wenhaston	Zoe Ebbage
Earsham	Judy Pike	Necton	John Gibson	Wheatacre	Debs Johnson
East Carleton	Sally-Anne Bennett	Needham	Paul Quick	Wickham Market	Zoe Ebbage
Easton	Dean Park	Newton Flotman	Sally-Anne Bennett	Wicklewood	John Gibson
Ellingham	Debs Johnson	North Pickenham	John Gibson	Winfarthing	Paul Quick
Felthorpe	Dean Park	Norton		Woodton	Judy Pike
Fersfield	Paul Quick	Subcourse	Debs Johnson	Wortwell	Zoe Ebbage
Flordon	Judy Pike	Norwich	Sally-Anne Bennett	Wrampingham	John Gibson
Forncett (St Peter & St Mary)	Judy Pike	Oulton	Zoe Ebbage	Wreningham	Liz Ross
Framingham Earl	Sally-Anne Bennett	Poringland	Sally-Anne Bennett	Wymondham	Liz Ross
Framlingham	Zoe Ebbage	Pulham Market	Judy Pike	Yelverton	Sally-Anne Bennett
Freethorpe	Debs Johnson	Pulham St Mary	Judy Pike		
Fritton	Judy Pike	Reydon	Zoe Ebbage		



Domestic Abuse awareness

In September, Neighbourhood Manager Jennifer Hoyer and her partner completed a skydive at Beccles Airfield to raise money to support people experiencing domestic abuse in our local area.

So far, they have raised over £850, which will go to Leeway Domestic Violence and Abuse Services and also Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (NIDAS), a partner of Leeway that offers a countywide service. Click on their logos below to visit the organisations' websites and learn more about them.



Image of Jennifer Hoyer and her partner



We believe that you, and those living with you, should never live in fear of violence from a partner, former partner, or other members of your household including carers.

Through our Community Fund, we can now offer home safety equipment for domestic abuse survivors. Along with advice and support to victims, the Neighbourhood Team can provide additional security for your home, including window alarms, door handle alarms and swift locks. We work in partnership with other agencies to manage and tackle incidents of domestic abuse, and take all reports very seriously.

We have a form you can complete if you think you are suffering from domestic abuse, or if you know someone who might be. [Click here](#) to access the form.

→ [Click here to find out more about the support available to you.](#)



Is your heating system ready for the winter?

With most of our heating systems turned off during the summer, now is a good time to check they are all running properly and ready for the winter months.

If your heating system does not work or you have any issues, please email us at info@saffronhousing.co.uk or call 01508 532000.



Please remember to be extra cautious if you receive a call from an unknown number.

Do not give out any of your personal details and hang up immediately.

If you ever receive a suspicious call that claims to be from Saffron Housing Trust, please email us at info@saffronhousing.co.uk or call 01508 532000 and we can confirm if the call was genuine.



Our Customer Contact Team has been experiencing technical challenges with the telephony system we use in recent weeks.

Our provider, Netcall, has recently made some changes to its 'cloud services' and this has had an impact on the service.

Saffron has been a client with Netcall for 7 years and the platform has been very stable until the recent changes. This has resulted in our callers being held in very long queues without an opportunity to connect to an advisor.

Following investigation, Netcall has clarified the actions it has taken to prevent this from happening again. We have also worked with Netcall to improve our service so we are now able to make you aware of issues with the system at the time they happen, whilst providing you with other ways to contact us.

We are sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

Community events

Throughout the summer, we introduced free **Community Fun Days** as a great way to meet with tenants and local communities.

In July, we hosted a Fun Day at our children's play area on Silfield Avenue in Wymondham.

There were lots of activities for people to get involved in including a penalty shootout, colouring competitions, hula hooping and face painting.



Wymondham Town Councillor and Mayor of Wymondham Suzanne Nuri-Nixon attended and met local residents (pictured, far left).

There was even a visit from the Red Arrows, who happened to fly over towards the end of the afternoon!



In August, we held a Fun Day in Mulbarton. Activities included colouring, face painting and building a bug hotel, which was very popular with the children who came along.

There was also entertainment including magic and balloon animal making.

Images of children and Saffron staff attending the Fun Days



We have recently held a number of **Skip Days** around Norfolk and Suffolk to give tenants an opportunity to dispose of any unwanted items.

In July, as part of Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Week, we visited Dickleburgh.

It was a very successful day, managing to fill 2 skips in a couple of hours.

Several tenants cleared their gardens of various items and helped with a community clear-up around the street.



Images of tenants and Saffron staff at a Skip Day



Image of two Saffron staff standing in front of a skip

In August, we held a Skip Day in Saxmundham.

The event was a success as the skip filled up within 90 minutes!

Several local residents also took part in a community litter pick, with children who joined in receiving gold medals and sweets to thank them for their efforts.

Around 10 bags of rubbish were generated from cleaning up the area.

If you have any suggestions for improvements to your community, we would love to hear them.

You can share these with the tenant groups by using the handy contact form on their webpages. [Click here](#) to visit the Tenant Scrutiny Group page, or [click here](#) to visit the Tenant Communication & Support Group page.

Alternatively, send us an email at info@saffronhousing.co.uk with your ideas.

Your Own Place sessions

If you have concerns about the current cost of living, you can benefit from financial support sessions we are offering in community spaces, in partnership with Your Own Place.

The sessions, currently based in a foodbank in Diss, offer the chance to have a chat with the Your Own Place team and plan how to manage your finances more effectively.



These are a mixture of drop-in discussions, one-to-one chats, and dedicated Cost of Living sessions, covering topics including:

- Budgeting and saving
- Understanding and managing debt
- Benefits and Cost of Living support
- Directing you to specialist help

You can also get support with filling in online forms, applying for travel passes, looking things up online or planning your spending.

To find out more about Your Own Place and how they can help you, visit their website by [clicking here](#).

Graphic showing the topics covered in the sessions

Last month, the team spoke with a Saffron tenant who had at first needed help with money as he “didn’t have enough”.

As he shared his incomings, outgoings and savings over the next few weeks, the team helped him to discover that he was in a better financial position than he thought, as he found out he was in 6 months’ credit with his rent.

When the Your Own Place team last saw him, they asked what he was going to do with the money. He said: “put it in my ISA” and “save for my Council Tax”.

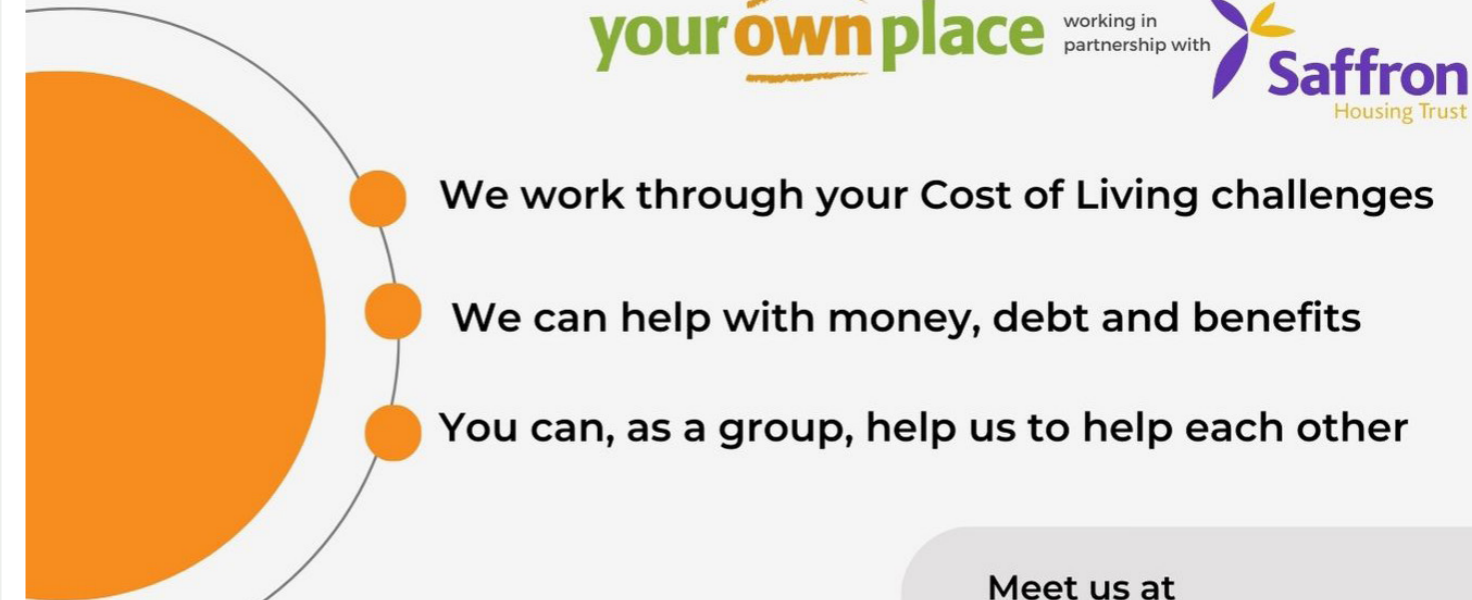
His increased awareness around incomings and outgoings has supported him to budget and plan for the future. Along with this tenant, many others have found the sessions beneficial in helping them to navigate their financial concerns.



Images of a tenant with Your Own Place staff member at a session

Cost of Living Concerns?

Come and have a chat with



Mike
07704 303 194

Meet us at

Hope Church
Vince's Rd,
Diss IP22 4HG

Meet us on
Mondays 10 - 11am on:

6 November
13 November
20 November

Get together as a group to discuss
benefits & support options

Friday 24 November
12.30 - 2.30pm



Your Own Place is a registered Community Interest Company 08751344



Poster displaying upcoming session dates

Contact us



(01508) 532000



Saffron Housing Trust, Saffron Barn,
Swan Lane, Long Stratton, NR15
2XP



info@saffronhousing.co.uk



www.saffronhousing.co.uk



Saffron Housing Trust



@saffronhousing



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