



Sandwell Community Information & Participation Service

SCIPS News

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We are still here

The Board wishes to assure you that even in these challenging times, the company is still supporting the tenants and residents of Sandwell.

As you know, we have been unable to deliver services in the normal way, but decided not to furlough any of the staff and they have all been working from home supporting individuals, groups and Sandwell MBC.

The Board and the officers of the Board are holding regular virtual meetings and are reviewing how and when we can possibly hold meetings safely again. The Board realise that this is a changing situation and our members must feel confident and safe before they may wish to attend any meetings. The safety of all concerned is the Boards priority and we will follow government guidelines at all times. We will keep you informed about this situation as things become clearer.

The staff have continued to work on a number of projects including

- Hateley Cross Big Local
- Tablet loan scheme,
- Digi-comm in partnership with St Albans
- A number of task and finish groups with SMBC
- Tenant Review Panel also with SMBC
- Dame Judith Hackett Report on Building and Fire Safety within High Rise Blocks.

Finally a simple message from all at SCIPS "Stay Safe"

Our Number
0121 544 1230



SCIPS AGM 2021

The question of how and when to hold our 2021 AGM during the COVID-19 pandemic is a challenging one for the Board. This is a new and rapidly changing situation, so there is a lack of guidance and practical examples.

The Board have considered the following facts:

Our governing documents require that we hold an AGM within 15 months of the previous one, for SCIPS this is by 24 November 2021.

Under current lockdown restrictions we are not able to hold a physical AGM.

Our governing documents do not currently permit us to hold a virtual AGM, however The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (The Act) allows more flexibility for charitable companies that are required to hold their AGMs. This has now been extended until 30 March 2021. The Act enabled us to hold our postal AGM in August 2020.

It takes staff around 3 months to prepare for a physical AGM – It is likely to take around 5 months for a prolonged postal AGM with voting required.

The Board have concluded:

If the current lockdown restrictions prevent a physical AGM taking place by 24 November 2021 then The Act will most likely be extended again, beyond 30 March 2021.

The board will need to decide by early June 2021 if we intend to carry out a postal AGM to allow staff time to administer this. The Board will consider this again at their Board meeting in April 2021 and keep you informed.

Mysandwell Account



The My Housing/My Rents portal went live on the **4th January 2021**. The portal will enable council tenants to have 24/7 digital access to their housing accounts covering rents, garages, leaseholders and any sub accounts. The facility will provide residents with the ability to make payments, set up user friendly direct debits and access supporting information around money advice, employment and more.

The hope is that the portal will reduce the pressures on frontline services. The portal can be accessed via MySandwell by tenants whom have a MySandwell account. Services can be accessed via the My Accounts option, registering your accounts only requires your surname, date of birth and account number.

CAL (Carers Assistance Line)

Are you are carer? Do you need support or advice?

The Crossroads Carers Assistance Line provides a caring, listening ear and can support you in many practical ways:

- Confidential, one-to-one support
- Advice, information and guidance over the phone or face-to-face
- Signposting to other specialist support services and/or groups provided by Crossroads and other organisations based within Sandwell
- Help to reinstate previous/pre-COVID-19 care arrangements or facilitate new arrangements
- Advice on how to gain a Carers Assessment from the Local Authority
- Wellbeing support, coaching/mentoring
- Signposting to our in-house trainer for Practical training to support carers with complex care within their own home



Do you care for someone living in Sandwell?

Caring can make you feel isolated and put a lot of pressure on you. The Crossroads Carers Assistance Line provides a caring, listening ear and can advise and support you in many practical ways.

Call our free Carers Assistance Line
0121 803 6830
 Mon - Thurs, 8.30am - 4.30pm. Fri - 8.30am - 4pm
 or email CAL@sandwellcrossroads.org
 For more info visit www.sandwellcrossroads.org

Logos for COMMUNITY FUND, Crossroads Caring for Carers, and CARERS TRUST. Address: 494 Wolverhampton Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B68 8DG. Registered charity number: 1040679.

Access to Carers Trust Emergency Fund

Repairs for council tenants



Repairs for council tenants

If you live in a council property, we are carrying out essential repairs internally as well as external and communal area repairs and appointments such as gas servicing and electrical safety checks.

To get in touch about an essential repair, call **0121 569 6000** or go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/repairs

Estate Services are currently prioritising urgent tasks so we would ask tenants to please be patient with us on any non-essential works.

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council



SCIPS Office Update

The COVID-19 pandemic has required all staff to work at home on aged laptops provided by SCIPS for this purpose. This IT equipment is now 6 years old, (IT is expected to last around 3 years) and is beginning to fail sporadically causing issues for staff on a daily basis.

The Board have commissioned upgraded IT equipment for staff to enable them to work efficiently from home. The set up of this new equipment is likely to leave staff with no access to IT for just one day in the coming weeks.

SCIPS will ensure that an “out of office” message is returned to all emails and an answerphone message is on the phoneline on this day to minimise disruption. Please bear with us during this transition to new IT equipment.

Until then our telephone lines are connected to a mobile phone which is being manned by Helena during our normal working hours (9:30am - 17:30pm) so if you do need to contact us please continue to ring the 0121 544 1230 number and she will be happy to pass your details onto the relevant person and they will endeavour to return your call.

Sandwell Community Information & Participation Service Ltd



NMC Venue
47 Birmingham Road
West Bromwich
West Midlands
B70 6PY
0121 544 1230
Fb: @sandwellcips



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