

## **Why Choose John Mortimer Property Management Limited**

We come with a great deal of experience in the management of estates and blocks of flats in the South of England. You will benefit from a family company locally based and established for over twenty years.

We have the rare distinction of being appointed by the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal on two occasions to manage particular blocks after an exhaustive vetting process. We were also approved by the Cardain Trust to manage one of their local developments. The majority of our new business is by recommendation from a satisfied customer. With my company comes a personal touch that cannot be matched by my competitors.

You would have the benefit of regular visits from your dedicated Area Manager, plus additional visits to monitor major on-going projects, supervise staff and meet Directors as they require. Along with all of these professionals monitoring your development, there is also the full support of the Management Team based at our Bracknell Headquarters, which includes an Assistant Manager who will have the responsibility of being the single point of contact for any of your residents who wish to place a call to report a maintenance issue or other problem.

That Assistant Manager will have the responsibility to ensure the day to day booking of repairmen, obtaining quotations and dealing with routine matters, and will be at the disposal of any of your residents during business hours.

This Assistant Manager will be supported by our Projects Manager, who will deal with major projects such as quotations for redecorations and major expenditure repairs. Their findings and quotations will be submitted to the Board of Directors for discussion and approval, together with our recommendations.

By choosing my Company you will also benefit from our ongoing training and updating from our legal advisors on all new legislation, which is coming into play, including the asbestos regulation and the new Fire Risk Assessment. There are many new regulations now in place and being released in stages via the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act. All of which make the management of Blocks and Estates more specialised than ever before.

### **Examples of Legislation and Regulations**

Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002  
Fire Risk Assessment  
Fire Precaution (Workplace) Regulations 1997 (as amended)  
Water Safety Risk Assessment  
Disability Access to Properties  
Risk Assessment Regulations  
The Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002  
The Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (England) Regulations 2003  
Employment Act 2002  
Working Time Regulations  
Money Laundering Act  
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, 1999  
The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999  
The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992  
Landlord and Tenant Act 1987 as amended Oct 1996  
Gas Safety Regulations 1998

The Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1998  
Plugs and Sockets etc (Safety) Regulations 1998

### **Definition of Management**

This is outlined on the reverse side of our brochure, but in essence we cover all aspects of the management of your association, from setting budgets to the collection of service charges, payment of bills and submission of accounts to the accountant, in readiness for preparation and submission to the residents at an AGM.

### **Accounts**

My Company and my Accounts Team will handle the day to day collection of service charges, chasing up those in arrears and paying all the bills. Trial balances and nominal ledger print outs are available to the Board, as and when they require them. These are very simple to read and can be prepared at any given time.

We reconcile our accounts on a month to month basis and, at the end of the financial year, we will present to an independent accountant, appointed by my Company or your Board, a full year's accounts including trial balance, nominal ledger, receipts, and bank statements, for the accountant to review and compile into accounts suitable for Companies House, to fulfil the legal requirements under Company Law. However I shall also produce an easy to read report of the year end finances to distribute to the owners which will explain the finances in easy terms that all can understand.

We will then arrange for those accounts to be distributed to the Board for their approval, and when it is time for an Annual General Meeting we will send the accounts to all the residents, to include an annual report from this Company on the maintenance issues.

### **Collection of Arrears**

Our company only uses solicitors in the most dire situation, as we find them to be expensive and slow. If we have a debtor who is not responding to our invoices and reminders we will send out a final red reminder, which informs them that the matter will be put in the hands of a Debt Agency within 7 days if payment is not received and that there will be an additional charge for this.

The Debt Agency then writes to the debtor, which includes their fee for their services, and starts the process of trying to collect in the funds. They will do a search to see if there is a mortgage company in place, however, in most cases the mortgage company will not pay the service fees unless we have been to a small claims court. If the Debt Agency does not have any success in obtaining the funds, and I must hasten to add at this point that a good 80% - 90% of the time they do get the money without going to Court, they will then forward this on to their own solicitors. They will ask us for a filing fee to file this in Court but this is usually around about £100 and will be recoverable later, but these are the only costs. They will then put their solicitor in place to arrange for the matter to be taken to Court. In all, we find this to be a most effective way of collecting in funds, but we only use the Debt Agency when we have a severe case where someone does not respond to us.

### **Budgeting**

We would work in conjunction with the Board on the production of a budget on an annual basis. We take into consideration any planned projects. I do find the best approach is to

have a budget for the basic day-to-day running of the development and then add in the extras, if you want any special projects, as a separate issue. We will propose a budget to the Board for their consideration and modify it if they should have any comments accordingly. On an annual basis we would continue to produce these budgets and do a comparison against costs.

With every development we maintain separate fully bonded clients accounts for the sole purpose of that development. Besides the cheque account we hold the reserves for the estate and individual blocks in separate savings accounts, designated for the sole purpose of the individual block in question. While we as a Company have always done this, the laws governing the handling of service fees have been overhauled under the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002, plus the Inland Revenue have invoked a little known clause within the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987, governing interest received, under the Trust Tax regulations. In the past small amounts of interest have been exempt from tax, however they are now subject to 34 to 40% taxation.

### **Communication**

Communication is the key to good customer relations. Whilst people normally do not mind spending, as long as they can see where the money is going, it is often the case, particularly with absentee owners, that they cannot see where the expenditure is because they are not there.

With our annual report comes a list of repairs carried out during the year and a few paragraphs on the summary of accounts to make it easier for people to understand how much money has been spent on repairs, when the major projects have been carried out, the cost of them and how much is left in the reserves.

We have found from many years of experience that sending out an annual report along with the annual accounts to all the residents has proven to be very successful and saved many questions being asked at the Annual General Meetings, because they have already got the answers. When they look in the accounts and they see X amount of thousands of pounds being spent on repairs and they have a list of those repairs, they can see clearly the activity that has been going on. A lot of it can be behind closed doors in areas that are not obvious to them because they are working or they are absent from the site.

Dependent upon the Board, we are happy to communicate with our point of contact on a regular basis. For any major projects, we would send in the tender documents for their approval and we would naturally give our recommendations. What we have done is to set up an email group so that if we need to convey any information to the Board, we can convey it by email, which is proving to be very successful for those who enjoy using this particular system. Otherwise, we can drop a line or we can telephone, if there is a particular person nominated that we should keep in contact with. Naturally, if there are any major projects going to take place on the site, it is part of the new regulations that we have to write to the residents informing them of the projects, how much it is going to cost and how it is going to be supervised.

### **Legal Secretary**

Our Legal Secretary and her Assistant carry out all the legal functions associated with managing companies, such as issuing share certificates, completion and submission of annual returns, organising AGM's etc. She would track the accounts to make sure they are signed off and distributed to the residents, organise the AGM's and send out the minutes of meetings.

## **Major Projects**

All major projects are supervised by my management team. However, there may be a case where we are dealing with a major construction issue and a surveyor would be best suited for the job. We have a surveyor at our disposal and we can get a quotation for his services to handle the project. With decorations we use the services of Dulux Paints who offer a free survey service, as long as we use Dulux Paint. They will produce a tender document, which we can then send out to contractors for them to quote against. When the work starts the Dulux surveyor will come out on site to check the work and sign it off. This acts in conjunction with our own inspection.

## **Licensing**

In some cases any alterations to the flats must be approved by the Board, or their Agent, and a licence must be sought prior to works being carried out. We are used to doing this with other developments, in particular where we have to issue Sub-Leases, Parking Licences, and much more. Wherever this applies our Legal Secretary would handle this.

## **Buildings Insurance**

My Management Team will handle insurance claims and get quotations for insurance renewal at the appropriate time for approval by the Board. My Company has been approved by the FSA for the purposes of insurance business.

Due to the size of our portfolio we have immense buying power and have negotiated very good terms with a major Building Insurance Company. At the time of your next renewal we can obtain quotes as a comparison and see if we can achieve better terms on your behalf.

## **Security**

Security is becoming a major issue and a discussion point at all blocks of flats in the South of England. The coverage of security can be discussed with the Board to find out how good it is and if there are any weaknesses, so that security can be tailored to the requirements of the residents.

## **Management of Staff, Porters, Caretakers**

My Company has a great deal of experience in the handling of staff within blocks of flats, a typical example is Cleaners, Security Guards, Yardmen, Porters etc. My Company would carry out a review of the job specification and role of each individual member of staff, we would then discuss with the Board the type of problems they are experiencing and what their expectations are for each member of staff.

After these investigations we would carry out an interview with every member of staff to clarify their position and how management in the future will work. It may become necessary to make some very hard decisions if members of staff have been lacking in their functions and fail to meet expectations after mutual discussions. My Company is experienced in these matters and, in liaison with the Board, would put forth recommendations for improvements in these areas.

## **New Regulations**

There are many new regulations coming out and the most important one was the Asbestos Risk Assessment. My Company negotiated with a number of different companies on the basis that, if we provide them with plenty of work we can get it at a reduced cost. The essence of the legislation is that we must carry out a survey of all buildings (communal areas only), identify if there is any asbestos and log it.

If you do not already have a log we would arrange for a surveyor to carry out a survey and take the necessary action on their recommendations. An even more important part of this process is the fact that when we send a contractor out, if they are working in an area of asbestos, then we must inform them and if there are any changes to the status of the asbestos we must log it.

The first stage would be to get an asbestos surveyor out. He would then create a log for us, we would then maintain and monitor that log. This is a legal requirement throughout the industry.

Apart from the asbestos, there is now the Fire Risk Assessment for which we will provide a quotation.

We will carry out a normal health and safety risk assessment to make sure the building is safe. This we do in house at no extra cost.

## **Changes to Regulations and Interpretation of Law**

This is monitored by our professional bodies and we are advised when any of these issues affect block management. Our staff are regularly sent on training courses as appropriate to their responsibilities.

## **Emergency 24 Hour Service**

As part of our services we advise all residents of our out of hours 24 hour number, which is a mobile number that either myself or one of my Managers picks up the calls for. If there are any emergencies out of hours or at weekends we will arrange contractors to be on site and deal with those repairs. During business hours of course they can phone their point of contact at our office.

## **Savings and Best Price**

It is not always a case that the cheapest is the best. With our experience and buying power, we will ensure that you get the best value for money, balanced against a good service. Large projects will always be subject to a minimum of three quotations. You will make savings in Legal Fees, Debt Collection, Company Secretarial duties and Contractor charges.

## **Service Standards and Service Specification**

As a Company we pride ourselves on our flexibility to tailor our services to the requirements of our clients. Naturally, there is a minimum standard that we need to have in place in order to protect the client, in view of the fact that we are the professionals and understand the legal requirements probably better than our clients.

Standards and services are monitored very strictly by myself. My regular meetings with our clients, enables me to monitor the feedback of our services and ensure that we are meeting their requirements. Since our business growth is based on recommendation rather than advertising, it is very important to me to ensure that every aspect of our business is working correctly and meets the demands set by myself. Therefore a review of every person's job is carried out on a yearly basis and a departmental review is carried out by myself.

### **Review of Contracts and Tendering**

With major projects a tender document is put together by our Manager, or our Surveyor, and is sent out to tender with at least 3 or 4 quotations being received based upon that tender. The quotations are then submitted to the Board for discussion and consideration.

With regards to contracts such as insurance, lifts, water pumps etc, these are reviewed annually. In particular if it is a contract in place where parts are not included and there are great deal of parts being used, it may be better to put a different contract in place to include parts. This is done on a regular basis, in the main by an Assistant Manager, and where these contracts are a major expenditure, they are also discussed with the Manager.

### **Appointment of Staff**

Staff are hand picked by myself and are subject to a minimum of two interviews plus a three month probation period and also subject to the usual references. They are then put into a training programme, which is overseen by our Manager. We have found that in the majority of cases it is best not to employ someone who has been working for a previous agent. We prefer to deal with people who have not been in the trade before, but have perhaps peripheral experience, as we are able to train them in the way that we do things and ensure that they meet our high standards.

In a person we are looking for good organisational abilities, good communication and a practical approach to problems on a day-to-day basis.

### **Professional Membership**

We are members of ARMA, NAEA and ARLA. I am also a member of the Institute of Directors. ARMA is the regulatory body that governs block and estate management.

### **Professional Indemnity Insurance**

We carry Professional Indemnity Insurance.

### **Reporting Timetables and Structure**

Reporting timetables are in agreement with our clients. If there is any particular work that needs to be done by a specific time then our team will work towards that time frame. It normally falls in place with a meeting coming up.

With regards to structure, that is dependent upon the type of work it is and who would be assigned that task.