

The Link

Issue Seven Q2 2008

Chainbow

beyond
property
management

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Welcome from the Chairman

Here comes summer and there goes the sun! Doesn't it always feel like the best weather arrives as a taster and then just as you look forward to packing your bucket and spade, Mr Blue Sky takes his vacation as well! Oh well, perhaps it won't be like that this year!

Here is our summer newsletter full of action packed activities and news of what is happening with us. We are entering an exciting phase as we start to implement a lot of the initiatives we have been working on and see a leap forward in managing for the majority and not letting the minority, for whom nothing is right, spoil it for the rest.

Of course this is always a challenge as the noisy minority think they speak for all! Well, we will continue to be transparent, open and available. We will make sure adding value is our number one priority. And every day in every way we will work to enhance the blocks we manage.

Enjoy the newsletter, tell your friends and family and let us welcome them to the growing Chainbow experience.

Roger J Southam
Chairman & Chief Executive



Our News

- RICS audit our accounts

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors is the pre-eminent organisation of its kind in the world. As such, it represents everything that is good in the property profession. As part of its role, they help to set, maintain and regulate standards.

Part of their responsibility as regulators is to conduct regular finance audits for their members. As a member of the RICS, Chainbow was chosen at random earlier this year to be in the first batch of companies audited.

This inspection included the close examination of all bank transactions, ensuring that all amounts tallied up and that all cheques and BACS payments had been given the correct approvals.

The RICS were especially pleased with the separation of duties at Chainbow, no two people were doing the same thing and therefore every staff member's time was being used effectively. They were also pleased with the fact that all processes were being authorised and signed off properly and that Chainbow has no overdrawn accounts.

In the past this audit would have been carried out in house which would have not only cost Chainbow time but money as well. With the RICS performing this task, it relieves Chainbow of these unnecessary costs and more importantly means there is no room for the outcome to be biased as it is in the RICS's best interest to perform an independent assessment of all their member companies.

This independent evaluation enables us at Chainbow to stay true to our core values of transparency and aids us in our effort to provide a first class service to our clients.

Our News

- Chainbow joins ARMA

Chainbow is pleased to announce that it is now a member of the Association of Residential Management Agents. ARMA is the only body in England and Wales to focus exclusively on matters relating to the management of residential leasehold blocks of flats.

With some 200 corporate members, ARMA's founding aim is working towards improving standards for lessees, resident management companies and investor freeholders.

It is estimated that there are some 1.5 million private leasehold flats in England and Wales. Whether the buildings in which they are situated are owned and controlled by investor freeholders or the lessees themselves, a large proportion employ managing agents to handle the day to day running and ongoing cyclical maintenance of their buildings.

Managing agents have a unique and important role to play in managing other people's homes and money - a role that requires an in-depth knowledge of residential management, a wide range of skills and the utmost professionalism.

As a member of this body, Chainbow now has access to a huge library of experience shared between other residential management agents. This library consists of guidance notes, technical advice and support from ARMA's technical officers and a range of relevant staff training courses. Chainbow now also has the use of the ARMA dispute resolution scheme and has access to summaries of relevant and important LVT, Lands Tribunal and Court decisions.

Featured Resident

Michael Tornay - Carrara Wharf

There is something to be said for atmosphere. The senses respond to it. People recall it. Even want to purchase it. Undefined, it is nevertheless real.

When 100 residents called for new management at the start of this year, they explained to Chainbow that Carrara Wharf in Fulham was a sad place to live. What? Even on a winter's day it was a fabulous Thames-side location. Despite the leaking roofs, potholed lawns and dumped sofas, the Chainbow team were visiting a 'luxury riverside residential estate'. On Fulham High Street a faded billboard from 1991 declared this to be just so.

We dwellers of London are grateful for a room with a view. But even the most optimistic heart can get crushed after waiting 15 months for the apartment block lift to be repaired.

A cocktail of fly-by tenants, skiving contract cleaners and indifferent management meant that the place was being reduced to the level of a bad council estate. Painfully, people still paid their service charges and sent 20 irate emails into space as the tumbleweeds of refuse blew around their ankles.

This small development, like so much of the Capital, has become an expensive place to buy into. A studio flat, a quarter of a million. A house, the reward of a lifetime's work. Investing in bricks and mortar is something we are encouraged to do. Making the right decision is crucial to our wellbeing.

Now Spring has arrived with its fresh vigour and the gardeners are mowing, the gaps in the fences sorted, lights work, lifts elevate. The maintenance man is a grafter. And our property manager is pointing out how important it is to repair. The comical incompetence of the former management is now history.

Funny, with this the atmosphere has decidedly switched. People are smiling, grumbles have turned to grins. Meeting the new neighbours, I saw the old place through their eyes. They love living here. And so say all of us.

Michael Tornay



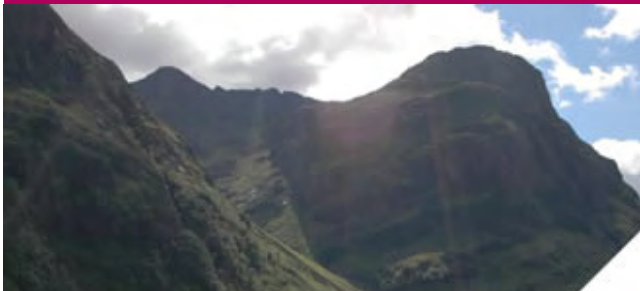
Sparks Update

The 3 Peaks Challenge - 15th August 2008

On the 15th of August 2008, 3 brave Chainbow staff members (and their trusted friends) will be tackling Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon, and doing it in the space of 24 hrs...now that is going to be challenging! A total of 480 miles of driving, largely during the night and climbing a total of approximately 3,000 vertical meters makes this a special kind of challenge, and not one to be taken lightly.

Between the 10 people taking part we aim to raise a minimum of £5,000 for Sparks. Sparks is the only UK children's charity that funds medical research across the whole spectrum of paediatric medicine and this makes them unique. They tackle conditions as diverse as cerebral palsy, meningitis, spina bifida, childhood arthritis, pre-eclampsia, childhood cancers and the dangers of premature birth.

If you would like to help us reach our target by sponsoring us, please contact Helena Piper on 020 7928 9944 or helenapiper@chainbow.com



Showhouse Magazine

"A firm, handshake from a property type is not unusual. But when the subject is dressed in a blue suit and a red and blue bow tie you expect the thumb to go to the nose at the last minute, a raspberry blown and the bow tie to revolve, light up and squirt water. I even checked for a whoopee cushion before I sat down."

Rupert Bates of Show House Magazine is pleasantly surprised when he interviews Chainbow's CEO, Roger Southam.

Download the article at:
<http://www.chainbow.com/docs/news/in-news/200806-show-house-builders-breakfast.pdf>



Positive moves

After much soul searching and agonising we took the extraordinary step of sacking a client! A bold move and not one taken lightly but it was the right decision. For one director nothing we did was right, we were spending a disproportionate amount of time running around trying to keep someone happy who will never be happy!

So we did what we should have done a long time ago and resigned. A difficult choice because the other 80 residents were happy and pleased with the service.

From this cathartic experience we are now reinvigorated to make sure that we do not put ourselves in a position of pandering to whims but do what we do best and that is proactive management and adding value!

Frequently Asked Questions - Accounts

- 1. Why has my service charge increased?**
Our budgets are based on actual expenditure from the previous year with allowance for normal inflation or an increase in a contractor's pricing. We always tender to get the best value.
- 2. Why do I keep receiving red letters (pink statements with word written across it)?**
Statements are sent to inform homeowners of the status (balance) on their accounts. Some homeowners prefer to pay on these as opposed to invoices. These are sent as reminder of non-payment and for information purposes also.
- 3. Where are your bank details?**
Our bank details are at the bottom of your demand and statements. However for ease, please find as follows.

Chainbow Ltd Client acct
Name of Account: Chainbow Ltd Client Account
BANK: Natwest Bank plc
Sort: 606004
Acct: 45096805
Acct Ref: (quote your account reference)
Please do not forget to quote your account reference on all correspondence and bank transfers.
- 4. When does my service charge year run to?**
Your service charge covers a full year. The service charge year is based on your lease, this may be from January to December or April to March, etc.
- 5. Why am I being charged for last year's charges, I only moved into the property last week?**
All charges at the time of sale should have been taken into account and a retention is usually held for unexpected deficit amounts occurring due to the property year end or late charges. As you are now the leaseholder, legally you are liable for these charges.

However you can approach your solicitor or the seller's solicitor to see if there was a retention held. If there wasn't one, your solicitor can then approach the seller's solicitor for their share of the funds for the period that they occupied the property.

