

## Leasehold Flat Ownership

**What it means to be a flat owner.** You are a member of the family of property owners at Whitehall landing. Your reasons for purchase are your own but ownership means different things to different people. Please be aware that your neighbours today or tomorrow may be retired owner-occupier with high expectations for a quiet and orderly lifestyle. The leases provide for this in the best interest of all.

If your primary aim is another use, this must be permitted under the lease and your responsibilities for compliance with lease restrictions and maintenance costs cannot be delegated to a third party occupier. You remain at all times as the owner responsible for ensuring that your occupiers meet the required standards at Whitehall Landing.

**The role of the Management Company and Agent.** They are provided to service the communality of the development. All matters of policy are decided by the Board of Directors or Freeholder who employs the managing agents to look after the day-to-day affairs. The extent of their responsibilities does not extend to work within a private flat, nor do they have automatic rights of entry. Management would authorise a forced entry only if this was necessary to protect the interests of everyone in the building eg to prevent the spread of fire or to end water damage.

The Management Company can only operate within the financial constraints that maintenance payments provide. This often requires forward planning and prioritisation of needs.

In the event of a disaster, the Management Company insures the structure of the buildings for all the normal risks particularly fire and storm damage and the follow-on effects of an escape of water. Owners however provide their own contents insurance. In all cases expenditure can only be undertaken with the authority of the insurers if they are to meet the cost. Emergency measures to mitigate a loss e.g. hire of the dehumidifiers to dry the structure (building), carpet removal drying out (contents) would normally be refundable to an owner by an insurance company.

Any keys made available to a management representative to assist an owner in their absence can only be released to a contractor on the direct instruction of an owner and without any liability for their actions.

**The role of a flat owner.** You enjoy all the normal rights and responsibilities of a property owner in relation to the decoration and fixtures and fittings. Any structural changes would however require the approval of the management company and building regulation approval. As a flat owner you have a duty to your fellow owners to use the flat in accordance with the terms of the lease and exercise the normal duty of care to others in terms of usage, health and safety issues and winter plumbing precautions.

**1. Precautions.** You cannot go far wrong if you always turn the water and electricity off when leaving and in the winter months inspect your flat weekly leaving sufficient constant

background heating to ensure protection of pipework, 10 degrees is recommended. If the flat is to be left empty and unattended for a long period all services should be turned off and water supplies professionally drained down. Please check that any of your internal pipes on outside walls are suitably insulated. If you are on the top floor please ensure that any of your private pipe work in the roof space is similarly lagged and protected against bursts.

**2. Repairs.** If you notice the need for a communal repair or you have identified a health and safety issue please report this promptly to the managing agent. In the case of vandalism or criminal damage please contact the police to report the details and obtain a crime number which should be passed on to the managing agent.

**3. Lifestyle.** If you have a lifestyle issue relating to another flat user, management will be happy to pass on a written complaint to the owner of the flat concerned. In the first instance however a direct approach must be recommended as an occupier may not be aware that there is a problem.

**4. Services.** If there is a loss of power please ring the local power company after checking your fuses have not tripped. If the lift breaks down please ring the lift maintenance company detailed. If you suspect a water leak please liaise with your neighbours and turn off the incoming supply to the flat or the whole block if necessary on a temporary basis. Please call any available plumber to assist and advise management of action taken in order that they can try to contact the owner of the flat concerned and subsequently any other owners thought to

be effected. Time is of the essence and insurers are not critical of action taken to mitigate a loss and management will cover the cost.

**5. Parking.** Please ensure that the occupier of your flat is aware of any designated parking space and the need to park with due consideration for others. No commercial vehicles are permitted in parking spaces. Visitors must park in designated parking areas only.

**6. Smoking.** Smoking is not permitted in any of the internal common areas of blocks of apartments. The inconsiderate disposal of cigarette ends can also cause offence to non-smokers.

**7. Sub letting.** Unless the lease prohibits letting completely, a property owner can normally let their apartment on an assured short hold basis i.e. 6 months or longer. The owner is again fully responsible to ensure that his tenants comply with covenants as set out within the lease.

**9. Refuse disposal.** Please be considerate. Owners must familiarise themselves with the local authority requirements for rubbish. Any incorrect use of the recycling bins is regarded as contamination and can incur the company with a cost of £40 or more to rectify and this cost will be charged to the party responsible if identified.

**10. Use of Entrance Halls and landings.** These are common areas and should not be used for the storage of furniture,

bicycles etc. Such use constitutes a hazard in the case of a fire and may compromise the building insurance.

Thank you for reading this report which we hope you will have found informative. Please retain a copy for reference and feel free to copy same to any occupiers of your flat.