

The Letter

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Spring 2021 Issue 27

All under the same roof...

There's so much to be said for keeping everything under the same roof - and Chinneck Shaw says this principle has been the key to their success.

The talented team all operate from their stylish HQ in Portsmouth which is ideally situated to access the whole of the island of Portsea and beyond.

While some agencies have different branches and even outsource some elements of their workload (some use overseas teams to deal with sensitive issues such as rent arrears and accounts departments can be based hundreds of miles away), Chinneck Shaw prefers to deal with everything in-house.

"We've placed a great deal of care into assembling the best possible property management team to ensure we can offer a seamless experience for all our clients.

"The team who take on properties are the same ones conducting viewings and dealing with the tenancy throughout, they know and care about the properties, the tenants and you, our clients," said Director, Neil Shaw.

Where contractors are used for activity such as property maintenance, the Chinneck Shaw team have been working with them for many years and built a relationship of trust.

The team has adopted the latest tech to allow them to provide the best possible service during the pandemic and lockdown restrictions.

They can:

- connect remotely to their work desktop wherever they are in the world, making working from home easy,
- desk phones have been plugged in at home so incoming calls can be answered swiftly and calls can be transferred with the press of a button
- mobiles are connected to the office phone network so office calls can be taken on the go.

Continued on Page 2



In this
issue
Page 2

**COVID-19
continues to
shape how we
operate**

Covid 19 – Eviction
News Update

**Could there be a
post-lockdown
bounce back?**

Page 3

News Roundup

**What is the ideal
length of a lease
for tenants?**

Page 4

Remembering
Neil Shaw senior

InventoryBase, a new piece of inventory software that digitises inventories, means reports can be generated and have photos added, then emailed to the new tenants so they can make their comments and add photos remotely. The reports are then kept online for the duration of the tenancy, they can be added to and used for interim inspections and checkouts.

And Property Manager, Joe Rocks, explained how Goodlord, a pre-tenancy platform is helping too.

“Goodlord allows us to streamline our referencing and contract generation, it enables us to have secure payment of ‘moving in’ money, digital signing of all tenancy documents and it automatically distributes all of the legislative documents we need to issue.

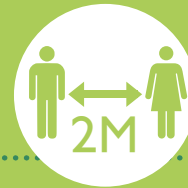
“This keeps us, our clients and the lets compliant with ever changing legislation. As part of our new relationship with goodlord we can start to offer some clients a ‘rent guarantee policy’ on new lets, an ever attractive policy especially in today’s climate.”

Giraffe 360, a new camera that scans the property, takes marketing photos, creates a floorplan and video tour all in one visit, is also being used on some properties so they can be viewed remotely. Rather than just watching a video, it is interactive so you can walk round the property at your leisure from the comfort of your home. Take a look at an example here; <https://premium.giraffe360.com/chinneckshaw/seafielddroadpropertytour/>

So, whether it rent collection or repairs, lettings or accounts all aspects of Chinneck Shaw’s Lettings & Property Management operation are covered conveniently “All under the same roof” from their Headquarters at Bridge House, Milton Road, Portsmouth.



COVID-19 continues to shape how we operate



The government published guidance during the first lockdown telling agents how to operate safely during the pandemic and we are continuing to follow that guidance. Thanks to the technology we have introduced, we can offer virtual viewings prior to any physical viewings taking place. We pre-qualify applicants to make sure they are suited to the property and our client’s expectations before conducting a virtual viewing. Then we conduct a physical viewing following the safety guidance, keeping our distance, wearing PPE and opening all the windows and doors to ventilate the property whilst also opening internal doors to minimise the applicants having to touch any surfaces. By pre-qualifying the applicants and offering virtual viewings we really aim to only have one viewing at a property in order to secure a tenant.

All referencing and tenancy agreements are signed digitally and remotely. Moving-in payments are taken over the phone so the only time the Chinneck Shaw team comes into contact with the new tenants, following the initial viewing, is when they hand over the keys and of course that is done safely following the government guidance.

When tenants move out, they can opt to leave the keys in the property or drop them through the letterbox of our office. We have been advised to wait 3 days to conduct any checkouts to allow any potential virus to die. We then conduct the check out as normal. The deposit schemes have relaxed the normal rules, where a deposit must be returned within 14 days, without penalty due to Covid-19

Covid 19 – Eviction News Update

The effect of the pandemic continues to be felt and the private rental market has been the focus for change as a result of the extended Coronavirus restrictions.

The evictions ban, announced in March 2020 and passed into law in the Coronavirus Act 2020, has led to a series of announcements from the government. The intention has been to protect vulnerable tenants during the crisis. The ban on evictions mean landlords and tenants are encouraged to find a compromise.

This collaborative approach will continue with new temporary changes to the possession action process, designed to alleviate pressures on the courts now that possession proceedings have restarted, with extended notice periods in most cases of six months until at least 31 March 2021.



NEWS NEWS NEWS

ROUNDUP

- The extension of the Furlough scheme to April 2021 has further cushioned the effect of the pandemic and many are calling for the scheme to be further extended. Fears remain that once the scheme ends there will be significant job losses, and this will impact the ability of tenants to pay their rent.
- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has published and updated How to Rent guide - the checklist for renting. Landlords and letting agents must make sure new tenants and those renewing, receive the correct version of the guide. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942503/6.6642_MHCLG_How_to_Rent_v5.pdf
- And finally, a consultation finished on Jan 11 2021 looking at expanding the current Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulation to all properties. A summary of the responses will be published and placed on the government website at www.gov.uk/mhclg

Could there be a post-lockdown bounce back?

Despite the challenges of the pandemic and the difficulties it has caused for the private rental sector, there may be a glimmer of hope on the horizon.

Property experts are beginning to forecast the potential for there to be post-lockdown bounce back, thanks to the signs that momentum was starting to return to the market.

The Rental Index from Goodlord showed the market was picking up speed again during the last week of November. There was an above average rate of new application during a traditionally quiet period for the market.

With tenants beginning to look beyond lockdown, the final days of November saw the market processing 10% more lets than at the same time last year, according to the research.

Neil Shaw, Director, said: "This news is heartening after such a tough time for everyone involved in the private rental market."

Ideal length of lease for most singles

77% of singles have tenancies of that length



Source: Dataloft, Property Academy

What is the ideal length of a lease for tenants?

Recent research from Dataloft Property Academy, highlighted the mismatch between actual lease lengths and what would better suit tenants dependent on age and household type.

Ideal length of lease for most couples

76% of couples have tenancies of that length



Source: Dataloft, Property Academy

Ideal length of lease for most families

23% of families have tenancies of that length



Source: Dataloft, Property Academy



Remembering Neil Shaw senior

Many clients will have met Neil Shaw senior who sadly died in July 2020 and we wanted to mark his passing with a fitting tribute.

A true property professional, his career began after he spotted an advert with the following wording.

‘Property company requires a general assistant. Car provided ...’

“He always said it was the car that attracted his interest but it started a lifelong interest and passion for property,” said his son Neil, Director of Chinneck Shaw.

Always diligent from the start he studied for his professional qualification by way of a correspondence course alongside his full-time job.

In 1970 he qualified as a chartered surveyor and worked for a number of south London property firms, the Greater London Council and then, following the move to Chichester, Portsmouth City Council. He eventually went into business on his own, buying the firm of JS Chinneck & Son in Portsmouth, which he ran successfully, working with and supported by his wife Jane, until he retired.

As a hugely respected professional he became the Chairman of the Portsmouth Property Association, his term of office ending with a speech at Portsmouth Guildhall. It was attended by the Lord Mayor and every solicitor, accountant, estate agent and surveyor in the area.

Neil said *“Telling many of dad’s old clients the sad news of his passing, we have had some touching messages back, describing him as ‘trusted, respected and a top bloke’ and ‘a gentleman who always kept his word’.”*

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