



GreenSquare

Leaseholder LINK



This is the first edition of a brand new newsletter specifically targeted at leaseholders and shared owners of OCHA and Westlea Housing, both of which are part of the GreenSquare Group.

We now have a Leasehold Management Team based at our Swindon office providing a customer service for GreenSquare's leasehold properties. The team deals with all aspects of leasehold management including rent queries and the setting and administration of service charges. They also provide guidance and information on a wide range of technical and legal matters affecting leaseholders.

Photo below left to right: Jennie Hempleman (Sales and Marketing Officer), Stephanie Shirley (Leasehold Customer Service Advisor), Kelly Thomas (Marketing, Sales and Leasehold Services Manager), Hilary O'Brien (Sales and Marketing Officer), Zoe Robins (Sales and Marketing) and Damian Spencer (Leasehold Manager).

Stephanie Shirley is your Customer Service Advisor. She is your initial point of contact for any queries you may have. **You can contact Stephanie on 01793 602829 or email her at stephanie.shirley@greensquaregroup.com.**

Zoe Harris (Sales & Marketing Chippenham) and Zoe Robins (Sales & Marketing Oxford) are currently on maternity leave and will be returning early next year.



Update Leaseholder services

In September 2009 and March 2010 we carried out telephone surveys to find out what leaseholders and shared owners thought of our services and what changes you would like to see. We spoke to 45 (Westlea) leaseholders and 13 shared owners.

Key improvements LEASEHOLDERS would like to see

- More clarity around maintenance charges
- Maintenance in general with some particular concerns about communal areas
- Better communication and support

Key improvements SHARED OWNERS would like to see

- Better customer service and communication
- More informed staff

We are listening Strategy

We have drafted a strategy and action plan which sets out the areas that will be developed in order to improve our service, taking account of feedback that you have given us already.

However, we would welcome further comments.

Included in the documents:

A new leaseholder team was set up in 2009 and are the main point of contact for leaseholders and staff when dealing with leaseholder queries.

This should improve communication between us and leaseholders.

Records of ground rent and service charges are now on the main computer database.

This makes it easier for you to get an update on your account

Cleaning contracts have been set up for all schemes of flats and are in place and constantly monitored. Previously our caretakers were dealing with this and were unable to cover the growing stock.

This will help to improve the maintenance of communal areas.



Get together with your neighbours to cut local crime

Neighbourhood Watch is one of the biggest and most successful crime prevention initiatives ever. In partnership with the police and neighbours you can:

- ✓ Cut crime and the opportunities for crime
- ✓ Help and reassure those who live in fear of crime
- ✓ Encourage neighbourliness and closer communities
- ✓ Provide a better place to live, work and play.

A scheme is generally led by a volunteer coordinator with help from the police Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer. They organise meetings to advise residents how to keep their properties and area secure and plan which problems to target and what action to take. Some insurance companies reduce the cost of your household insurance if you are part of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

If you are interested in setting a scheme up in your area we could make contact for you and help set up the first meeting.

Smoke alarms SAVE LIVES

A fire strikes when you least expect it, often in the night when you are asleep and the real killer is the smoke. If you are asleep when a fire starts and you don't have a smoke detector your chances of survival are very low.

Did you know that...

- A quarter of the deaths in home fires happen between 10pm and 8am
- On average 270 people killed in fires each year didn't have a smoke alarm
- Over the last five years more than 70 people have been killed every year because their alarms didn't work – usually because the battery was flat or missing

There is a large range of fire alarms on the market from DIY stores, hardware and electrical shops varying in price

from £3 to £30. Whichever you choose check that it has a British Standard Kite mark and has (BS) 5446 part 1 marked on it.

Make sure when you install your alarm that you can hear it throughout your home especially in the bedrooms.

Once an alarm is installed you should test and maintain it regularly to make sure it is working properly.

Smoke alarms for the deaf are available for people with hearing difficulties. They either flash or vibrate to let you know there is a problem. For further information contact the Royal Nation Institute for the Deaf on 020 7296 8000 or visit their web site at www.rnid.org.uk.

For any further information visit these websites: Wiltshire Fire and Rescue www.wfb.org.uk, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue www.glosfire.gov.uk or Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/fire_service.



COMING SOON Gas appliance servicing

Because we want to help all of our customers to stay safe and warm, GreenSquare is currently working on a new service for our leaseholders and shared owners.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your boiler is serviced regularly and to assist you with this we will soon be offering a competitively-priced annual gas service. We currently engage a firm of heating engineers to service our rental stock and we have negotiated a price with them so we can extend this competitively priced service to you. This will enable you to help keep your appliances working safely and efficiently all year round.

We will be contacting all leaseholders and shared owners with the details of this new service shortly, but if you would like to register your interest in this service please contact Danielle Godridge, service contract co-ordinator at Westlea Housing, on 01249 466099 or OCHA Customer Services on Freephone 0800 980 9272.



Westlea maintenance 01249 466100 • OCHA 0800 980 9272 Freephone or 01865773000



housing people, building communities

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**Jennie Hempleman is available from Monday to Wednesday only.*