

The Letter

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Spring 2020 Issue 25



Home offices open for business

Our door is always open – albeit virtually at the moment – as the impact of the coronavirus pandemic hits home in the private rented sector.

Following guidance from the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), we have temporarily closed our Portsmouth office so our team are now working remotely to support landlords and tenants.

We are still able to receive emails and calls – via our usual number **023 9282 6731** – which will be diverted to our mobile phones.

Chinneck Shaw director Neil Shaw said: “These are unprecedented times for everyone.

“Our plans to work from home have gone successfully so far and my thanks go to

everyone for their understanding. This includes landlords, tenants, contractors and suppliers as well as the superb Chinneck Shaw team.

“Inevitably there are some restrictions, but we aim to provide the highest quality and least uninterrupted service as we possibly can.

“We look forward to seeing you in person in the office, when we emerge from this pandemic. Stay safe everyone until then.”

There have been many questions raised about working practices in the private rented sector and as well as some changes to regulations.

This includes legislation about evictions (see page two for more details). Please don't hesitate to call or email us to discuss further.

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Housing possessions on hold

We are keeping track of the latest government and public health guidance as well as industry advice about how to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

One of the immediate implications of the Coronavirus Act passed on March 25 was effectively to suspend evictions.

Under the Act, landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict tenants for at least three-months.

This includes possession of tenancies under the Rent Act 1977, the Housing Act 1985, the Housing Act 1996 and the Housing Act 1988.

It applies for Section 8 notices, where previously the period was 14 days. It also applies to a Section 21 eviction, which previously gave two months' notice.

This extended, three-month buffer period applies until September 30 although the Government may well extend it.

It covers the vast majority of tenants in the private and social rented sectors, and all grounds of evictions.

The change in law only applies to notices served on or after March 26. But the court service has also suspended all ongoing housing possession cases. This suspension will initially last for 90 days but may be extended if required.



The leading industry bodies, of which Chinneck Shaw is a member, are continuing to lobby the government for more measures to support the sector.

There are many other issues to consider, including routine inspections, licensing, check ins and outs, repairs, maintenance, smoke alarm tests, tenancy terminations and gas safety certification.

Please contact us for more details or to discuss how this affects you.



Staying social during lockdown

Just because we're all practising social distancing, it doesn't mean we can't keep in touch.

We've continued to update our social media, including LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Recent posts have included details of the latest edition of our Portsmouth Property News and our support for the Pompey Chimes singalong.

You may have also seen a post about the unusual discovery of a boat, which had been flytipped on a site we manage in Portsmouth. The Portsmouth News even picked up on the story and featured it along with a picture of our property manager Joe Rocks.

Keep in touch with us on LinkedIn on our company page under Chinneck Shaw Estate and Letting Agents, on Facebook at [@chinneck.shaw](#) on Twitter at [@ChinneckShaw](#) and on Instagram at [@chinneck_shaw](#).

Five star review boost

Many thanks to everyone who has given us five star reviews on Google recently, to see our reviews or to leave your own please search Chinneck Shaw on Google or on Working Feedback.

One said: *'Very professional and helpful throughout – a pleasure to deal with'.*

Providing customer satisfaction is by far the most rewarding part of our job so it's brilliant to receive such feedback – especially at a time like the present.



**VERY
PROFESSIONAL
and helpful
throughout -
A PLEASURE
TO DEAL WITH
★★★★★**

Switch on for electrical safety rules

New electrical safety regulations are set to come into force for landlords and agents.

The new rules mean that every fixed electrical installation must be inspected and tested at least every five years by a qualified person.

Landlord and agents are also required to send a report of the results to their tenant within 28 days and retain a copy until the next inspection is due.

At the time of going to press, this was due to come in to force for all new tenancies in England from July 1, 2020 and for existing tenancies from April 1, 2021. This could change depending on the impact of coronavirus.

The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 also state that upon request the report must be provided to the local housing authority within seven days.

Other measures are that a new tenant must be given a copy of the latest report before occupation, while a copy must be supplied to any prospective tenant within 28 days of a request.

Local housing authorities are required to enforce the rules and they have the power to arrange remedial action.

Breaches can result fines of up to £30,000. We will keep you updated about any changes to the dates.



One hundred not out!



We donned our gladrags for the Portsmouth Property Association's (PPA) grand centenary dinner earlier in the spring.

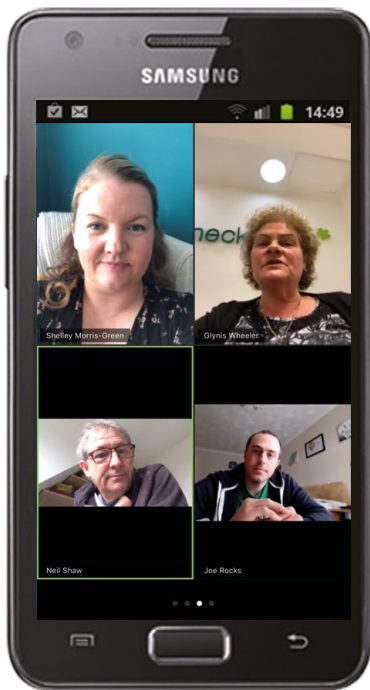
Held at Portsmouth Guildhall before the coronavirus lockdown, we were among 300 property professionals at the black-tie extravaganza.

Former England player and captain Kevin Keegan regaled the audience with stories from his career, and a total of £6,000 was raised from a raffle and auction for three local charities.

As a longstanding member of the PPA we attend every year – and we're looking forward to 2021!

A Day in the Life of.... Joe Rocks during coronavirus

Our Day in the Life of... feature is back with a difference. This time our property manager Joe Rocks gives an insight into his job working remotely during the coronavirus lockdown.



Home is my office right now, as everyone at Chinneck Shaw is working remotely. I'm aiming to keep to my same routine as much as possible although inevitably it is somewhat of a juggling act.

"First on my list of priorities in the morning is helping to sort out our 20-month-old son for the day before checking my emails.

"I'll deal with anything urgent or needing a reply before heading into the day's tasks. This may involve speaking to landlords, handling enquiries and dealing with any issues raised by tenants, including urgent repairs.

"We are speaking to tenants to try and talk some things through over the phone at the moment. I recently managed to guide a tenant safely through a minor boiler issue which saved a contractor having to go out.

"Then it's time for the daily video call with Chinneck Shaw's property management administrator Shelley Morris-Green, who deals with the bulk of payments and admin.

"Although that part of the business is not really that different now, we always video call each other every day to cross-check figures and details.

"Our team are in constant contact with each other and our office phone lines redirect to our mobiles so we can receive calls as usual. It means we are all covering the phones/emails as if we were sat in the office.

"We also hold three video meetings every week for our team, including our director Neil Shaw. It's good to keep in touch and see everyone's face!

"As part of my role I also keep a very close on how the news affects the property industry, so we can act accordingly. I've been doing this quite a bit over the past few weeks...

"It's never quiet in the world of property management. Although the coronavirus pandemic keeps us on our toes we aim to make sure that it's very much 'business as usual' as far as possible.

Log-off time for me tends to be 6pm – just in time to play, feed and help get a lively toddler ready for bed!

Community spirit alive and well

Amid the coronavirus gloom, there have been many bright points with some individuals going above and beyond to help others in the community.

Some of the most heart-warming acts of kindness featured by the Portsmouth News have included people setting up volunteer forces to help the elderly and vulnerable in self-isolation.

It was also heartening to see businesses donating mobile phones to the Hive volunteer hub so it could co-ordinate contact with vulnerable people in the city.

And well done to all those organisations which have been donating personal protection equipment for frontline health workers. Together we will get through this.



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PROTECTED

Keep in touch: our contacts

Although working remotely, we are still available to help.

Please call us on **023 9282 6731** as usual. You can also email the following people below from our lettings team:

Director Neil Shaw:
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