Welcome

Welcome to issue number seven of your newsletter which I hope you find useful and informative. If there is an article which you would like me to include in the next newsletter, please feel free to contact me on 01509 634830.

Due to the success of the open surgery at the last Leaseholders’ Forum on 18 May 2011 we’ve decided to hold another surgery at 5.30pm on 16 August 2011 before the Leaseholders’ Forum. If you would like to attend you will be more than welcome and I look forward to another good response. Minutes from meetings available at www.cnh.org.uk/informationforleaseholders.

At the moment I am busy working on the Certified Summaries for 2010/11 and some of you may already have received them. Can I just draw your attention to the article regarding the change in the enquiries on Certified Summaries on page 3.

The next issue of this Newsletter will be sent out in February 2012.

Sarah Taylor, Leasehold Tenant Officer

Message from your Chair

Dear fellow leaseholders

It was most pleasing to see so many members at the last meeting in May, including those who have not been able to attend for some time. We will be meeting again on Tuesday, 16 August so if you have any issues, thoughts, comments or items for the agenda then please let either myself or Sarah Taylor know. You may even wish to write an article for the next issue of Leaseholder News!

If you would like to become more involved in the setting and delivery of clear service standards, scrutinising and challenging landlord performance with pressure for them to improve continuously.....then here is a golden opportunity! Scrutiny Panels are being set up with training and support for residents. For more information please contact Sally Harbey (Customer Services and Engagement Manager) on 01509 632556 or email: sally.harbey@cnh.org.uk
What is the easiest way to pay my Service Charges?

If you have a bank account which allows you to set up Direct Debits this is the easiest way to pay your service charges. Charnwood Borough Council now offers the following dates for payments:

Quarterly on 1st or 15th April, July, October and January OR
Annually on 1st or 15th April

To pay by Direct Debit please call the Income team at Charnwood Borough Council on 01509 634817 to request a Direct Debit mandate. If you currently pay on the 15th of the month and would like to change the payment date to the 1st you can contact the team on the above number.

Home Contents Insurance – are you paying too much?

If you answered yes, why not sign up for CNH’s Home Contents Insurance and insure your possessions against fire, flood, theft and accidental damage for as little as £13.65 per quarter (which includes accidental damage cover). This can be paid quarterly with your service charges (based on up to £9,000 worth or cover. Lower cover rates are available for pensioners). For more information, please contact the Housing Income Team free from most landlines on 0800 633 5548 or email us at housing.income@cnh.org.uk

Buildings Insurance

A few local authorities have stated that the insurance cover they offer for leaseholders does not cover re-plastering, electrical work, pipe work etc within the leasehold property after a re-build. Please rest assured that our policy covers the re-instatement of the property so our policy is adequate.

Ideas for future meetings

Perhaps you’d like a speaker from LEASE (the Leasehold Advisory Service) who provide free legal advice on the law affecting residential leasehold? They also give advice on service charges, rights to information, extending the lease, management issues and the leasehold system etc. I will bring along to the next meeting samples of their leaflets. You may like to invite managers from CNH and CBC to give a talk on their service areas? Please let Sarah or myself know. Thank you for supporting ‘your’ forum and have a very good summer. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes
Helen
Email:HMI@hotmail.co.uk
Email: leaseholders@cnh.org.uk
Tel: 01509 217585
All leaseholders have the opportunity to get involved in shaping the services provided to you by attending the Leaseholders’ Forum which meets quarterly. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 16 August 2011 at 6pm. There will be another open surgery at 5.30pm, just before the Forum begins. The Forum will then start promptly at 6pm so why not come along and tell us your views on the services we provide and how we could improve them.

Please contact Sarah Taylor on 01509 634830 or leaseholders@cnh.org.uk for further information.

Certified Summaries – revised service standards

Some of you will have already received your Certified Summaries for 2010/11 and as you will see from the covering letter, you now have 28 days from the date of the letter to raise any queries you have on your Certified Summaries. Once the 28 days have passed all charges within the Certified Summary will stand. This is a new service standard which was agreed at the Leaseholders’ Forum on 18 November 2010.

The reason for introducing this new service standard is due to leaseholders raising issues about their Certified Summary when they receive their Estimate the following year. Revising the Certified Summaries and Estimates at this stage causes extra administration work and also a delay to all the Estimates within the block concerned. So please ensure that if you need to get in touch with us about your Certified Summary, you do so within 28 days of the date on the letter.

Become an Estate Ambassador

We know that our leaseholders care about the areas where they live and we often receive calls or letters about issues that concern them, such as litter or graffiti.

To help us monitor the level of service we deliver and identify areas that need improving we would like our leaseholders to become Estate Ambassadors. These leaseholders will complete a questionnaire each month, ticking boxes to rate their areas and posting the questionnaires back to us.

Anyone can be an Ambassador. It can be done from home and you can choose the area you want to report, whether it is the street where you live or the area around your block of flats. If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador, or would like more information, please contact us on 01509 634931 or involvement@cnh.org.uk
A report for the Leasehold Service was taken to the Performance and Scrutiny Committee on 26 May 2011 for the first time. The purpose of this was to ascertain whether the service was being delivered correctly, accurately and on time.

There were five leasehold performance indicators established for the service and detailed below is a brief summary of what was achieved in 2010/11 and what the new targets are for 2011/12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Actual 2010/11</th>
<th>Target 2011/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LH01 - Leaseholder Satisfaction</td>
<td>Percentage of leaseholders who rate the service good or excellent</td>
<td>New indicator for 2011-12</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH02 – Estimates Sent on Time</td>
<td>Percentage of estimated service charges sent on time</td>
<td>99.3% 284/286</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH03 – Actual Charges (certified summaries)</td>
<td>Percentage of certified summaries sent on time</td>
<td>284/286 86.7%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sent on time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH04 – Accurate Estimates</td>
<td>Percentage of estimated service charges which are accurate</td>
<td>284/286 99.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH05 – Accurate Certified Summaries</td>
<td>Percentage of certified summaries which are accurate</td>
<td>283/286 98.9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, please contact your Leasehold Officer, Sarah Taylor on 01509 634830.
Getting hold of you - emergency contact numbers

We have noticed an increasing number of cases recently where we need to contact you in an emergency and we don’t always have updated contact details.

The majority of you have provided us with landlines and mobile numbers – but we still require you to keep us updated when you change your numbers.

You can use the email address or telephone number below to provide this information.

Please contact us on **01509 634830** or email leaseholders@cnh.org.uk.

**Coming clean!**

CNH carries out surveys and attends events and meetings to understand what is important to our tenants and leaseholders. Feedback from consultation told us that many of our customers are unhappy with the condition of the communal areas in our blocks of flats. Although it is the tenant or leaseholder responsibility to maintain these areas we understand that it is very difficult for you to clean light fittings or windows in these areas.

We have been working with some of our tenants and leaseholders to look at how we can assist with maintaining these areas. We have carried out a pilot cleaning exercise in some of our blocks to find out the best method to clean them, what difference it made and how much it cost to clean each block.

The tenant and leaseholder project group concluded that cleaning the light fittings and windows made a difference to most blocks, even the well maintained ones. The group identified that new floor coverings and painting would help and the costs of these are being investigated.

CNH has a small budget to clean all the communal areas and will be developing a programme for the works.

Revised Leaseholders’ Handbook

We now have a new Leaseholders’ Handbook which has been completed by the Leasehold Tenant Officer with the help of members of the Leaseholders’ Forum. If you would like a copy of the handbook you can either email leaseholders@cnh.org.uk or call 01509 634830 and request a copy. The handbook is also available on CNH’s website under Information for Leaseholders. The handbook is an evolving document which can be updated as and when necessary.
Sub-letting your home

You must tell the Leasehold Officer 28 days before you plan to sublet your property. If you have not told us, you will be breaking the conditions of your lease and we can take legal action.

You must also give us your contact address and phone number in writing. Your tenants must also keep to the conditions of your lease. If they cause any nuisance or break any conditions of the lease, you will be held responsible. In other words, even though you are not living in the property, you are still responsible for making sure that the leaseholder’s duties are carried out. If you are letting your home, you should tell your mortgage company and get legal advice on your rights and duties as a landlord of your property.

Please remember that as leaseholders you are still liable to pay your service charges - this responsibility does not pass to your tenant.

Handyperson service

Older people can benefit from a new handyperson service run by Leicestershire County Council. If you are over 60 and receive means tested benefits, you can arrange to have small jobs done for free! Services include door and window repairs, minor plumbing work, handrail fitting, draught proofing, lock fitting and fence repairs.

The service is delivered by Mears Home Improvement Services. You can contact them on 0845 601 7822 or visit www.mearsgroup.co.uk.
Useful contacts

Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing
Leasehold Officer: 01509 634830
Email: Leaseholders@cnh.org.uk
Reporting a repair: 01509 634666
Paying your invoice: 01509 634817

Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE)
The Leasehold Advisory Service provides free advice on all aspects of the law affecting leasehold property through their website. This also contains a lot of information on applying to a Leasehold Valuation tribunal.

The Leasehold Advisory Service is based at Maple House, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 7BN and you can contact them on 020 7383 9800 (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday) or email info@lease-advice.org. There is also an online enquiry form on their website at www.lease-advice.org.

The Leasehold Valuation Tribunal (LVT)
The Leasehold valuation Tribunal (LVT) is part of the Residential Property Tribunal Service.
The Regional Address is:
Residential Property Tribunal Service
2nd Floor, Louisa House
92-93 Edward Street
BIRMINGHAM B1 2RA
Tel: 0845 100 2615 or 0121 236 7837
Fax: 0121 236 9337
Email: midland.rap@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Local Citizens Advice Bureau
Woodgate Chambers, 70 Woodgate, Loughborough LE11 2TZ
01509 221221 (Telephone advice times: Monday & Thursday 9.30am-2.30 pm / Tuesday & Wednesday 9.30am to 12.30pm)
www.charnwoodcab.org.uk
How to Contact Us

In Person
We are located in the Charnwood Borough Council Offices on Southfields Road, Loughborough.

Opening Hours
8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday.
Please note that no tickets to see a Customer Advisor will be issued after 4.45pm (4.15pm on Fridays)

Online
There is an online contact form for you to send us enquiries, comments, compliments, complaints or suggestions at:
www.cnh.org.uk

By Phone, Fax or Email
Tel: 01509 634666
Fax: 01509 634518
Email: info@cnh.org.uk

By Post
All letters should be addressed to:
Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing Ltd, PO Box 8749,
Council Offices, Loughborough, Leics LE11 9EF