



QUEENSWOOD NEWS

Issue 11, April 2010

Insurance

There is quite a lot of confusion about the insurance that is in place for Queenswood Gardens as a whole. Our insurance policy only covers the buildings and the common areas of each block. The policy does not cover any of your own personal effects – whether they are in your flat or stored in your garage, if you have one. Nor does it cover your – or your tenant's – liabilities to third parties.

This means that if, for example, a pipe bursts in your bathroom or kitchen, flooding part of your flat and causing damage to your furniture, carpets, etc, you will not be able to claim for them on our policy. If the flooding extends to the common areas or another flat, the policy does cover consequential damage to the fabric of the neighbouring flats (ceilings, plaster, electrics, decorations, fixtures, etc), subject to an excess, but it excludes damage to your neighbours' personal effects.

However, as mentioned in a previous newsletter, where the leak is a result of bad workmanship or negligence in your property, we will claim the costs back from you so that we keep our insurance premiums to an acceptable level. You may also be liable for any excess under our policy. It is very much in your interests for you to have your own insurance policy that covers the contents of your flat and provides you with liability insurance.

Prams & Pushchairs

A number of residents are still in the habit of leaving prams and pushchairs in the corridors. This was identified as a significant hazard when the fire-risk assessment was last carried out by an independent inspector.

If you have a pram or pushchair, please make proper arrangements for its storage – otherwise it may be removed to meet the fire-risk assessment requirements.

Queenswood Gardens in Cyberspace

At last – Queenswood Gardens has an online presence! Our new website at www.queenswoodgardens.com has just gone "live".

We aim to provide as much information about our community as possible on the site – both for existing lessees & residents, and for anybody who is thinking about moving to Queenswood Gardens.

You'll find useful information about both Queenswood Gardens Ltd and Queenswood Management Association Ltd on the site, with contact phone numbers and e-mail addresses. The most recently approved accounts for each company are also available. We've included details of Hull & Co – who does what and how to get in touch with them – too.

There are sections on parking (with downloadable parking permit application forms), frequently asked questions, a news page (with a newsletter archive), and general information about Queenswood Gardens for potential newcomers.

We do want the website to be as useful as possible, so if you have any suggestions, do get in touch.

QMA Board

Board members and their block responsibilities are:

- Block A – Mike Thompson (Flat 73)
- Block B – Gerald Cox (Flat 36)
- Block C – Griff Griffith (Flat 105)
- Block D – Bob Haswell (Flat 19)
- Block E – Pauline Thurman (Flat 137)
- Block F – Len Kerridge (Flat 135)

Whilst directors are always prepared to give you advice, they are not caretakers – if there is something that needs repairing or some other attention, please notify Hull & Co, as this is the quickest way to get it fixed.

Leaving a message on a director's answer-phone can actually delay our response, as it can easily get overlooked or lost.

Parking & Driving

Firstly, a few reminders. Commercial vehicles may not use the parking bays, except those marked "Commercial Bay" by the entrance to Queenswood Gardens. Only one resident's parking permit is available for each flat. Visitors' permits are for visitors and may not be used for a resident's second vehicle; vehicles that use a visitor's permit to park at Queenswood Gardens for more than 2 weeks (particularly if overnight) will be liable for a parking charge ticket.

If you get a parking charge ticket, do not call Hull & Co to dispute it – they have no power to cancel tickets. You need to contact Central Ticketing – their details are on the back of the ticket.

We get regular complaints about inconsiderate parking. Please think about others when you park – try not to park on corners, or where your car causes an obstruction either to other cars or to pedestrians.

Finally, please watch your speed when driving in and out of the estate. There have been some near misses lately that could have ended in tragedy. We've no plans to ask Redbridge to introduce a formal speed limit, but if drivers keep their speed down to around 10 mph or less, that will surely help to make Queenswood Gardens safer for all of us – drivers included.

"We're a small community - let's be proud of it"

Noise

We still get complaints about noise across Queenswood Gardens. In a number of cases, a small minority are – in the words of one complainant – “making life hell” for other residents. In such cases, if there is a clear breach of the terms of the lease, then we will take appropriate action.

Often, the problem can be reduced or even eliminated with just a little thought. If you are carrying out any work in your flat, remember that construction work and use of power tools in flats is not permitted outside the hours of 9.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

Television Reception

The communal aerial system that provides access to terrestrial and satellite television services generally seems to be working well, although there have been a couple of occasions when we have had to call in our contractors to fix minor faults.

If you have a problem with reception in your flat, first check that all of your cables are properly connected. If you are 100% certain that your television, your Freeview or Sky box, and your cables are all working properly, then contact Hull & Co and ask them to call in our contractors. If you call them in yourself, without first talking to Hull & Co, you will be liable for their charges yourself if they subsequently find that the fault is in your flat.

Gardens Update

The sharp-eyed will have spotted that quite a few of our trees were pruned earlier in the year before they started on this year’s growth cycle. They are generally in good condition, although one or two might need to be removed because they are dying off. If we do have to cut any trees down, they will be replaced with suitable alternatives.

We are working with Nigel to bring in some more colour to the gardens across the development. Extra planting is in progress, and already the fruits of that work are very noticeable.

The section of the garden wall that was knocked down by a car at the beginning of the year has now been rebuilt at no expense to us. Contractors working for British Gas asked if they could use the gap as a temporary walkway and offered to rebuild the wall when they’d finished their work. Job done!

We Value Your Comments

If you have any constructive ideas or comments about this newsletter, or what’s going on at Queenswood Gardens generally, please don’t hesitate to let one of us know.

All we ask is that you put your thoughts on paper; it will make it easier for your ideas to be distributed to board members for consideration at our meetings, and it will also ensure that we don’t forget your comments – we’re only human!

Security

A number of residents have raised concerns about strangers gaining access to all blocks across Queenswood Gardens.

It has been reported that a small number of residents are in the habit of “buzzing in” anybody who calls them, whether they know who they are or not. As a result, there have been a handful of incidents when unsavoury characters have been found wandering the corridors (and even sleeping in them) when they clearly have no business to be there.

So if you are “buzzed” by someone and asked to let them in, do make sure that you know who they are and what business they have before you let them in.

Vandalism

We’ve had a spate of vandalism lately. Most of it has been quite petty, although very upsetting for some affected residents. For example, pictures that residents have provided over the years that were hanging in the corridors have been ripped from the walls and damaged – sometimes beyond repair.

We’ve also seen the re-emergence of the Block A light-bulb thief – who must by now either have the most brightly-lit flat in Queenswood Gardens, or be doing a roaring trade in selling second-hand bulbs on a market stall somewhere.

Of greater concern is the continued setting of small fires in and around bin sheds. Whilst the fires have so far caused only superficial damage, there is clearly potential for a much more serious incident. The police have been informed about the problem; they’re now patrolling Queenswood Gardens to see if they can catch the culprit(s)

We’re sure that the majority of residents at Queenswood Gardens share our disgust at all of these acts of mindless vandalism. If you know anything about them – or see anybody behaving suspiciously in future – do report it to Hull & Co. In serious cases of vandalism, please report it to the police, too.

Waste Disposal – Large Items.

Sorry to keep coming back to this issue in almost every newsletter, but some residents still haven’t got the message. If you have large items to dispose of, you must arrange for disposal yourself.

If you leave your large items in the bin sheds, the regular waste disposal people will not take them away – we have to pay (at commercial rates) to get them removed. Ultimately, that means everybody pays for the disposal through their service charges.

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