

APPOINTMENTS STRENGTHEN PROPERTY MANAGEMENT BUSINESS

One of Bournemouth's oldest firms of chartered surveyors and property managers has strengthened its team with two key appointments.



After 4 years with the firm as Head of Property Management, Matthew Strong has now been appointed as Managing Partner. In his new role, Matthew will be responsible for the day to day management of the business, as well as continuing to head up the property management department. Matthew Strong commented "this is an extremely exciting opportunity and I am delighted to become further involved in developing the business".

In order to strengthen the property management team, Rebbeck Brothers have appointed Jordan Pollard as senior property manager. Jordan will be responsible for



managing around 40 blocks of flats within the Bournemouth and Poole area, as well as completing the implementation of the firm's new property management software.

Matthew Strong said "we have been looking to recruit another qualified and experienced property manager for some time and are delighted that our recent new business gains have resulted in us being able to employ such a senior manager. Jordan has an excellent track record having lived and worked within the area for the last 10 years".

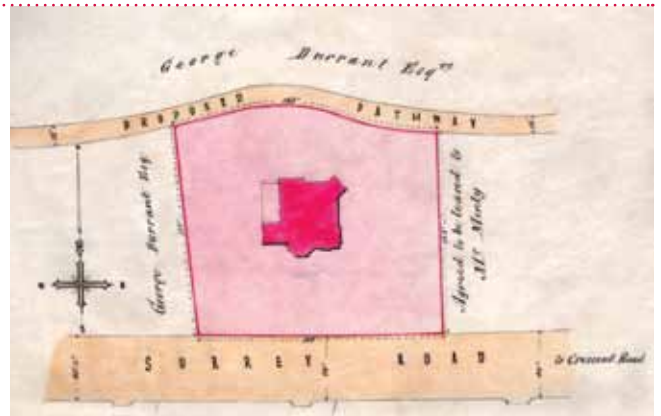
Rebbeck Brothers partner, Tim Mellery-Pratt, believes that 2010 is going to be a critical year for everyone in the property industry. He commented "the appointment of Jordan Pollard and Matthew's greater involvement in the running of the business, is evidence of our commitment to provide our clients with a professional property management service. The increasing regulatory environment that we all work in, makes it all the more important to recruit and retain a strong team".

HISTORY OF REBBECK BROTHERS

Moving on in the history of the firm – 'It was in 1877 that Mr E W Rebbeck was joined by his two brothers and the firm became known as Rebbeck Brothers'. Those of you who have visited our offices may have seen (in the Conference Room) the framed instructions to the Solicitor to draw up the terms of the Partnership.

In these days of instant communications, with mobile telephones and broadband, it is hard to picture the situation in the latter half of the 19th Century. The Rebbeck Brothers office was also the office of the South Coast Printing Telegraph Company, which was open daily for the "transaction of messages". The charge was 6d. for up to 10 words, excluding the address. Bournemouth was, at that time still isolated from the rest of the country, with the nearest railway stations being at Holmsley and Hamworthy.

This was a time of great development in Bournemouth, and Rebbeck Brothers were involved with many major sales, including the original Winter Gardens, Brownsea Island (then known as Branksea Island) and many large areas of fields, which were subsequently developed into the areas that we know today as Winton, Kinson and Boscombe



Extract from legal document for sale of land, Surrey Road, 1876

Manor. Rebbeck Brothers still holds an interesting archive of information relating to these early sales and development of the Bournemouth and Poole conurbation.

This was also the time that the Local Authority was established with the administrative area of Bournemouth controlled by 13 Commissioners. Mr Rebbeck, the founder of the firm, became Chairman of the Board of Commissioners in 1872, whilst his eldest son became Chairman in 1878, and again in 1887. The first rate demand on local properties produced a total income of £592 – today one flat would be paying more than this in Council Tax!



21 WAYS TO BE A GREAT LEASEHOLDER

Rebbeck Brothers currently manage a portfolio of around 130 blocks of flats. We aim to build a good relationship with leaseholders and to work in partnership to maintain and enhance the value of their home and investment.

Living in a leasehold flat is a rewarding and pleasant experience so long as neighbours respect the need to consider each other when living side by side or on top of each other and sharing communal facilities.

The Association of Managing Agents (ARMA) of which Rebbeck Brothers are Corporate Members have produced an extremely useful guidance note on how leaseholders can “help themselves” in the smooth running of their block. We are grateful to ARMA for their permission to reproduce the wording of their Advisory Note – 21 Ways To Be A Great Leaseholder.



- 1. Water leaks** – water leaks are the most common cause of damage and insurance claims in blocks of flats. If going away for more than 48 hours then turn off the water at the stopcock in your flat. Many managing agents will ask you for the contact details of an emergency keyholder just in case there is a leak whilst you are away. Please co-operate and make sure a neighbour knows how to contact you.
- 2. Fire Safety** – do not store petrol, calor gas or paraffin heaters in your flat or on balconies. Do not light barbecues on a balcony.
- 3. Fire Evacuations** – do not block landings and hallways with bicycles, prams, toys or rubbish sacks. They are dangerous in case of a fire and a trip hazard even if there is no fire.
- 4. Refuse** – put your rubbish in the refuse bins or chutes provided. Do not dump large items for others to dispose of; ring your local council. Ensure you comply with any recycling arrangements.
- 5. Security** – Always make sure the main door to the block is locked. Do not let anyone in through a door entry system or a locked communal entry door if you do not know them.
- 6. Pets** – there will usually be restrictions in your leases about pets and normally you will need to get permission from the landlord or management company.
- 7. Satellite dishes and cable TV** – most leases do not allow the fitting of dishes by leaseholders. Ask your agent about whether a communal dish is possible. Cable TV to a block will need cables to be routed through communal areas so you will need to ask for permission.
- 8. Insurance** – the building will be insured by your landlord but you should insure your own contents. Do make sure your contents cover includes cover if a leak from your flat damages the contents of your neighbours’ flats because you will be liable. If you will be away from your flat for more than 30 days and the flat will be empty it is normal that your agent will have to inform the insurers. Please let the agent know. If you do not it is likely any claim for damage to your flat will be disallowed.
- 9. Gas servicing** – if you have a gas boiler in your flat do get it serviced annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer. If there is a problem it will not just affect you.
- 10. Service charges** – pay them on time and so maintain the cash flow needed to provide the services and repairs that you and your neighbours want, lease permitting.
- 11. Loft space** – do not assume that you own or have the right of access to any loft space over your flat. Ask your agent first.
- 12. Alterations and improvements** – most leases will require the landlord’s permission except for minor changes. Do ask for permission. Failure to do so will lead to complications and delays if you decide to sell.



13. **Noise** – is the number one cause of neighbour disputes. Be sensitive and let your neighbours know if there will be unusual noise from say DIY or workmen in your flat. (Refer to ARMA's LAN06 Noise on www.arma.org.uk.)
14. **Wooden floors** – are one of the biggest gripes of leaseholders because they transmit sound so easily. Carpets and/or rugs are the neighbourly floor covering choice in any flat and are likely to be required by your lease.
15. **Subletting** – you will normally need to obtain permission from your landlord first. Whether you do or do not, provide your landlord with your or your lettings agent's contact details, the name and contact of who is the tenant and a copy of your tenancy agreement. Remember you are responsible for the tenant's behaviour so make sure he/she is aware of what is expected in your block, particularly under the terms of your lease.
16. **Keep important information** – keep things like service charge and ground rent demands, annual accounts, budgets and consultation notices. This will help you and save you money if you decide to sell.
17. **Get involved** – if your block is run by a leaseholder's company then you can help by getting involved. Volunteers for directors are always wanted.
18. **Neighbour disputes** – if you have a problem with a neighbour over noise or other anti-social behaviour try and solve it between yourselves. Landlords have very little power to take action for anti-social behaviour. Get to know your neighbours so you have a basis to resolve things if problems do arise later. (Refer to ARMA's LAN12 Anti-Social Behaviour on www.arma.org.uk.)
19. **Meter readings** – make sure you have your meters read when you buy and sell the flat. And the communal meter cupboards must not be used for storage; that would be a major fire risk.
20. **Electric safety** – if the wiring in your flat is more than 10 years old have a test carried out by a qualified electrician. A lot of fires are caused by electrical faults.

21. **Parking** – if spaces are allocated park in the space(s) allocated, not in a neighbour's spaces; and let your visitors know of the rules about parking before they visit so they do not upset your neighbours.

AND FINALLY make sure you understand how the leasehold system works by going to www.arma.org.uk and viewing 'Living in Leasehold Flats – a guide to how it works and your rights and responsibilities'.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this Lessee Advisory Note, it must be emphasised that because the Association has no control over the precise circumstances in which it will be used, the Association, its officers, employees and members can accept no liability arising out of its use, whether by members of the Association or otherwise. The Lessee Advisory Note is of a general nature only and makes no attempt to state or conform to legal requirements; compliance with these must be the individual user's own responsibility and therefore it may be appropriate to seek independent advice.

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REBBECK BROTHERS CHARTERED SURVEYORS AND PROPERTY MANAGERS

Whatever your commercial or residential property needs, we can help. Rebbeck Brothers is a firm of Chartered Surveyors based in Bournemouth offering property management, valuation, planning and professional support services to a wide range of individuals, businesses and residential management companies.

At Rebbeck Brothers we provide cost effective, high value solutions to meet all your property needs. We work hard to get to know you in order to deliver timely, individual advice on how to improve and maintain your property – whether it be an investment or your home.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q Can I pay for my service charge by card over the telephone?

A Yes – we accept payment by debit or credit card, either in person or over the telephone. If you use a credit card then there is a transaction charge of 2.5%. This does not apply to debit/switch cards. Telephone 01202 780780 and choose option 1 for the Residential Department.

Q How do you calculate the service charge for our block?

A Under the terms of most Leases, we estimate at the beginning of each financial year the predicted total expenditure for the year. This estimate or budget is based on known expenditure from the previous year, quotes from contractors/insurers and/or our knowledge of the local market. The service charge demands for the year will be based on the budget – however, it is just an estimate and charges may be subject to adjustments before the end of the financial year.

Q We have recently received a “levy” relating to “Section 20 Works.” Can you explain these terms?

A *Levy*

If during the year there is a shortage of funds either due to a budget overspend or an agreed special project then we will issue a “levy” or additional service charge invoice to cover the shortfall. This will only be issued where it is necessary for the proper management of the building.

Section 20 Works

Where the cost of individual items of work such as internal redecorations, recarpeting or rewiring of the common parts would be greater than £250 per flat, then the managing agent will consult with all residents by issuing two Statutory Notices. The first notice will detail the works to be undertaken and the second will detail the quotes for the work. In both cases you have the opportunity to comment on what is being proposed.

Q One of the flats in our block has been repossessed – who will pay the service charge?

A When a flat is repossessed the bank or building society take over the responsibility for paying any service charge arrears. They will continue to pay service charge until the flat is sold.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU



Some of the Rebbeck's team

All of our staff will deal with your questions and queries in a courteous, prompt and professional manner.

We will advise all residents of any issue relating to their property, its maintenance, level of service charge or any meeting in good time.

We will endeavour to manage the property in a cost effective manner and in the best interest of all residents.

We will be transparent and honest with regards to any fees or charges and provide a written management agreement.

In the unlikely event of a complaint, we will seek to resolve the matter through our company procedure and, if necessary, refer the complaint to a Senior Partner.

We will value our clients, build relationships and work in partnership to maintain and enhance your investment and your home.

General Disclaimer - this newsletter is provided for general information only. For specific advice relating to your block please contact us or refer to your lease and or block regulations.

Rebbeck

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