

MACFIE & CO. NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2021

FESTIVE OFFICE HOURS

Our office will close at 3pm on Thursday 23rd December 2021 and will re-open at 9am on Wednesday 5th January 2022.

EMERGENCY OUT-OF-HOURS CONTRACTORS

In the event the services of an out-of-hours contractor were required, please telephone our office number, 0141-632-5588, and select the option for the trade required. Please note that contractors can only attend and access areas such as the roof if it is safe to do so. Additional call-out fees may apply during holidays and weekends. Contractors would be expected to observe prevailing guidelines in terms of Covid 19.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Our offices are still physically closed to the general public and staff are working predominantly from home with full access to our office systems. Given current uncertainty, we do not know when the office will re-open. That aside, the management team are available for meetings by appointment, assuming the current guidelines are observed.

While we have no dedicated reception staff at present, our automated phone system is fully operational. For non-emergency enquiries, email is the best way to contact us or alternatively, our website enquiry facility performs the same function.

WEBSITE PORTAL

Our website includes a client portal which grants online access to client statements, accounts, development correspondence and a payment facility. The portal also enables owners to check their own contact details and make any necessary changes. Registration is simple - all you need is your eight digit account number (found on your common charges invoice) to begin the process.

CORRESPONDENCE VIA EMAIL

If you currently receive correspondence and accounts via post and would now prefer to receive this via email, simply email manager@macfie.com, stating your property address, and we will add you to the email system.

WINTER PREPARATIONS

During winter-time, plumbing can be susceptible to bursts, particularly where pipes are unprotected from the cold or where properties are left unheated for extended periods of time. In the event your property is to be left unoccupied over the winter period, you should ensure it is heated at a constant temperature.

If this cannot be implemented, we recommend where practicable having the plumbing completely drained-down. It is good practice to determine whether your flat has a stop valve, and where it is located. We would also recommend you leave emergency contact details with resident neighbours. A water key should also perhaps be obtained to enable the water for the building to be isolated from the street if necessary to mitigate damage so much as possible

INSURANCE CLAIMS – ESCAPE OF WATER

Water damage claims are the most common claims made on buildings insurance policies and regular claims can significantly affect premium rates, excess sums and/or terms of cover.

Homeowners can reduce the chance of water escapes by regularly checking around shower and bath seals, identifying worn or displaced grouting, checking for leaks and drips at overflows, boilers and radiators, checking connections to dishwashers and washing machines. Where defects are identified, it is important to have these repaired as soon as possible to mitigate internal damage either to your own property or any situated below, by containing leaks so much as possible or at least isolating supply to pipes via stop valve/s until permanent repairs can be effected.

It is recommended that you employ a qualified plumber to check for leaks within your property after a report of an escape of water, rather than to attempt your own assessment or repair. It is also worth bearing in mind that pipes are often concealed under floors and within pipe chases – just because you cannot see a leak within your flat, does not mean there is not a problem and it therefore requires to be properly investigated by a professional.

MANAGEMENT FEES

We will be applying an inflationary increase to our management fee of £2.00 plus VAT per quarter, effective from the common charges account for the period to 28th February, 2022. As with all industries, the cost of running a compliant and regulated service-based business increases year-on-year and not only in terms of general overheads and compliance costs but also investment in staff pay, training, and technology etc. While we continue to absorb the lion's share of these increasing costs, it is necessary to apply a small increase, as agents working on behalf of co-owners.

FORTHCOMING LEGISLATION IN CONNECTION WITH FIRE ALARMS

Every home in Scotland must have an interlinked fire alarm system by February, 2022. Interlinked means if one activates, they all activate, so you should always hear an alarm wherever you are in your home. The new law applies to all Scottish homes. It is the property owner's responsibility to meet the new standard.

By February, 2022, every home must have:

- One smoke alarm in the living room or the room the occupants use the most
- One smoke alarm in every hallway or landing
- One heat alarm in the kitchen

All smoke and heat alarms should be mounted on the ceiling and interlinked. If you have a carbon-fuelled appliance, such as a boiler, fire, heater or flue in any room, you must also have a carbon monoxide detector in that room, but this does not need to be linked to the fire alarms.

Units within shared property, such as a tenement block of flats do not need to be linked to each other, and there is no need for alarms to be fitted in communal areas, such as halls and stairways.

For more detailed information on this new legislation, please consult the Scottish Government website.

May we take the opportunity to wish you the compliments of the season.

We hope you and your loved ones keep safe and well.