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YOUR NEWSLETTER FROM JAMES GIBB RESIDENTIAL FACTORS

WINTER 2020



*Wishing everyone  
a safe and happy  
Christmas and  
New Year*

## Welcome

Firstly, we hope everyone is safe and well.

You'll notice that our newsletter is in a new format this time.

We've spoken to a number of companies recently and have now selected one to which we have outsourced our bulk mail requirements. This relieves the need for our staff, who are still mainly working from home, to come into our office to print, fold, collate, envelope etc. all our hard copy mail; tasks which take significantly longer while maintaining the current safety protocols. The company we have selected has all COVID protocols in place whilst maintaining the ability to generate bulk documents quickly and efficiently. To reduce the number of touch points, our newsletter is now printed, by them, in standard A4 format, hence the change.

One thing that has not changed, of course, is our Christmas Quiz. Please have a go and you could be in with a chance to win your choice of champagne or luxury chocolates. *Good luck.*

THE JAMES GIBB TEAM



## Changes in Law Domestic Smoke Alarms

At James Gibb, we continue to monitor any amendments or changes in property law which may affect our customers.

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London, a Ministerial Working Group on Building and Fire Safety was established to review Scotland's building and fire safety regulatory frameworks. This legislation will ensure that everyone in Scotland has the same level of protection whether they own or rent their home. We can confirm that the Scottish Government has issued new legislation in regard to changes regarding smoke alarms in domestic properties. This was originally to be in place by February 2021 but as a result of logistical issues resulting from COVID-19, this has been delayed until February 2022.

The information relating to the common parts/areas of blocks and stairwells, which we would manage on behalf of the homeowners is as follows:

In a shared property such as a tenement or block of flats there is no requirement for different properties to be linked to each other. There is no requirement for alarms to be fitted in communal areas such as entry halls and stairways. Any change to smoke detectors in common areas requires full consultation with owners, as per the Property Factors Act 2011. This is additional work and outwith the core service charges but one with which we can assist homeowners.

In regard to your own home, there is legislation in place and owners will have to adhere to information provided by Scottish Government. We have provided some of information for you here.

All homes will be covered by the new standard, as it is important that all homes should be safe for occupants regardless of tenure. It will be the property owner's responsibility to meet the new standard, however, the legal duty to enforce the standard rests with local authorities. Where owners are unable to meet the standard, it is not a criminal offence. The standard requires; one smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes; one smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings; one heat alarm installed in every kitchen; all alarms should be ceiling mounted and interlinked.

Where there is a carbon-fuelled appliance (such as boilers, fires (including open fires) and heaters) or a flue, a carbon monoxide detector is also required which does not need to be linked to the fire alarms. The requirement is to have all smoke and heat alarms interlinked. You may not hear the alarm closest to the fire but, by having an interlinked system, you will be alerted immediately. **Any costs will be the responsibility of homeowners and landlords, not factors.** We estimate that the cost for an average three bedroom house which requires three smoke alarms, one heat alarm and one carbon monoxide detector will be around £220. This is based on using the type of alarms that you can install by yourself without the need for an electrician for installing a hardwired alarm.

We have been working with one of our preferred suppliers and we can pass their information direct to you (contact us via [enquiries@jamesgibb.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@jamesgibb.co.uk) or call 0333 240 8325). This will assist in avoiding any unscrupulous tradesman who may take advantage of this new regulation. We will also provide further information regarding the supplier via our normal communication channels.

Separate information will follow for those involved in our retirement developments.



Our opening hours, over the festive period are as follows:

### Christmas and New Year Opening Hours - 2020/21

Thursday	24th December	9.00am to 1.00pm
Friday	25th December	Office Closed
Monday	28th December	Office Closed
Tuesday	29th December	9.00am to 3.00pm
Wednesday	30th December	9.00am to 3.00pm
Thursday	31st December	9.00am to 1.00pm
Friday	1st January	Office Closed
Monday	4th January	Office Closed

Normal opening hours of 9.00am - 5.00pm will resume on Tuesday 5th January 2021.

Outwith these hours, our out of hour contact centre will be fully manned and can be contacted by calling our normal office number on 0333 240 8325. As usual, our contact centre should only be called for emergency requirements.



## New Office Opened in Dundee

Following our recent acquisition of the factoring arm of Chartered Surveyors, Graham and Sibbald, we are delighted to let you know that we have now opened an office in Dundee to serve the local developments managed in our portfolio. This is a strategic and exciting enhancement for us and will allow local interaction with local knowledge.

The office is located at:

**Unit 20, Prospect 111 Gemini Crescent  
Dundee Technology Park  
Dundee  
DD2 1SW**

Normally, we'd be delighted to welcome visitors to our new office but, with current restrictions, this is not possible at the moment. We certainly look forward to welcoming our Dundee owners as soon as we can.

## Are You Moving Home?

Whether it's a consequence of COVID or just an unusual seasonal spike, we have seen a significant increase in the number of property sales over the past few months.

There is so much to plan and organise when moving house, and it's a very exciting but stressful time for many so it's always worth keeping a tick list of everything that needs to be done.

If you are in the process of selling, please don't forget to include advising your Factor (via your solicitor), that you are moving, right at the top of your list. Our Written Statement of Services (Section 5.6) states that we require a minimum of 14 days' notice of the sale date. We need this time to ensure we can fully and accurately answer all the questions the seller's solicitor will ask. Details of outstanding works, forthcoming projects, presence of sinking funds, levels of debt etc. are all important pieces of information that the buyer's solicitor will require from the seller's.

On a number of occasions recently, we have been given very little notice of a sale (sometimes one day). Such timescales are unreasonable and could lead to delays in sale completions.

For further information, please download our handy "Selling your Home" guide from our website (home page / documents and guides tab) or request a hard copy from us if you have no access to the internet (or prefer a hard copy).



## Settling Your Invoice

**As you know, it's very important that your development's account is constantly in credit to ensure continuity of supply of services, insurance, utilities etc etc. This requires all invoices to be settled on time.**

Of course, for some, particularly during this unsettled time, financial constraints are such that it can be difficult to rely on the availability of sufficient funds to settle each of our invoices fully, when received.

If you do require assistance with payment, please don't ignore your invoice. Contact us and we will be happy to discuss a payment plan with you. This will avoid the need for reminders or late payment charges.

We are also setting up a new paperless direct debit facility (more details below), to allow the spread of costs over the year. This is a very popular option for many, so, if you don't already pay by Direct Debit, you may wish to give it some consideration.



## Electronic Comms

We often ask our customers, who still receive hard copy communications, to consider switching to electronic communications.

Now, more than ever, we see the benefits of doing so. This pandemic has driven lots of people on-line, many of whom previously had limited contact with the internet for commercial use.

Please email [enquiries@jamesgibb.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@jamesgibb.co.uk) to set this up.

Of course we realise that not everyone is keen to, or can move to, electronic communications and, where that is the case, we continue to support you at no additional charge.

If you've not yet used your James Gibb+ Portal, please also log onto that using your Account number and JG+ ref (available on your invoice) to gain access to all your relevant development information.



## COMING SOON

## Introduction of Paperless Direct Debit

Having listened to feedback from many of our customers, we are delighted to announce the imminent introduction of paperless set up of direct debit, making the direct debit instruction process more efficient and much easier, as it removes the requirement for paper-based transactions and their associated administration.

The move away from paper-based transactions to a more efficient automated process realises many benefits for you, such as:

- Safe and convenient way to pay your invoice
- Never forget to pay a service charge account
- Avoid reminder letters and late payment charges
- Protected by the 'Direct Debit Guarantee'
- Flexibility to pay monthly or quarterly
- Advance notification ahead of agreed collection date
- Future proofed as traditional payment methods are phased out
- Environmentally friendly

Make life easier and cleaner. Sign up for paperless direct debit.

Log on to our client portal James Gibb+

Talk to one of our finance team on 0333 240 8325

Get more information on paperless direct debit sign up at [enquiries@jamesgibb.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@jamesgibb.co.uk)

We'll announce on our website newsfeed and social media blogs when this facility is available



