

# Our expertise, your way



## PowellsLaw

Spring 2017

## Achieving excellence: Our commitment to clients

Here at PowellsLaw, we believe that understanding your situation is key to delivering expert legal advice in a professional and supportive manner. Our empathetic approach along with our comprehensive knowledge ensures that we are able to provide clients with the advice and support that they need through an easily accessible and efficient service. We work to your individual requirements, and our commitment to quality customer service means that we are one of the leading firms in Weston. We are very proud to have a 5 star rated service by our third party feedback service Working Feedback.

We are always delighted to receive testimonials from our clients who have first-hand experience of our services. All feedback is dealt with by Working Feedback, a third party company that provides our clients with a quick and easy way of submitting invaluable feedback to us. The feedback that we receive is essential as we are able to draw upon the experience of our clients to shape what we do and how we deliver our services. Our commitment to clients is reflected throughout the testimonials that we receive.

Read some our latest testimonials to find out for yourself:

### **Fantastic service –**

*I thought Daniel Langley was fantastic at organising my will. He was very friendly and efficient, made the whole process nice and easy. Everything was explained well, I am really happy with the service received.*

**Excellent, helpful, knowledgeable –** PowellsLaw were excellent, helpful, and knowledgeable. The service I received was very pleasant and friendly.

**Clear, prompt and accurate service –** I consulted Powells Law because I wanted to arrange for a deed of variation to my late mother's will. I saw Jenny Brading and she clearly explained the implications and the alternatives. The deed was ready for me to sign a week later. I am very pleased with the service and would recommend Powells Law.

If you would like to give us some feedback after your experience of our service, this can be done through our website here [www.powellslaw.com/leave-feedback](http://www.powellslaw.com/leave-feedback) or alternatively you can pop into our offices to pick up a hard copy feedback slip.



# You're invited...

Each month we host a **Bite-Size Breakfast** meeting to get together with local businesses to meet other people and sometimes hear from other firms about new ideas and services. It is informal and a great place to discuss issues and opportunities that we might be able to address together.

We understand your working days are extremely busy, so whether you drop in for 5 minutes or for the whole meeting, we'll aim to make each session interesting, interactive and focused around your issues so you get the most out of the Bite-Size Breakfast.

To find out more information about our Bite-Size breakfast visit [www.powellslaw.com](http://www.powellslaw.com) or to register for our next event please email [helpforyourbusiness@powellslaw.com](mailto:helpforyourbusiness@powellslaw.com).

If you would like to give a short presentation at any of our breakfast meetings, please contact our Practice Administrator Rebecca Sage on **01934 637908** to discuss or alternatively email her directly [rsage@powellslaw.com](mailto:rsage@powellslaw.com).



## Reflecting on your business financial year?

**As we approach the end of the financial year for many firms, businesses often take this opportunity to reflect on successes and achievements over the last 12 months and ways to improve going forward.**

Whilst you are reviewing suppliers, systems and services that all help your business to function efficiently, it is important not to overlook the legal side to your business affairs? A simple oversight can be a costly surprise. Our business service, Law on Call, is available to any business on a simple monthly fee pricing arrangement, giving businesses easily accessible initial assessment advice and guidance.

Law on Call will give you the freedom to call one of our expert lawyers anytime you are unsure of your legal situation whether that be around employees, contracts, property etc. We will then advise you based on the situation what the best approach is and whether you will need any additional legal support or not.

So if you are looking for support services for the new financial year, find out more about this service visit our website [www.powellslaw.com/legal-help-business/company-business-support/law-on-call/](http://www.powellslaw.com/legal-help-business/company-business-support/law-on-call/) or contact us on **01934 623 501**.



# Leases – what you need to know

**Reading any document carefully before you sign it is always sound advice, and rarely more so than with a lease. It's tempting to assume that the lease is a fairly standard piece of documentation and that signing it is a formality - part of the process of acquiring the property.**

Leasehold is quite common for flats and apartments, and for some houses. First of all: be careful! The wording of leases vary significantly and may contain clauses that could expose you to significant additional costs or restrict how you use the property without you realising.

Even if there are no nasty surprises hidden in the small print it's worth remembering that a lease is a legally binding contract. So taking time to read the document carefully and know for certain what you're signing up to is always a good investment.

## **The Basics - Buying a Leasehold Property**

With a leasehold property you pay to own the property for a specified period, after which it reverts to the owner of the building, who in most cases will be the freeholder. Normally, the freeholder is responsible for maintaining the common areas of the building plus the exterior walls and roof. They will also arrange for buildings insurance.

In addition to your mortgage you will have to pay maintenance fees, annual service charges and a share of the building's insurance. There could be restrictions on altering the property without the freeholder's permission and there could be bans on owning pets or subletting. You don't want to discover these after you've bought the leasehold.

## **Always Check the Lease Duration**

If you extend a lease with less than 80 years left to run, you not only pay the cost of extending the lease you are also liable for 50% of the 'marriage value'. This is the value added to the property thanks to the extended lease.

Also, it can be hard to get a mortgage on properties with less than 70 years to run on the lease. The values of these properties are also likely to decline significantly every year.

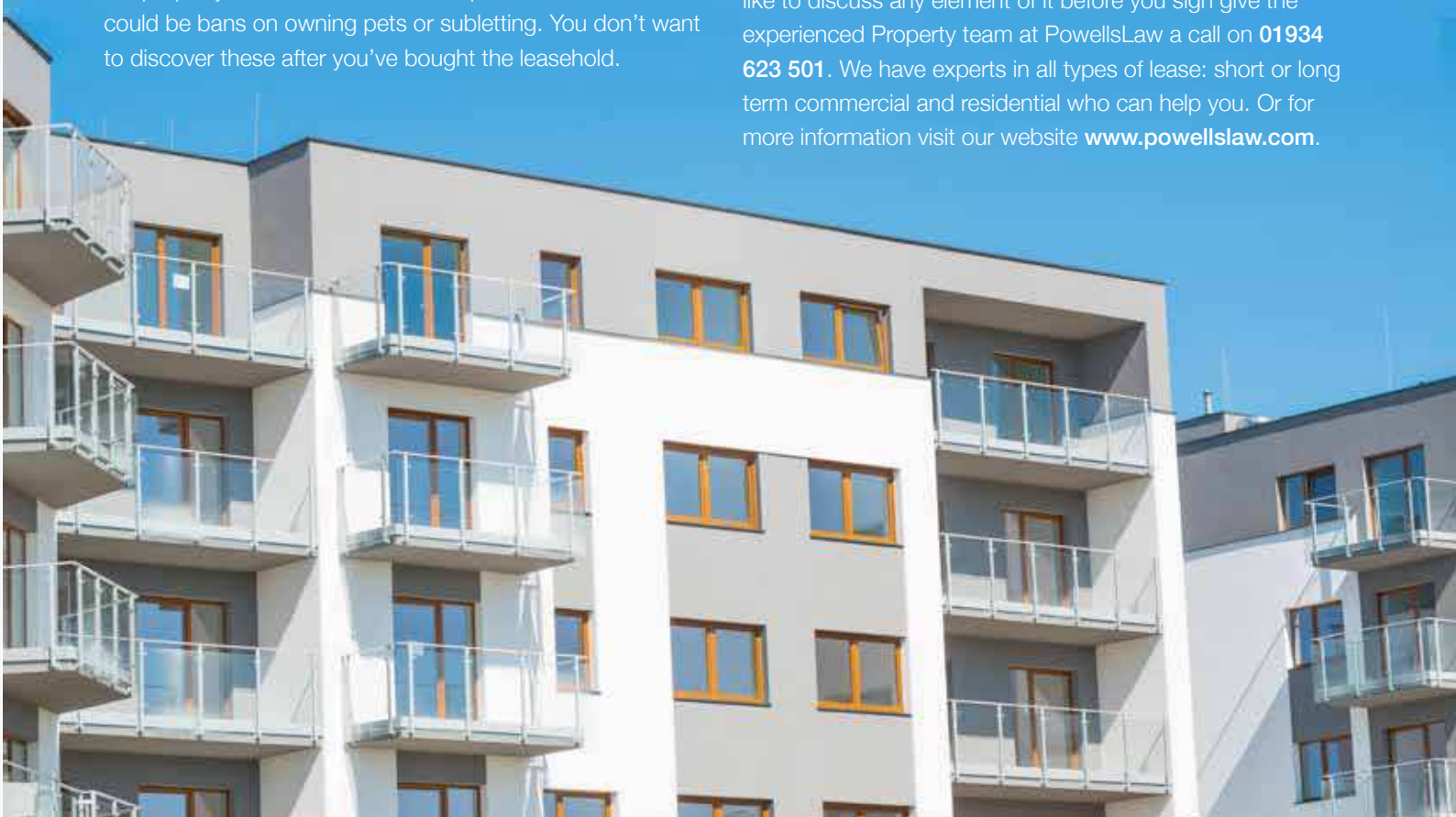
While you have a legal right to extend the lease by up to 90 years once you have owned the property for two years, you must be cautious as not all freeholders will be happy to extend even once you've signed the lease.

## **Ground Rent**

The freeholder owns the land the property stands on and may charge ground rent. Sadly, some freeholders offer attractive ground rents at the start and then hike them up the longer you own the lease. The mechanism for calculating any ground rent should be clearly stated in the agreement - make sure you understand the implications.

If you're not sure about what you're signing or are concerned about what you have already signed get professional advice. A property law specialist will soon identify any clauses that you need to challenge or clarify.

If you are struggling to understand your lease and would like to discuss any element of it before you sign give the experienced Property team at PowellsLaw a call on **01934 623 501**. We have experts in all types of lease: short or long term commercial and residential who can help you. Or for more information visit our website [www.powellslaw.com](http://www.powellslaw.com).



# We are merging

with Hall Ward and Fox Solicitors

We are pleased to announce a recent firm merger with Hall Ward and Fox Solicitors. Due to retirement they have decided to cease trading and have entrusted us to carry their existing client relationships forward. We would like to welcome all existing and previous Hall Ward and Fox clients to contact us should they have any questions that they may wish to discuss.

Here at PowellsLaw our aim is to make access to law easier, quicker and more affordable. We have a wealth of experience dealing with legal help for you and your business should you need legal assistance.

To find out more about the services we offer or how we may be of assistance to you, please visit our website [www.powellslaw.com](http://www.powellslaw.com) or get in touch on **01934 623501**.



## Welcome

### to our new trainees

#### Stacie Godfrey

Stacie read Law with American Studies at the University of Sussex and after graduating she spent the winter season skiing in Val d'Isere before studying the Legal Practice Course at the University of Law. Prior to joining PowellsLaw, Stacie worked for Acas as an employment law adviser and trainer.



In her spare time Stacie plays rugby for Bristol Ladies and is hoping to get selected for the Somerset County squad.

#### Rianna Treasure

Rianna grew up in Bristol and completed her Law degree at UWE in 2014 before going on to study the LPC at UWE part time over two years whilst working full time as a paralegal in both personal injury and civil litigation.



In her spare time Rianna enjoys going to the gym, reading and socialising with friends.

## PowellsLaw is Re-Accredited

with the Law Society's Lexcel Quality Mark



We are delighted to announce that we have been re-accredited with The Law Society's Lexcel legal practice quality mark again this year. This is awarded to law firms to recognise their excellence in legal practice management and excellence in client care.

This re-accreditation is confirmed recognition for PowellsLaw and provides re-assurance that we meet the highest standards of technical expertise and client service. People are often apprehensive when they need to visit a solicitor, no matter what the circumstances, but with Lexcel you can be confident that PowellsLaw has the skills and expertise to provide you with the best possible advice and expertise.

If you have a legal query you would like to discuss contact our expert team on **01934 637920**.



[www.powellslaw.com](http://www.powellslaw.com)