

# Riverbourne Court, Sittingbourne

Riverbourne Court, located in Sittingbourne, is a private leasehold retirement scheme with 64 apartments, under the control of a Right to Manage Company set up by the residents. Previously the residents had been unhappy with the management of their building with many issues which had failed to be addressed.

### **Time for Change**

One of the residents found an article in the local paper about the Right to Manage Federation (RTMF) and how they had assisted a local scheme in breaking free from their freeholder, enabling them to take control of their building.

This allowed them the right to appoint their own managing agent to deal with the day to day building management. The residents wrote to the scheme for advice and collectively decided that forming an RTM company was the way forward.

The residents elected a committee and worked with the Right to Manage Federation to form a limited company. The RTMF then assisted them throughout the legal journey to remove the management from the freeholder. The residents were then able to proceed, and asked several management companies to tender - Grange was one of three companies shortlisted.

We were asked to attend an interview including a presentation and budget preparation.

The selection criteria was not based around cost savings, with more emphasis placed on the quality of service, management style and communication.

When we won the tender the transition to Grange ran smoothly. The residents wanted to keep some of the contractors already employed to carry out their house keeping services, and we were happy to accommodate. We were able to provide quotes to the residents for them to choose which contractor they wished to use for other items such as the lift, something which the residents had not previously been consulted about. Working with their property management company in this way was exactly what the residents had been hoping for.

### **Improving efficiencies - a better environment all round**

Since employing Grange, residents have reported that the atmosphere at the scheme has improved significantly. The residents now have a happy, friendly, honest and above all, approachable Scheme Manager who mixes with the residents and

encourages them to use communal areas such as the residents' lounge and gardens to socialise in.

There have been cost savings in relation to the insurance premium and alarm monitoring. Increases to the budget following the inaccuracy of previous meter readings meant the residents were presented with a very large bill from the utility company, but Grange was able to secure a reduction in the amount owed, as they had previously been charged the incorrect VAT rate.

*Continued over >*

## Grange Services:

- Communication with residents and directors
- Managing the development including site inspections and holding residents meetings
- Placing the contract for grounds maintenance
- Arranging insurance
- Paying utility bills
- Arranging reactive repairs
- Managing the long term reserve fund for major capital replacements or repairs
- Managing the bank account - collecting service charges and dealing with any debtors.

"We would certainly recommend Grange to other residents' committees and management schemes. In fact, since Grange have taken over the management of the building, other schemes have approached us to talk about the RTM process, and using Grange.

With right to manage in place, we are far more in control. We feel safe and secure financially and are reassured that there are no nasty surprises using Grange. There is a much more consultative approach now and the Regional Manager is available when we have the need to discuss issues with her. We are confident we are being looked after well and have open communication with our excellent Scheme Manager, which means that our input is taken seriously by Grange.

We have just had our first year end accounts back and we are delighted with the preparation of them ... so clear and informative with all the information we require, these are the best we have ever had."

**Vera Adgie**

**Director** - Riverbourne Court  
Right to manage Company