

# Cover4LetProperty



**Cover4LetProperty**

Specialists in Landlords Insurance  
& Unoccupied Property Insurance

## e-Newsletter

Issue 2 January 2011



**Firstly may I wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year.**

2011 will see many challenges ahead for Landlords and Business Owners – and no doubt plenty of new opportunities as well.

We have filled this edition with lots of news and articles you will hopefully find of interest.

We would welcome your feedback and look forward to receiving your entries to the caption competition.

Best Wishes

*Richard*

Richard Burgess MCIM  
Director  
Cover4LetProperty  
0800 970 7172

## Occupancy Levels Rise In The Let Property Market

To follow on from an article titled 'A Change in Mindset? Or Just the Economic Way?' in our previous newsletter, we can confirm that recent studies show that occupancy levels are on the increase in the UK.

Recent studies have shown that the current economic state has had a hugely positive effect on the rental market, showing that many more people are turning to rented property. Rented properties are increasing at a rate of around 3% each year, and there are a few reasons for this.

The renting market is adapting to enable for different types of tenants and allow flexibility for these. People are also looking to buy a property later in life, and of course the recent recession has also scaled back a lot of people's plans to purchase property currently. These factors have all led to the increase in rented property, a trend that looks set to increase further in 2011.

## Cover4LetProperty – Who We Are

Cover4LetProperty is a trading style of Alan Blunden & Co. Ltd, which is based and registered in Southend-on-Sea. Alan Blunden & Co. Ltd has been operating for over 60 years in which time vast knowledge and experience has been gained in the insurance market, which we believe is demonstrated in our competitive premiums and excellent customer service.

We are extremely passionate about our Company and we work tirelessly to offer you a vast range of high quality products at competitive prices, coupled with our personal and professional service.

You have a dedicated Account Handler who is always on hand to answer any queries or questions that you have regarding your policy, and the same contact will also be there to assist you in the unfortunate occurrence of a claim.

If you have any further queries regarding this, please contact us on 0800 970 7172 where we are always happy to help.

## Caption Competition

For your chance to win £50 off of your next renewal with Cover4LetProperty, have a look at the photo below and give us a caption:

Please submit your entry by email to [sophiem@alanblunden.co.uk](mailto:sophiem@alanblunden.co.uk) or by post at our address shown in the contact information. Closing date for entry is: **1st March 2011**



# Cannabis on the Rise – How to protect your Let Property

Over the last 4-5 years, there has been a great increase in the number of homes used to grow Cannabis. The drug was recently reclassified as a Class B drug, but this hasn't stopped the increase in the number of homes now used to grow the drug.

Police have confirmed that 50 out of 58 police forces have had dealings with the drug being grown in their area, showing that this is not an issue in specific urban areas, but all over the country. What is more, 94% of cannabis operations have occurred in residential homes, which causes major concern for Residential Property Owners.

Damage from a cannabis farm can be vast, and it is not necessarily the plant that causes the damage. In one incident, a halogen light was used to heat the plant, and in turn this caused the property to set alight and damage was caused in the fire. Other damage that can be caused by the plant includes punching holes through walls and causing damage to water pipes and electric cables within the property. The average cost of repair following cannabis damage is £30,000, which shows the extent of damage that can be caused by the growing of the plant.

Any damage to this extent would obviously be a large claim if looking to be made on your

Landlords Insurance. We can advise to look out for the following to minimise the risk of this occurring when looking for a tenant:

- Query a tenant if they are looking for a short-term let of 3-6 months.
- Query if a large chunk of their rent is paid in cash.
- Query if the tenant fails to provide a reference.

There are also a few things that you as a landlord can do to help minimise the risk of damage:

- Do not accept payment in cash but instead insist on payment through a bank.
- Do not allow sub-letting in your tenancy agreement.
- Carry out regular inspections on the property.
- Vet a prospective tenant thoroughly.
- Alternatively, you can employ a letting agent who will vet the tenant and inspect the property regularly.

Cannabis farms are an increasing problem, and are a concern for anybody with Let Property Insurance. If you have any concerns regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact us at Cover4LetProperty on 0800 970 7172.

## Previous Caption Winners

Thank you to everybody who entered the last Cover4LetProperty caption contest. We were inundated with entries. Here is a quick reminder of the photo:



Our runner up was Rachel Bennett from Soham, Cambridgeshire with her entry of:

**'I said I only wanted a SMALL water feature.'**

But our winner (after a vote from our Communication team) was Lorna Bardwell from Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire with her entry:

**'This attractive residence has a waterside location.'**

Many congratulations to Mrs Bardwell, who has received her brand new Ipod Touch.

## Cover4LetProperty Interview – Tom Entwistle



### What Is LandlordZONE?

LandlordZONE is an independent website for landlords founded back in 1999. It's an invaluable source of information and help for anyone involved in letting property – from novice to experienced landlord, amateur to property professional alike.

The site provides free access to information and advice, plus suppliers of value to residential and commercial landlords, letting agents, property managers, property professionals and tenants.

The LandlordZONE Question and Answer Forum is probably the busiest Landlord & Tenant Forum in the UK with over a quarter million posts and 24,000 members to-date, answering 50 to 100 questions every day - just about every question imaginable for the landlord or tenant.

Founder and MD Tom Entwistle has over 30 years' experience managing his own residential and commercial properties. He runs LandlordZONE with a team of four and is a regular speaker at landlord shows and events. Tom said,

"Our "landlording" philosophy is one of honesty and integrity and we firmly believe, based on our own direct experience over many years, that a professional, customer oriented approach, based on study and hard work, can bring long-term wealth and prosperity to the landlord whilst providing a worthwhile service to tenants and the community.

The site is based on our own experience and the premise that successful "landlording" demands five things: (1) thorough market research, (2) careful and selective property investment, (3) a prudent approach to finance, (4) knowledge of the rules (the law) and (5) sound property management practice using the best resources available. We aim to bring together an unrivalled body of knowledge, expertise and resources on an independent, jargon-free, gizmo-free, fast efficient site."

In this regard we are very happy to have enjoyed a long-term relationship with Cover4LetProperty as LandlordZONE sponsors and providers of cost effective and reliable Landlords' Insurance

Tom Entwistle  
LandlordZONE



Winner of the 2010 Landlord & Buy-to-Let Magazine  
"Web Site of the Year" award

# Winter Weather Advice

## – How Your Let Property Can Beat The Cold This Winter

With the onset of yet another freeze, there are a few simple precautions that can be taken to ensure the continued well-being of your home, tenanted property or any other property.

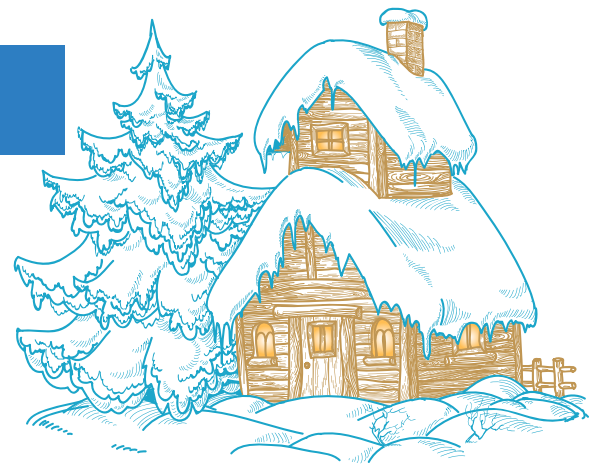
One of the largest dangers that exist during the winter weather are burst water pipes. This happens when the water freezes within the pipe, expands thus damaging it, causing an escape when the water thaws.

The following steps should be taken to ensure that the property and its contents are not seriously damaged due to an escape of water:

- Ensure that pipes and water tanks are well-lagged. Unlagged pipes are far more likely to freeze in sub-zero temperatures. Insulation materials and lagging are relatively inexpensive and will frequently cost less than the policy excess charged by your insurer in the event of a claim.
- If the property is unoccupied, even a relatively small leak if undiscovered, can cause catastrophic damage. If this is the situation, the water system can either be drained or if thermostatically controlled, the heating system should be left to operate at a minimum temperature of 15 degrees Celsius.
- If there is a gravity fed water or heating system, one vulnerable area may be the tank in the loft space. This is because the insulation on the loft floor may prevent the warmth of the house penetrating through increasing the likelihood of an escape of water. In these circumstances, if the premises are unoccupied, it is best to drain the water system. Alternatively, if the heating is left in operation, to ensure that some warmth circulates in the loft space, the loft hatch should be left open.

Depending upon the cover that has been selected at inception of your policy, a claim for escape of water may not be insured. If the property is vacant, there will also be additional conditions expressly stated within the policy or schedule that need to be complied with. If you are in any doubt as to the cover provided or action required, please contact us on 0800 970 7172.

The majority of escape of water claims are preventable so it is best to take the above simple steps and you will have one less thing to worry about this Winter.



## Largest Ever Debt Collection For Eviction Specialists



Eviction specialists Landlord Action have collected £92,000 rent arrears for one case, the largest rent recovery in their history since their set up in 1999.

Ms Vanessa Headley called Landlord Action following her attempts to get help from a solicitor failing. Her tenant had failed to pay any rent from the outset.

Landlord Action founder Paul Shamplina explains: "When the client came to us back in April the rent arrears were already over £40k and, although I confirmed I would be able to evict her tenant and regain possession of her property, I felt it unlikely we would be able to collect the money that she was owed, due to the large amount involved"

"It was at this stage we made a note of a Mercedes and an Aston Martin parked on the drive giving us cause to rethink the situation and

suggesting to Ms Headley that she used a High Court sheriff to escalate the case in an attempt to collect the monies owed. After several visits by the enforcement officers, the debtor eventually agreed to pay up, only to negate leaving the officer with no alternative but to clamp the Aston Martin and seize both cars."

The problem with rent recovery from bad tenants is an increasingly troublesome issue. We would urge you as a Landlord to take out all of the necessary tenant checks and credit and tenancy references prior to letting your property.

Landlord Action is a UK based organisation helping landlords and property professionals deal with problem tenants. They have to date acted in over 17,000 problem tenant cases. They only act on the behalf of the landlords and property companies.

# Cover4LetProperty Launches Commercial Online Quote Engine

We at Cover4LetProperty are very proud to announce the addition of Commercial Property Owners Insurance to our online quotation engine.

In the past we have been able to provide quotes manually but this new development allows you to go online via the website [www.cover4letproperty.co.uk](http://www.cover4letproperty.co.uk), type in your details and get the quote there and then.

We currently have 2 online providers of this insurance, both via Lloyd's of London. They are Equity Red Star and Novae Syndicates Ltd and both have a wealth of experience in this type of insurance.

We can provide quotes for a wide range of property types including shops, offices, restaurants and more.

Don't forget that we also have a team of experts ready to take your call on freephone **0800 9707172** and take you through every step of the process. We aim to make buying your insurance as easy and painless as possible and are committed to treating our customers fairly.



## Contact Information

### Cover4LetProperty

#### Contact Information:

Cover4LetProperty  
7th Floor, Maitland House  
Warrior Square  
Southend-On-Sea  
Essex, SS1 2NB

Team Number: 0800 9707172  
(freephone)  
Fax: 01702 600546

Email: [cover4team@alanblunden.co.uk](mailto:cover4team@alanblunden.co.uk)  
Website: [www.cover4letproperty.co.uk](http://www.cover4letproperty.co.uk)

#### Team Contact Names:

Michael Stammers – Manager  
Sophie Morris – Assistant Manager  
Catherine O' Donoghue – Account Handler  
Jecelda Allen – Account Handler  
Sarah Clarke – Account Handler  
Daniel Sullivan – Account Handler  
Tony Thorne – Account Handler

## A – Z of Let Property – D E F

### D

#### Damage

Damage happens to lots of things and is caused by the owner, natural cause or by third party. Luckily that's what we have insurance for to cover most damages caused by a number of things.

### E

#### Exclusions

Exclusions are perils or incidents that are not covered under the insurance policy that has been taken out. These may be general exclusions for the Let Property Insurance industry, for example damage as a result of terrorist activities or as a result of sonic bangs, or they may be exclusions specific to the policy that you have taken out. It is always best to check the Policy Schedule you receive for any policy exclusions.

### F

#### Frost Damage

During the winter months you need to be aware of the damage frost can cause. A big factor is the expansion effect – water turns to ice and occupies a greater volume. So please make sure your concrete or brick is not porous, this will help prevent any damage caused. Frost damage is a peril included in Let property insurance so if you have any issues with frost damage please do not hesitate to contact us.

