



Applegate Properties

New
Look

Home

Home Magazine / Issue 4

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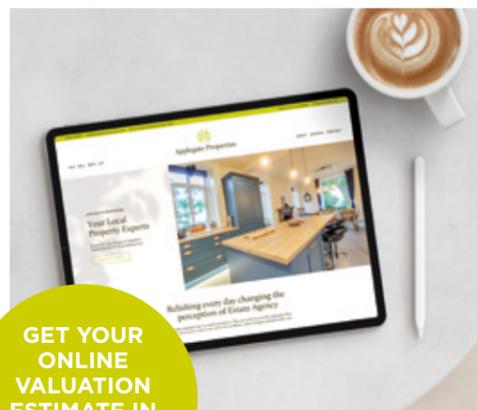
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How to Make Your House
More Sellable

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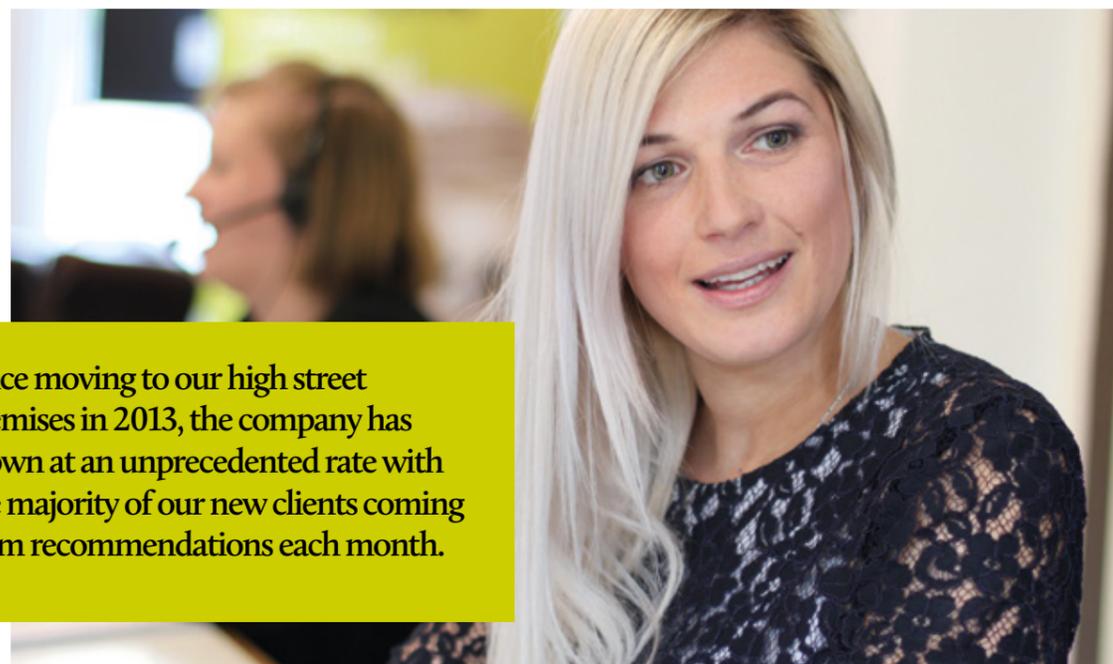
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Applegate Properties



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Since moving to our high street premises in 2013, the company has grown at an unprecedented rate with the majority of our new clients coming from recommendations each month.

Home is what you make it

Applegate Properties Managing Director, Amy Wray, introduces the new issue of Home Magazine.

Applegate Properties was born in a back bedroom back in July 2010, it was just me, Amy Wray, with a phone line, an email address and a second hand laptop. It seems like a lifetime ago that I made that decision to start my own company and to realise what had just been a dream up until that point. Today it is no longer a dream or me on my own, and more importantly, I'm no longer in the back bedroom (the team and I would definitely not fit in there now!).

Since moving to our high street premises in 2013, the company has grown at an unprecedented rate, with the majority of our new clients coming from recommendations each month which makes me incredibly proud to come to work each day.

I have tried to make the office environment a unique and fun place to be, incorporating a large shared desk, breakfasts at work, having bells that we ring when a property is sold or let and I also encourage out of work socialising and team building as well as external training programmes. It is so important to have a happy motivated team who want to come to work every day and it is what I believe makes the difference between acceptable levels of customer service and exceptional levels of customer service.

It has been hard work competing in such a competitive industry and locality. However, I have enjoyed learning

along the way and still feel just as passionate, if not more passionate, about my job. I love getting stuck-in on reception and answering the phones when I can; I still get that buzz from selling or renting a property and love solving a problem under pressure.

The awards that we have won over the past few years have been amazing and these are really down to the team of dedicated and hardworking people who I get to spend the day with, staying true to the original ideas of providing excellent customer service and setting ourselves apart from the stereotypical agent.

Above all, we would not be where we are today if our fabulous clients had not supported us every step of the way and recommended us to their friends and family; thank you so much for entrusting a newer company to deal with your properties.



AMY WRAY
(MARLA) (MNAEA)
Company Owner & Head Valuer

Editor's Letter

PHOTO » The kitchen is often seen as the 'heart of the home' so can be the most valuable room in the house.

Industry Tips

How to Make Your House More Sellable

When it comes to selling your home, you want to get the best possible price for it to put towards your next property.

So, here are some tips on how to improve your home and boost that final sale figure.

Make minor repairs

Your home may be full of tiny but necessary repairs that inevitably come along with the wear and tear of living in it. These may be minor things that you have ignored or forgotten about, but when someone views your house, everything will be put under a magnifying glass and scrutinised. So, make sure you identify anything that is damaged, cracked or broken and repair or replace it – this will help to showcase the high standard of your property, ultimately increasing the chance of the buyer being willing to pay more.

Clean

Polish and clean everything until it sparkles! You don't want a showroom, as this sometimes makes it hard for potential buyers to picture themselves living in your property. But, you can still make sure things like carpets, appliances and surfaces are gleaming. This will create an atmosphere of cleanliness and comfort, showing any viewer that you have looked after your home and taken pride in living in it.

Declutter

This links back to cleaning – decluttering doesn't mean depersonalising your home, as you still want it to have that homely, welcoming feel. Instead, get rid of any excessive, unnecessary things that you have been accumulating over time.

Prioritise the kitchen

The kitchen in any house is often the most valuable room, so spend a little time making sure this area has the wow factor. If it is a little outdated then consider refacing the cabinetry, for example – this is much cheaper than installing whole new ones, and can be effective in increasing the value of a property.



Keep it light and airy

Wall mirrors are an effective, affordable way to create the illusion of space. Ensuring your windows are clean inside and out is another great way to make rooms feel lighter and bigger, increasing the attractiveness of your property.

Don't forget the garden!

Even though a well-kept garden may not add significant value to your property, it is still a great way to invite people into your home and make it sell quicker. Gardens are sometimes the first thing that a viewer will see, so make sure the lawn, flowers and any other shrubbery are tidy and under control. Clean your patio and furniture of any dirt, so potential buyers can imagine themselves using the space for relaxation.

And finally, research suggests a prospective buyer has decided whether they are at least interested in your home within around 30 seconds – which also makes the external arrival and hallway an important area.

These are just some of the ways you can improve your property to boost its sale price. And once you have followed these easy steps, you can begin thinking about looking for your next dream home! If you are looking for some help with this, we may be just the people you need! Simply pop into our office or give us a call on 01484 682999.

Research suggests a prospective buyer has decided whether they are at least interested in your home within around 30 seconds.





Thinking about Selling Choosing the Right Estate Agent to Sell or Let Your Property

The first thing to consider when preparing to market your property is how much it might be worth, which in turn, clarifies the type of house you may be able to buy next. And, choosing the right estate agent is the key to this whole process!

So, where do you start? Here are some top tips to finding the perfect agency for you...

Create a shortlist

It's always a good idea to compile a shortlist of possible estate agents, so you're not overwhelmed with the numerous options available. You can begin by asking friends and neighbours if they have any recommendations – it's always helpful to get a personal endorsement.

Once you have a shortlist, searching online is also a good way to decide whether a company is worthy of a place on your list as you can see reviews previous clients have left. You should be able to see reviews on your agent's Google listing and Facebook as well as some dedicated agent review sites.

Once you have created a shortlist, check the Propertymark Register to ensure you are dealing with a reputable and licensed agent that undertakes regular training. All agents licensed have qualifications and meet a high criteria including being members of an ombudsman and having the correct insurances in place to safeguard you. Above all, they conform to the Estate Agent Act 1979, acting within your best interests (not their own) every step of the way; <https://www.propertymark.co.uk/#find-an-expert>

Do your homework

After creating your initial shortlist, begin to look at the potential providers in more detail. View their websites, paying close attention to the quality of the photographs, floor plans and the information that's present.

Setting up an appointment

Now that you have done your homework, you're ready to make contact with the estate agents that have remained on your list, this may just be one or two. There is so much information available online now that you don't necessarily need to see three or four agents. It may be tempting for you to simply call or email them, but you will get a much better sense of who they are by meeting face to face.

Remember, you're about to ask them to deal with possibly your most important and valuable asset, so it's crucial that you feel you can trust them.

When they arrive you'll instantly get a feel for whether they're right for you or not. How do they respond when you walk in? Are you made to feel welcome? Is it a professional and friendly environment? If you feel at ease and comfortable, they can probably jump to the top of your list! But, if you don't, it may be best to walk away. Above all, do you trust them?

How will they market your property?

Here, you need to think about where you want your property to be placed in terms of advertising. Assuming they promote properties on the internet, it's good to know which portals you want to be listed on and which ones they use. Of course, your house will be on their company website, but will it also be placed on other popular property sites? These are the types of things you should find out before deciding on one estate agent. After all, you want maximum coverage on your property to hopefully help you sell or let it as quickly as possible.

Cost

Estate agents will usually charge you a small percentage (+ VAT) of the price at which you sell or let your property. Simply choosing the lowest fee doesn't mean you will get the highest price for your property and could end up costing you more. An agent that guarantees to qualify your buyer, negotiate hard and progress your sale with the solicitors is often worth paying more. Likewise, finding a tenant with great references rather than just going with the first applicant.

Seek a valuation

Ask your agent to explain how they intend to market your house to get the best possible price. It's a common mistake that some people will choose an agency simply because they have come up with the highest price for the property. It is flattering to be told your home is worth more than anticipated, but remember, there's a lot more to successfully selling a property than putting a huge price tag on it! Seek an agency that you can trust to be up front and honest from the beginning and you will avoid being disappointed in the long run.

Help them to help you

Finally, tell them what you need! In order for you and the estate agent to work well together, you need to be clear about what you want from them. A good agent will ask you the right questions to help them determine your needs. But if you feel there's something important they should know, and it hasn't been covered, voice it!

It may be that you must sell or let your house by a certain date, but regardless of what it is, be honest about your circumstances. This will help the relationship run smoothly, knowing that all bases have been covered.

If you're looking to sell your property, take a look at what we could do for you, contact us on 01484 682999 info@applegateproperties.co.uk

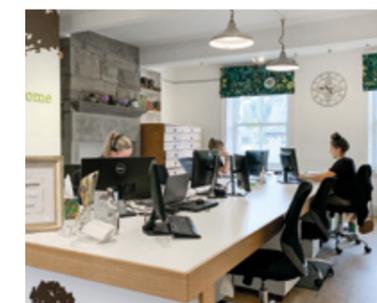


PHOTO » Top: Jimmy Carr and Amy Wray – Best Agent Award – The Negotiator Awards, London. Bottom: Applegate bespoke office – Holmfirth

Ask your agent to explain how they intend to market your house to get the best possible price. It's a common mistake that some people will choose an agency simply because they have come up with the highest price for the property.

Homes from Home



Our team relish reviewing the history of our clients & their homes

Great interviews like this also support the marketing of a property. Most purchasers love to know as much as possible.



This Victorian home is likely to have been built towards the end of the 19th Century and from the first moment our team viewed it with the current owners Colin and Kathryn, we were in love!

Officially a terrace property, this elegant home offers a living space comparable to the size of a large detached house. This has some great perks, the main one being the price tag; if this house were detached the asking price would be considerably higher. As Colin and Kathryn confirmed, the house may as well be detached as the thickness of the old walls cocoons you from its neighbouring properties.

A few minutes' walk from Holmfirth's ever-growing centre, you can be drinking fresh coffee from Bloc in a matter of moments. We revisited Kathryn and Colin to delve further into the real history of this home:

How long have you lived at number 76?

Over 35 years, we were searching for a home when we were getting married and haven't looked back since.

Why did you buy this house, what were its main draws?

We did know of these houses and they had been in our sights without any expectation that any of them might actually become available (there are only three of them), but this one did.

Victorian properties had fallen out of favour at the time but we loved its original features, which added so much character and elegance. The house also offered a tremendous amount of space for the money - as indeed it still does. We had no children then, but we saw that it would clearly make a fabulous family home, as it duly did when our family arrived. The wonderful cellars offered all sorts of possibilities with room for such things as a workshop, a gym, a games room, a music room etc.

What do you know about the history of the building?

We have been told that it was constructed around 1865 but it is more likely to have been towards the end of the 19th Century. The house is one of a row of three and we understand that the whole row was built for the three children of a local mill-owner. The houses used to inter-connect so it does appear probable that they were originally occupied by members of the same family. The fact that someone wealthy built the houses would account for their beautiful features.



Hidden away within the privacy of its gardens, many of us will have driven past this incredibly grand home without even realising what we have missed.

Which part of the house is your favourite space and why?

We would have to say the sitting room, with its splayed bay window. The room faces due South and on sunny days the light floods in through the bay window - hence the warm but cheerful decoration scheme we adopted. It's just a lovely room to spend time in, by day or at night. The view out of the bay window is lovely too.

What will you miss the most about the house when the property sells?

Well it will clearly be a wrench to leave after 35 years, having raised our children and spent many very happy times here. The dining room has been heavily used and we've particularly loved evenings around the dining table with friends and family. The house is too big for us now, although not having so much space and so many rooms for visitors might just be the single thing we'll miss most of all, although the ease of access to Holmfirth and our wonderful garden will also be contenders on the 'miss list'.

You've obviously renovated the whole house over the years, what was the biggest and toughest job?

That's difficult to say. The property was always structurally sound but it was cosmetically tatty when we bought it. Paint and wallpaper hadn't been stripped off since the house was built - about 100 years previously. The kitchen and bathroom needed replacing too (we've been here so long that they've since been done again!).

The place is in pretty good shape all round now. But I'd have to say that the biggest project was creating the rear garden after we were able to buy the plot of land behind the house. This has been Kathy's domain and she's created a fantastic garden out of what was effectively a small field. It's a lovely space in which to spend time.

What edible goodies do you grow in your garden?

All sorts! It's changed over the years but this year there are various salad crops and veggies like courgettes, cucumbers, tomatoes and beans, and always lots of herbs, plus soft fruits such as strawberries and redcurrants.

PHOTO » Victorian Residence for sale: Greenfield Road, Holmfirth. Vendors Kathryn & Colin.

Moving Home

1 in 4 house sales fall through, make sure it's not yours!

Research suggests some of these could be regularly avoided. We list some top tips to assist every seller along the way.

With the national average of house sales in England and Wales that fall through being anywhere between 20% - 30%, the team at Applegate work tirelessly to ensure our rates remain significantly below the national average wherever possible. We firmly believe the key is excellent communication.

Co-ordinating mortgage advisors, mortgage lenders, solicitors, estate agents and removal companies, and then times that by the amount of buyers and sellers in your own chain, which in most cases is at least 3-4, you have yourself a lot of people who need to work together. Using companies who answer the telephone, respond to emails and have great reviews may not always be the cheapest initial option but it can save you a lot of time and headache in the long run.

Top tip 1
Ensure your purchaser is qualified
Simply ensuring your purchaser can proceed and checking the chain below them can be the difference between problems arising or not. The Estate Agent Act 1979 stipulates that agents should verify any buyers position and ability to proceed, however, this can be missed if your agent is not qualified in recent legislation or if they do not understand the pit falls of identification not being in date and deposit amounts being in parents' bank accounts - it is essential a full qualification process takes place.

Top tip 2
Your agent should keep everyone talking
Your estate agent should take an active role in supporting the sales progression, although sadly, many feel once your solicitor

is instructed their job may be over! Your agent should contact your solicitor regularly for updates and inform relevant parties in the chain accordingly. Your agent should also update you and let you know what is going on. Your agent cannot give you predicted completion dates, however, they can speak to other estate agents in the chain and relay feedback from all other buyers and sellers so that you have a good idea where everyone is at. This is often a challenging and time consuming role for your agent, one that can not always be filled for the cheapest fee. When the housing market is buoyant, this is not always something that sellers consider when selecting an agent.

Top tip 3
Work with a team of trusted or recommended local suppliers
Your estate agent should be able to recommend a panel of solicitors and mortgage advisors, however, it is always your choice who you use. If you have existing relationships with companies already, use who you trust and have had great experiences with before. Using firms who pride themselves on customer service and updates can be the difference between your sale going through or not.

Top tip 4
Consider a local mortgage advisor to do the hard work
Many myths surround this service, one being that it is very costly, which is often not the case. Using a reputable, independent mortgage advisor to review your mortgage product can save you a significant amount of money, even if you stay with your existing provider. All advisors must disclose their charges to you

upfront, however, these are often around a few hundred pounds which will include them liaising with your lender, estate agent and even solicitor if need be. They should update you surrounding the application process, mortgage valuation and mortgage offer. This can be a huge weight off your shoulders when you are in the midst of trying to move house. Using your agents recommended advisor means they will often liaise with one another to resolve issues without even chasing you directly.

Top tip 5
Communication, communication, communication
Make sure you work with an agent who answers the telephone. If nothing else, there are likely to be times during the sales process when you just need a friendly chat or a bit of reassurance. Whilst the internet and online services are regularly used, it can be a huge relief working with an agent that has a local office you can pop into and see.

Top tip 6
Choose your removal firm as soon as you market your property
Don't let not being able to get a removal firm be the reason you cannot move on the date everyone else can! Select a removal firm early on and maintain a relationship with them as you get closer to getting a date to move. Your estate agent will be able to recommend good local firms that can assist. You should use a reputable firm that is insured to carry the relevant weights and will cover you for certain damages if necessary.



Tips

- ✓ Check the Propertymark website to find a licensed, local agent
- ✓ Check Google and Facebook reviews
- ✓ Speak at length with the agent who visits your home, ask how they will protect you

The lettings industry has faced huge Government scrutiny recently and a significant amount of legislative changes have been enforced for both landlords and estate agents. Application fees to cover tenant referencing costs have been abolished, you can no longer charge extra on a deposit for someone having a pet and deposits are capped at certain limits. Landlords must also be able to document that they issued their tenant with a number of documents at the outset of their tenancy relating to safety, their deposit and Government guidance. Landlords must also ensure they only include fair clauses within their contracts and carry out the correct identification checks and logs on all tenants. Did we mention there is a time limit on how quickly you have to issue a tenancy agreement too?

So, with all these changes and new rulings, is it even worth having a buy to let property anymore? In short, yes. However, using a reputable, Propertymark Licensed ARLA (Association of Residential Letting Agents) letting agent is the only real way to give you peace of mind.

What many landlords don't realise when they employ an agent is that a tenancy arrangement is legally between the landlord and their tenant. This means that even if their agent makes a mistake it can actually lead the landlord to be fined. If the letting agent doesn't correctly protect a tenant's deposit for example, and doesn't issue them with the correct paperwork,

in the correct timeframe, the landlord can be fined up to three times the deposit amount and not be able to gain possession of their property when required, even if the tenant is in arrears. Similar problems can arise whereby an agency sadly goes into liquidation and doesn't hold Client Money Protection insurance and adhere to client account management, the landlord can easily end up paying their tenants deposits back themselves.

Detailed logs throughout the whole of a tenancy are crucial if a landlord wishes to ever be able to use the initial deposit to cover damage within the property. Gone are the days where a few photos from when the tenant initially moved in are enough. Detailed photographic inventories with hundreds of photos, regular photographic inspections reports and phone call and email logs are all vitally important.

The legislation is, however, predominately welcomed! Many unscrupulous agents and landlords have had to change their ways or exit the market. Tenants are far more likely to stay at a property longer where their tenancy is set up and managed correctly and communication is clear. The majority of landlords actually want to protect their property investment and in turn, their tenants, and reduce high turnover and complaints.

Many unlicensed estate agents have had a steep learning curve and with the Regulation of Property Agents being proposed, it looks like many more will.

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Legislation

With increased fines, court cases & tenants' rights, is it still worth being a landlord?

With a series of significant legislative changes, safeguarding landlords has never been more important





Talking Design & Interiors

Huddersfield-born, award-winning designer James Everitt talks about design & interiors

As soon as he could put crayon to paper, the world of design fascinated Huddersfield graphic and interior designer James Everitt.

James recalls being questioned about his choice to pursue a career in the highly competitive world of graphic design, but for him it was the obvious choice.

Since meeting James over 10 years ago – when I asked him to create a logo for Applegate Properties – I have always wanted to take a sneak peek inside his home. I knew the interiors would not just be accurately set out and beautiful, but that every item would have been practically interrogated to ensure it would be dedicated to, and thoroughly enjoy, being within its allocated space.

When James launched his interior design services it was the perfect excuse for us to go behind-the-scenes to his barn conversion nestled within the Colne Valley hillside.

On arrival, it was clear to see that thought-out design really can impact not just how a home looks, but how it makes us feel – and even behave! We embraced a cup of coffee in plain porcelain whilst we received the tour from James, and eventually sat down to discuss a topic that he was clearly whole-heartedly passionate about... design!

“Practically everything has been designed,” says James, “many of us think of ‘design’ and then associate this solely with branding, logos and packaging, but furniture is designed, as are door handles, books, plates and crockery, clothes, smart phones, tablets, magazine covers, toys, flooring – and so much more!”

James is nearing the edge of the sofa, looking around the room, clearly genuinely inspired by his surroundings and it makes me question my own appreciation for many of the items I see every day in my own environment.



And now for some questions...

What have been the most exciting brands you have worked with, and will we know any?

James: Some of the most satisfying projects I've worked on are often for smaller, local firms that many people won't have heard of. I feel a huge sense of achievement having been able to make a big difference to a business – often quite quickly by working on their brand and design.

Other more well-known brands I have worked on over the years have included Adidas, Reebok, ghd, Illamasqua, Ben Shaws, Seabrook Crisps, Perspex and Vicon. But without doubt the most 'exciting' project was obviously Applegate Properties!

When did you realise you had a passion for interiors as well as graphics, or does one come with the other as standard?

James: I've always been quite a house-proud person – I think maybe it stems from watching Grand Designs and dreaming that I'd like to do that one day! I've always bought houses and done them up, and the dream of building my own home never goes away. I've had that many compliments on my home and interior style that it seemed like an obvious thing to offer it up as a service, and help other people at the same time.

Interiors are very personal, how do you manage to bespoke each design to individual clients, and what scale projects do you work on?

James: I think interiors are very personal. I have a lot of Scandinavian influence in my own home, but everyone's taste is different. If you're after chintzy or traditional, I'm probably not your man! However, that being said, there's design principles which underpin any design, scale proportion or light, to name a few. I'm a big believer in less is more – and stripping away the clutter is always a good start.

Meeting with prospective clients and asking them to show me a few images that they like online is a great way to start a mood board creation and open dialogue. I always want to create a 3D illustration of the design ideas too as it's vital the whole space works for them as an individual or family. Interior design isn't just about fabric and wall coverings, it concerns the whole living space.

Do great interiors have to cost a lot?

James: Not at all. My home is a mixture of classic design pieces, up-cycled items as well as Ikea!

Where do you get your inspiration from?

James: Pinterest is my go-to, I have boards for everything! I usually start any project with a mood board of inspiration before creating a number of layouts or ideas using SketchUp. This provides a great sense of how the space will work before committing to knocking a wall down for instance!

Visit James Everitt's website www.jecreative.co.uk and Instagram www.instagram.com/lessismore.interiors



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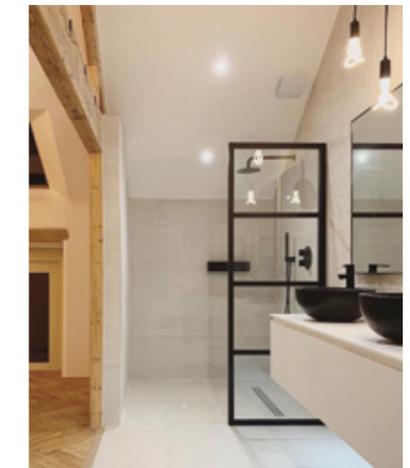




PHOTO » Property with several acres of gardens sold by Applegate Properties.



With less and less spare time, many buyers and tenants have opted for low maintenance gardens, but has the COVID-19 lockdown brought back increased demand for gardens?

The team at Applegate Properties will tell you in the immediate aftermath of the 2020 COVID-19 UK Lockdown, the demand for outside space definitely increased. High value properties were being snapped up with local buyers and previous city dwellers competing for them “just offer another £40,000” was heard from one buyer desperate to secure a property with one acre of garden!

The sales team at Applegate found any property with acreage or a large garden their top sellers. But what about rentals, did tenants also demand this large outside space? The tenant and buyer market have always been individual.

Tenants rarely want large outside spaces as a garden can actually be a significant investment. Plants, lawns, shrubs, fencing and decking all add up and if a tenant envisages moving after just a few years, the investment is not necessarily returned as it is in a property that you sell. However, so far we have seen apartments become less attractive to tenants, unless there is at least a balcony or outside sitting area. Properties with no outside space are definitely not the first choice for any tenant now and since so many of the UK’s population got to grips with digging over old flower beds and planting nasturtiums and tomatoes this could well be a trend that is here to stay.

What is certain, is that it is essential to present gardens (including old pots and outside furniture) to both tenants and buyers in their best light. Cut grass, edged borders and well kept pots all enhance the viewing experience and overall feeling as outside space is increasing in demand!

Outside space

How important is a garden to buyers & tenants?



“Our team were able to pick their phones and laptops up and work seamlessly from home, even transferring calls as though they were sat next to one another”.

Can your estate agent work remotely?

Now more than ever it is vital to ascertain whether your chosen sales or letting agent can care for your investment remotely.

The UK’s first national lockdown in 2020 was a great eye opener for the majority of businesses. As the team at Applegate Properties have been fanatical about answering every phone call since the day they opened their doors in 2010, this remained priority, as did excellent communication, including updates as the housing market rapidly entered into one of the most uncertain times it had ever faced.

Overnight, many organisations were ordered to close their doors and within a matter of days the Government had placed a ban on properties being able to complete where sales were already on-going. Vendors, buyers, landlords and tenants were thrown into panic, would they still be able to move in, sell or let? Specific and regular newsletters created by the team were sent to vendors, landlords, tenants and buyers which really did minimise worry and keep all stakeholders up to date.

Over the years the team had taken the advice of their I.T. Support company and invested significantly in various cloud software, remote servers and internet based telephone systems. In the run up to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Managing Director Amy Wray felt that the quiet streets of China could soon be here and quickly ordered several new laptops to ensure every staff member would have the full capacity to work from home, “at the time I think everyone thought I was being a bit dramatic, no one could envisage working from home, it just wasn’t done in our industry”.

No sooner had they arrived, Dell announced a significant shortage of laptops and other businesses scrambled to buy anywhere from one to several hundred laptops.

Amy had also asked her team to visit empty properties with the camera or their iPhone and create amateur videos of properties. Not the usual professional standard, but she felt this would be better than nothing and would have to do. Throughout the lockdown period, this action alone facilitated the sale of two properties and the letting of ten rental properties without a single viewing taking place.



“Our team were able to pick their phones and laptops up and work seamlessly from home, even transferring calls as though they were sat next to one another”.

Since the return to work Applegate Properties have invested in further advances meaning tenant property inspections can take place remotely, meetings can take place via video links and the telephones can be answered and transferred without a handset from anywhere as long as you have your laptop. Throughout the lockdown period, every call was answered, all maintenance works on properties were carried out when necessary and solicitors were still contacted to progress sales which meant any property sold with Applegate was at the front of the queue for completion when the doors opened – it worked!!

The companies clear communication was, is and will remain paramount to its day to day functionality and core values.

Who would have ever asked their agent in 2019 if they could work from home?



Applegate Properties

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