Hi Paul

Thank you for your email and kind comments during what has been a busy and challenging period for the team. We will continue to do our best for the residents of Repton Park.

I have in fact, written to all my staff personally thanking them as I have been very impressed by certain individuals who were more than happy to work late, and assist me when it looked like we were going into lockdown. We had to work fast and adapt to what was being asked by the government. It was slightly frustrating, as the government then changed their approach less than 24 hours later. I guess the positive from this, is that should a full lockdown be enforced by the government then we have done a lot of the hard work and got things in place.

With regards to service charge reductions, then there will be nothing at this moment in time. None of the staff have been furloughed and we continue to provide a presence on site. Due to the coronavirus, then this has led to us making some operational changes to assist staff getting into work safely. For example, giving them flexibility and avoiding peak travel times; reducing any associated risks to them and our customers. I am sure many businesses out there are doing similar things to support their employees in the workplace, and quite rightly so. I have also given them the opportunity to take some holiday if they wish.

With regards to service charge holidays, so a break in paying services charges, then we have not announced anything like this; certainly not for a 3 month period like the banks. I totally understand why residents may be concerned and we have always tried to be as accommodating as possible when it comes to paying service charge; this is within reason of course as the service charge operates on a profit and loss basis.

Previously residents were allowed payment plans to spread the cost of the service charge. In reality, this is not really permitted as the lease / freehold transfer dictates services charges should be paid in advance. This is to ensure we have enough money in the account to run the development. So paying the insurance, utility bills, contractors, staff, annual service contracts etc. This was something which were going to stop, however under the circumstances we want to help residents where possible and would consider allowing residents to spread the cost of their service charge over the said period.

I have been advised that if residents are struggling to pay the service charge due to the coronavirus, then they should email collections@firstport.co.uk. Each case will then be reviewed on an individual basis.

Should the government instruct a total lockdown which will affect the development drastically, where staff may be furloughed and removed from the development, then we would let you know.

I am logging off now as it has been a long day.

Have a nice evening and stay safe.

Kind regards

Matt