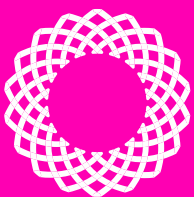




life changing solutions



Global
Guardians

www.global-guardians.co.uk



LIFE CHANGING SOLUTIONS FOR EVERYONE...

We expertly manage and maintain vacant properties, commercial and residential, whilst building sociable and socially committed communities that offer affordable city living for key workers or aspiring professionals.

This flexible lifestyle connects ordinary, responsible citizens with unique spaces that need caring for, whilst allowing them to save money in the process.

Our progressive and ethical approach saves time and money with end-to-end solutions for vacant property owners and managers.

Protect smart • Save money • Peace of mind.

*Everyone wins
with Global Guardians*

The Problem with Empty Properties:

Being responsible for one or more vacant properties can be both stressful and time consuming, and it goes without saying that the larger they are, the more problems they can potentially cause, no matter if they are commercial or residential.

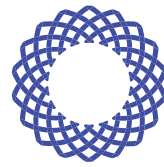
It's not just the security risk they present to the owner or asset manager – everything from squatters, criminal damage and theft, to being a venue for criminal or anti-social behaviour.

Leaving a building to stand empty for months, or even years, when there is such a shortage of affordable homes for people, especially in larger urban conurbations, can attract negative or unwanted attention or commentary to an organisation, public or private, which can impact on them in all sorts of ways. However, when it is a publicly owned property, the negative aspects can be much higher profile and attention drawing. Also, no one likes to live near or next to a long term empty building, for all the above reasons, so it is not just the wider public view to be considered, disenchanted or angry neighbours can be another issue to deal with. Everything about empty property creates work and worry.



Flytipping

Flytipping is a growing menace, a scourge on our streets and countryside and empty properties attract it. In the year to March 2017, there were 1m recorded flytipping incidents in England – the equivalent of nearly 114 every hour, and obviously many more unrecorded. That represents at least a 7% increase from the previous year and the fourth year in a row that flytipping has increased. It can cost a property owner hundreds of pounds or more to have it removed... only to find more illegal waste has replaced it as fast as it gets cleared.



Roof and gutter maintenance

Blocked gutters and missing roof tiles can lead to water incursion, damp and serious internal damage. If it all freezes, the problem gets compounded.

There are also the financial issues to consider. Although many Government owned buildings carry their own insurance, plenty don't, e.g. those belonging to local authorities or the NHS, and any sort of comprehensive insurance is extremely difficult to obtain on an empty property. Also, business rates still have to be paid, and one way or another, the building still has to be kept secure and maintained. These are all outgoings and a drain on scarce resources, and if the property sits vacant for any length of time, they can rise exponentially. Planning for new developments can sometimes get bogged down for years if there are objections from interested or aggravated parties, or the property can prove difficult to sell, depending on its location and potential.

All of this makes vacant buildings a bigger headache than occupied ones, and stress is a factor in our lives that most of us wish to diminish or avoid as it seems to come from everywhere these days... peace of mind is a much sought after commodity.



Squatters

Squatting is a risk for any empty property, even though it is illegal in residential buildings. It can cost thousands of pounds to go through the process of having illegal intruders evicted and repairing the damage they frequently cause to the property can easily double the final bill. There are no official estimates of numbers but according to homeless charity Crisis in their 2017 report¹, there were just over 12,000 incidences of squatting in 2016 across Great Britain, but this was just in non-residential buildings so the overall numbers can be assumed to be much higher.

¹ https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237582/crisis_homelessness_projections_2017.pdf



The Solution

A solution to all the above problems associated with vacant buildings is to install property guardians in the premises through an ethical and responsible company such as Global Guardians. They can turn the void into an income generator, as opposed to a drain, for as long as is necessary. The building becomes secured, the guardian company maintains it and ensures there are adequate living and domestic facilities there for its guardians; business rates liability is mitigated, insurance cover can benefit, income can be generated to offset any other financial charges and, importantly, an otherwise vacant building gets turned into a low cost accommodation opportunity so the social benefit is enormous.

But who or what are Property Guardians? Put simply, a vacant property guardian is a responsible person who occupies an empty building as a deterrent against squatting, theft, anti-social and criminal behaviour and dereliction. They are a form of house-sitter or caretaker who temporarily lives in an

unoccupied property under a Licence Agreement, until the property owner requires the building to be returned. It is important to note property guardians occupy a premises under a Licence Agreement, not an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST), which confers certain rights on tenants which can be impractical for temporary occupation.

Since at present there is no law governing the use of property guardians and their rights, unlike with an AST, there is only an industry Code of Practice to stop unscrupulous guardian companies evicting guardians from a property with very little notice and potentially rendering them homeless. This is one of the reasons why it is so important for property owners to use the services of a properly accredited and ethically responsible guardian company.

A property guardian pays a Licence Fee in order to share the living space in an empty property and their primary role is to protect an empty property either on their own or in cooperation with other guardians sharing the living space. The Licence Fee paid by property guardians is normally much lower than rents in accommodation in the surrounding area, which is what makes it an attractive option for some people, especially if they are on low incomes. Because of this, the social benefit reflects positively on the building owners as property guardianship provides much needed, affordable accommodation for working professionals looking to save on living or commuting costs, especially in expensive city locations. Property guardianship can enable key workers to live near their inner-city workplaces and is a real contribution to the provision of social/affordable housing.



Social Responsibility is now high up the agenda for all organisations

A life changing solution. That's what guardianship can be for some people. "My girlfriend and I have just about saved enough money to put down a deposit on our own flat after three years as property guardians. We'd never have been able to do that if we'd been living in an ordinary rented property with the usual outgoings. It's not just the rent, we didn't have to pay utility or other bills and we saved on commuting costs as well; as we were living so close to where we both worked, we could cycle in. It was the best thing we've ever done and we've never had to worry about moving around as Global always found us somewhere new to live every time" says one of Global's dedicated guardians. He is one of a host of young people currently struggling to get on the housing ladder in London. They have discovered some of the very positive benefits of being a property guardian with the company..

In fact Global Guardians reckoned their guardians saved some c. £12m in the equivalent of rent over the past year. That is an immense contribution to the current lack of affordable housing in London and has enabled countless people to get on the property ladder. Others have saved to buy and run a car, or go travelling, or simply to fund a new business venture or hobby. Quite a few guardians work for themselves 'at home' and really appreciate the space they often have in a vacant property... especially artists or creatives. They have room to indulge their talent, everything from making clothes to writing music or painting, something they say they wouldn't be able to afford anywhere else, paying a proper rent, or worrying about disturbing neighbours or flatmates. Global Guardians recognises that being a property guardian can aid productivity for new entrepreneurs or just by adding value to society in general.

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CASE STUDY

Alver Bank Residential Care Home Clapham, London SW4

Savings: £307,000 security and business rate savings since October 2015

Income generated: £107,000

A former residential care home for some 27 residents, owned by the Salvation Army Housing Association and originally managed by their Social Services arm, this property is just 10 minutes from Clapham Common Underground Station.

The property is immaculately presented and resides in a leafy and quiet street in the centre of a prime location in Clapham, a much sought after residential area of south west London.

Since being taken over by Global Guardians Management in the autumn of 2015, Alver Bank has been providing spacious, impeccably kept, low cost accommodation for 28 professional working people in an area where rents for

flats or houses are high due to the ease of direct and fast access into central London and the City, as well as proximity to the delightful Clapham Common open space. It is estimated rents in the area start at almost twice those of the licence fees paid by guardians in this property where their personal room space is also probably larger than that in small flats or HMOs that cost so much in Clapham, and that is without the delightful communal areas they can enjoy with other residents.

With rooms available for longer term occupation since the owners are still deciding how to make best use of the building, this entire project is a very worthwhile social endeavour enabling people to put regular savings on one side, maybe for a mortgage deposit or to run a car, fund a hobby or other interest. This of course at the same time as ensuring the entire site is kept secure, safe and free from anti-social and criminal behaviour that has bedevilled other large,



vacant properties in the area. Being such an immaculate building, with discerning neighbours, it is totally unfeasible to surround and otherwise secure it with unsightly fencing or hoardings.

This is a prime and perfect example of the new initiative by the Housing Committee of the Greater London Authority to encourage building owners to consider utilising their temporarily vacant properties in the capital for more affordable accommodation, via property guardianship through a reputable organisation, such as Global Guardians. Global Guardians are London's largest vacant property guardian company and have been a strong and supportive partner in this ongoing exercise as they believe deeply in the social element which is a natural beneficiary of their commercial business. This example is also a natural fit with the ethos of the Salvation Army and their endeavours to assist those less fortunate in all sections of society.

"This revenue share has generated over £100,000 for property owners, the Salvation Army"

As part of their contract with the property owners, Global Guardians' maintenance team keep the building and grounds immaculate and the site fits perfectly into its surroundings. Inside, the rooms are nicely decorated and furnished, clean and airy, many with their own washing or ensuite facilities. The communal rooms are also spacious with views out over the small lawned gardens, perfect for sitting in on a sunny evening or weekend. The property guardians appreciate living in such nicely furnished premises and ensure it is kept that way.

By having property guardians in situ, Alver House is kept secure from anti-social or criminal behaviour, as well as preventing theft, vandalism and other nuisances such as fly-tipping on the site. The cost of round the clock security guards or caretakers would otherwise be prohibitive and unfeasible, especially for a charity. By using property guardians, it is estimated that security costs of well over £100K p.a. are being saved, as well as reducing insurance costs and negating empty business rates since the property now requires Council Tax on behalf of its residential occupants. In addition to the savings outlined, the property owners participate in a revenue share agreement with Global Guardians who pick up the majority of the costs for the site. This revenue share has to date generated over £100,000 for the Salvation Army and their charitable outreach. William Booth would no doubt be delighted.



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