Keeping the board going: succession, handover and burnout

How to recruit and support new directors, hand over knowledge and avoid the building depending on one tired volunteer.

Many self-managed buildings run well for a few years and then falter, because the person who did most of the work moves, tires or falls out with neighbours. The building then finds that nobody else knows where the documents are, who the contractors are or what was agreed. Planning for succession is part of good governance.

Why boards struggle

- Too few people do too much of the work.
- Knowledge lives in one person's head or email.
- New directors are not welcomed or trained.
- Meetings are long and unproductive.
- Residents only get involved when something goes wrong.

Make the role manageable

Describe what a director actually does, and how many hours a month it takes. Offer defined roles with limits. Use paid help for tasks that take the most time or need specialist skills. Many people will help with a clear and limited commitment who would not accept an open-ended one.

Recruit before you need to

- Keep residents informed all year, not only at the AGM.
- Ask for volunteers for specific tasks, such as a safety lead.
- Invite interested residents to observe a meeting.
- Remind leaseholders that the building affects the value of their home.

Welcome new directors

Give each new director a handover pack:

- the lease and the articles of association;
- the latest accounts and budget;
- the contractor list and contracts;
- the insurance schedule and the safety certificates;

- the compliance calendar;
- the minutes of the last year;
- a summary of current issues.

Pair them with an experienced director for the first months.

Keep the records in one place

Store documents in a shared system that more than one person can use, with a clear folder structure. Keep a list of passwords and accounts in a safe place, and make sure it is available to the board as a whole.

Handing over when you step down

- Complete outstanding tasks, or hand them over in writing.
- Update the company registers, and tell Companies House.
- Return keys, documents and access.
- Explain any dispute, promise or ongoing issue.

Looking after each other

Directors who feel thanked and supported last longer. Share the load, keep meetings civil and say thank you. Disagreements between neighbours are a leading reason boards fail.

> Write it down. Any task that exists only in one person's head is a risk to the building.

Next steps

1. Prepare a handover pack.
2. Ask for volunteers for named roles.
3. Set up shared document storage.
4. Review the board's workload twice a year.

General information, not advice on your circumstances. Leasehold law is detailed and changes: check the current position and take advice before acting. Leasehold Clarity is provided by Leasehold Clarity Limited (company no. 16963931), with management and professional services from Murphy Thompson Moore LLP (LLP No. OC314041).