

QUANTOCK LETTINGS

LANDLORD GUIDE · 2026 EDITION

Letting your home, made simple.

A plain-English guide for landlords in Taunton and the Quantocks: getting ready to let, the rules that apply in 2026, and how we look after you and your tenants.

07918 612847 office@quantocklettings.co.uk Updated for the Renters' Rights Act

WELCOME

Thank you for thinking of us

Letting a home is a big decision, whether it's your first property or one of many. This guide explains what's involved, what the law expects of you in 2026, and how we can take as much or as little of the work off your hands as you'd like.

We're a small, local team based in Taunton. We let and manage homes across Taunton, Bridgwater, Wellington, Bishops Lydeard and the Quantock villages, and we live and work in the same communities as the landlords and tenants we look after.

Our approach is simple. We're honest about what your property will let for, we take time to find the right tenant rather than the first one, and we keep you informed without drowning you in paperwork. When something needs doing, you'll speak to someone who knows your property by name.

Renting has changed a great deal this year. The Renters' Rights Act came into force on 1 May 2026, and more changes follow in 2027 and beyond. We've written this guide so you can see exactly where you stand. If anything isn't clear, just call us.

Neil, Cheryl and Hattie

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Neil Hudson
Knows the local market inside out and has built long-standing relationships with landlords through hard work and honesty.



Cheryl Hudson
Has a lifelong interest in property, from renovating to letting, with a soft spot for rural and equestrian homes.



Hattie Rogers
Believes good service starts with understanding the person behind every let, and keeps things straightforward.

HOW WE CAN HELP

Choose the help that suits you

Some landlords want us to handle everything. Others like to stay hands-on and just need help finding a good tenant. We offer three levels of service, and you can move between them as your circumstances change.

MOST POPULAR

Fully managed

£450 to £650

set-up fee, depending on property size and number of tenants, then £50 to £120 a month

- Marketing, viewings and referencing
- Right to Rent checks
- Tenancy agreement and deposit protection
- Check-in on moving day
- Monthly rent collection and chasing arrears
- Arranging repairs, with 24-hour repair support
- Safety certificates and annual checks arranged
- Mid-term property inspections
- Rent reviews handled for you
- Ongoing compliance advice

Tenant find only

£475

one-off fee

- Marketing your property
- Arranging and attending viewings
- Referencing
- Right to Rent checks
- Tenancy agreement
- Arranging deposit protection
- Checking tenants in
- Compliance advice

After move-in, you collect the rent and look after the property and tenant yourself.

Rent collection

Price on request

ask us for a quote

- Everything in tenant find
- We collect the rent each month and pay it to you

This service doesn't include maintenance or day-to-day contact with your tenant. Ideal if you're a hands-on landlord who'd rather not chase payments.

Why landlords choose us

- A free, honest rental valuation with no obligation
- One local contact who knows you and your property
- Clear fees, with no VAT on any of our own services
- Up to date with the Renters' Rights Act, so you stay on the right side of it
- Regular inspections and clear monthly statements

Already with another agent?

Switching to us is straightforward, even with tenants in place. We'll liaise with your current agent, transfer the deposit and paperwork, check everything is compliant, and introduce ourselves to your tenants. Most handovers need very little from you.

BEFORE YOU LET

Getting your property ready

A little preparation goes a long way. Homes that are clean, safe and well presented let faster, attract better tenants and tend to stay let for longer.

Permissions to check first

- **Mortgage lender.** If the property has a residential mortgage, you'll usually need your lender's consent before letting it.
- **Freeholder or management company.** If the property is leasehold, check the lease allows letting and whether you need to tell anyone.
- **Insurance.** Standard home insurance rarely covers a let property. Tell your insurer you're letting and make sure the cover is suitable for a rented home.
- **Joint owners.** Everyone named on the title should agree to the let.

Furnished or unfurnished?

Most homes in our area let unfurnished, often with white goods and floor coverings included. If you do provide furniture, it must meet fire safety rules, and it's worth keeping everything simple, sturdy and easy to replace.

What will it let for?

We'll visit, look at the property properly and give you an honest figure based on what similar homes are actually letting for locally. Pricing correctly from the start is the single biggest factor in letting quickly. Under the new rules we must advertise a clear asking rent and can't invite bids above it, so getting the figure right matters more than ever.



Presentation checklist

- [ ] Deep clean throughout, including carpets, oven and windows
- [ ] Fresh, neutral paint where walls are marked
- [ ] Garden tidy, hedges cut, paths clear
- [ ] Repairs done: dripping taps, sticking doors, loose fittings
- [ ] All appliances working, with manuals left in the property
- [ ] Any signs of damp or mould dealt with at the source
- [ ] Personal belongings, loft and shed contents removed
- [ ] A full set of keys for each tenant, plus one for us

YOUR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Safety and legal checklist

The main legal requirements for letting a home in England. We can arrange all of them, and on our fully managed service we track every renewal date for you.

Requirement	What the law expects
Gas safety certificate Every 12 months	All gas appliances, pipes and flues checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Tenants get a copy before moving in and within 28 days of each check.
Electrical safety report (EICR) At least every 5 years	Fixed wiring inspected by a qualified electrician, with urgent faults fixed within 28 days. Tenants get a copy before moving in.
Energy Performance Certificate Valid for 10 years	Shown in adverts and given to tenants. The property must currently be rated E or above, and the government plans to raise this to C by 2030.
Smoke and CO alarms Tested at every new tenancy	A smoke alarm on every storey used as living space, and a carbon monoxide alarm in any room with a fixed fuel-burning appliance (except gas cookers). Repair promptly when reported.
Legionella risk assessment Reviewed regularly	Assess the risk from the water system and take simple steps to control it.
Furniture and furnishings When furnishing	Upholstered furniture you supply must meet fire safety standards and carry the correct labels.
Right to Rent Before every tenancy	Check every adult tenant has the right to rent in the UK, and keep copies of the evidence.
Deposit protection Within 30 days	Protect the deposit in a government-approved scheme and give the tenant the prescribed information. Deposits are capped at five weeks' rent (six if the annual rent is £50,000 or more).
A safe, decent home Ongoing	Free of serious hazards such as damp and mould, with the structure, heating and hot water kept in good repair.
Licensing Usually every 5 years	Homes shared by five or more people from two or more households need an HMO licence. We check Somerset Council's current rules for your property.
Landlord registration New, renewed yearly	Landlords must register themselves and each let property on the new government database. See page 6.

Why it matters. Councils can fine landlords up to £7,000 for many breaches, and up to £40,000 for serious or repeated ones. Tenants can also apply to get rent back, and missing paperwork can stop you regaining possession.

RENTING IN 2026

The Renters' Rights Act, in plain English

The biggest change to renting in England for over 30 years took effect on 1 May 2026. It applies to every private tenancy, including ones that started before that date. Here's what it means for you.

What changed on 1 May 2026

- **No more fixed terms.** All tenancies now roll from month to month. Tenants can leave at any time by giving two months' notice.
- **Section 21 has gone.** "No-fault" evictions have ended. To regain possession you must use a Section 8 notice and a specific legal reason, such as selling, moving in, or rent arrears. See page 10.
- **Rent reviews once a year.** Rent can only go up once a year, using a formal Section 13 notice with at least two months' warning. Tenants can ask a tribunal to check it's in line with the market.
- **No bidding wars.** Landlords and agents must advertise a clear rent and can't ask for or accept offers above it.
- **Rent in advance is limited.** You can't ask for rent before the tenancy agreement is signed, and no more than one month's rent upfront once it is.
- **Fair treatment.** It's now unlawful to refuse tenants because they have children or receive benefits. Every applicant should be judged on their own circumstances.
- **Pets.** Tenants can ask to keep a pet. You must reply within 28 days and can only refuse for a good reason, such as a lease that bans pets.
- **Written terms.** Every tenant must have the main terms of their tenancy in writing.

What's still to come

15 December 2026
The new landlord database opens, starting with the West Midlands and rolling out region by region.

15 August to 14 November 2027
Registration window for landlords in the South West, including Somerset. The fee is £65 per property each year.

Expected 2028
A new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman. All landlords will have to join, so tenants have somewhere to take complaints.

By 2030
Planned minimum energy rating of EPC C for rented homes, with a cap on what you must spend.

2035 onwards (proposed)
The Decent Homes Standard extended to private rented homes, along with firm deadlines for fixing damp, mould and other hazards ("Awaab's Law").

Good news for good landlords. If your property is safe, fairly priced and well looked after, very little changes day to day. Most tenants want to stay put, and the new rules reward landlords who keep them happy.

Dates for later stages come from government announcements as of October 2026 and may change. We'll keep you updated.

MARKETING AND REFERENCING

Finding the right tenant

Now that tenancies are open-ended, choosing the right tenant is more important than ever. We'd always rather take a few extra days to find someone who'll look after your home and stay for years.

Marketing your property

We'll write a clear, honest description, take good photographs and advertise your property on our website and the major property portals. We also contact people already registered with us who are looking for a home like yours.

Viewings

We arrange and attend every viewing, so you don't need to be there. We'll show the property at its best, answer questions and give you honest feedback afterwards. If tenants are still living there, we'll agree viewing times with them in advance.

Choosing between applicants

The law now sets clear rules for this stage. Every applicant must be considered fairly, without blanket bans on families with children or people receiving benefits. We'll talk you through each applicant's circumstances and help you make a sound, lawful decision.

Holding deposit

Once you accept an applicant, they can pay a holding deposit of up to one week's rent while references are checked. It's normally put towards their first month's rent.



Our referencing

Before anyone moves in, we carry out thorough checks on every adult tenant and any guarantor:

- ✓ Identity and Right to Rent
- ✓ Income and affordability
- ✓ Employment or other income evidence
- ✓ Credit history
- ✓ Previous landlord reference
- ✓ Guarantor checks where needed

We share the results with you before anything is signed.

STARTING THE TENANCY

Moving in day

A well-organised start sets the tone for the whole tenancy. Here's what happens between saying yes to a tenant and handing over the keys.

1. **The tenancy agreement.** We prepare a written agreement that complies with the new rules and sets out the rent, what's included and who is responsible for what. Everyone signs it before the tenancy begins.
2. **First payment.** The tenant pays the deposit and no more than one month's rent in advance. We hold these funds until the tenancy starts.
3. **Deposit protection.** We register the deposit in a government-approved scheme within 30 days and give the tenant the required information about how it's protected.
4. **Inventory and check-in.** A detailed inventory with photographs records the condition of the property and its contents on the day. The tenant checks and signs it. This is your best protection if there's a dispute at the end.
5. **Safety checks on the day.** We test the smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and record that they work.
6. **Documents for the tenant.** We give the tenant copies of the gas safety certificate, electrical report, EPC and deposit information, and keep a record that they've been received.
7. **Meters and bills.** We take meter readings and let the utility companies and Somerset Council (for council tax) know who is responsible from the start date.
8. **Keys.** The tenant collects their keys, and we keep a set for inspections and emergencies.

Keep good records

Many disputes come down to what can be proved. We keep signed copies of every document, certificate and inventory on file for the life of the tenancy and beyond.



MANAGING YOUR LET

During the tenancy

On our fully managed service, this is where we earn our fee. Our aim is a home that stays in good condition, rent that arrives on time and tenants who want to stay.

Rent and statements

We collect the rent each month and pay it into your account, less our fees, with a clear statement showing every payment and cost. Client money is always kept in a separate client account.

If the rent is late

We act quickly and politely. Most late payments are sorted with a phone call. If arrears build up, we'll talk to you about the options, which may include serving a Section 8 notice. We can also tell you about rent guarantee products that cover lost rent.

Property inspections

We visit to check the property is being looked after and to spot maintenance issues early. You'll receive a written report with photos. Tenants must be given at least 24 hours' written notice of a visit.

Rent reviews

We keep an eye on the local market and recommend a fair increase when it's due. Under the new rules the rent can go up once a year using a Section 13 notice with two months' warning. A sensible, market-level rise rarely gets challenged.

Repairs and maintenance

Tenants report problems to us, and we arrange trusted local contractors to put things right. We'll always check with you before spending above an agreed limit, except in a genuine emergency. Our 24-hour repair support means tenants have someone to call if the boiler fails on a winter night.

Damp and mould

Damp and mould is one of the most common problems in rented homes and is taken very seriously by councils. We look for it at every inspection, investigate the cause when it's reported, and recommend a lasting fix rather than a coat of paint.

Pets

Tenants can now ask to keep a pet, and you must respond within 28 days. We'll help you consider each request fairly and agree sensible conditions.

Keeping certificates up to date

We track the renewal date for every certificate and arrange renewals in good time, so your property stays compliant without you having to remember.

ENDING A TENANCY

When a tenancy ends

Most tenancies end because the tenant decides to move on. When you need the property back, the law now requires a clear reason and the correct notice. We'll guide you through it.

When your tenant leaves

Tenants can end the tenancy at any time with two months' written notice. We'll arrange a check-out, re-advertise the property straight away if you'd like to re-let, and keep the gap between tenants as short as possible.

Check-out and the deposit

At check-out we compare the property against the inventory, allowing for fair wear and tear. Where there's damage or cleaning needed, we agree deductions with you and the tenant. If they can't be agreed, the deposit scheme's free dispute service decides, based on the evidence. This is where a good inventory really pays off.

When you need the property back

Section 21 "no-fault" notices no longer exist. Instead, you serve a **Section 8 notice** on the official form, stating the legal ground you're relying on. If the tenant doesn't leave, you apply to the court for possession.

> Using a ground you don't genuinely intend to rely on can lead to a fine of up to £40,000. Always talk to us before serving a notice.

The most common grounds

Reason	Notice	Points to know
Selling the property	4 months	Not in the first 12 months of a tenancy. You can't re-let the property for 12 months afterwards.
You or a close family member moving in	4 months	Not in the first 12 months. The same 12-month restriction on re-letting applies.
Serious rent arrears	4 weeks	At least three months' rent owed when the notice is served and at the court hearing. The court must give possession.
Some arrears, or persistent late payment	4 weeks	The court decides whether possession is reasonable.
Breaking the tenancy terms	2 weeks	For example, damage or unauthorised occupants. The court decides.
Anti-social behaviour	Immediate	Serious cases can go straight to court once the notice is served.

A notice can be used to start court proceedings for up to 12 months. For most grounds, the court won't grant possession if the deposit wasn't protected properly. This table is a summary, not legal advice.

SCALE OF CHARGES

Our fees

Clear pricing with no hidden extras. No VAT is payable on any of our own services.

Service	What's included	Fee
Fully managed	Everything in tenant find, plus monthly rent collection, chasing arrears, arranging maintenance with 24-hour repair support, mid-term inspections, managing safety certificates and annual inspections, negotiating rent increases, tenancy renewals and help arranging rent guarantee insurance	£450 to £650 set-up then £50 to £120 a month
Tenant find only	Marketing, viewings, referencing, Right to Rent checks, tenancy agreement, deposit protection, check-in and compliance advice	£475 one-off
Rent collection	Everything in tenant find, plus monthly rent collection. Doesn't include maintenance or contact with the tenant about repairs	Price on request

Other charges

Item	Fee
Guaranteed rent protection scheme	On quotation
Landlord renewal agreement	£50
Additional property visit, including a digital report	£40 per visit
Section 8 or Section 13 notice, served on your behalf	£50
Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)	approx. £75
Gas safety certificate	approx. £80
Electrical safety certificate (EICR)	approx. £170
Attending court	£250 per day
Inventory and check-out	On quotation
PAT testing and Legionella risk assessment	On quotation

Prices for certificates and third-party services are approximate and may vary depending on the quotations we receive. Fees correct at November 2026.

> **A note on tenant fees.** By law, tenants can't be charged for things like referencing, check-in or tenancy paperwork. We never pass these costs on, so the fees above are the full cost of letting with us.

AT A GLANCE

Your landlord checklist

Tick these off before your tenancy starts. If you're fully managed, we'll take care of most of them for you.

Before marketing

- [ ] Mortgage lender consent, if needed
- [ ] Freeholder or lease permission, if leasehold
- [ ] Landlord insurance in place
- [ ] Valid EPC, rated E or above
- [ ] Gas safety certificate
- [ ] Electrical safety report (EICR)
- [ ] Smoke and CO alarms fitted where required
- [ ] Legionella risk assessment
- [ ] HMO or other licence, if required
- [ ] Property clean, repaired and presentable

Before the tenant moves in

- [ ] References and Right to Rent checks complete
- [ ] Tenancy agreement signed
- [ ] Deposit received and protected within 30 days
- [ ] Inventory and check-in completed
- [ ] Alarms tested on the first day
- [ ] Tenant given all certificates and deposit information
- [ ] Meter readings taken, utilities and council tax updated

Coming up

- [ ] Register on the landlord database when the South West window opens (15 August to 14 November 2027)
- [ ] Plan any energy improvements ahead of the EPC C target
- [ ] Join the landlord ombudsman when it launches

Tax and your rental income

Rental profits are taxable, and you'll usually need to report them to HMRC each year. Making Tax Digital for Income Tax now applies to landlords and sole traders with qualifying income over £50,000, and the threshold falls to £30,000 from April 2027 and £20,000 from April 2028. If you live abroad, special rules apply to how your rent is paid.

We'd always recommend speaking to an accountant about your own position. We can provide annual statements to make their job easier.



QUANTOCK LETTINGS

TALK TO US

Ready to let, or just exploring?

Book a free, no-obligation rental valuation. We'll visit, give you an honest figure and talk you through your options, with no pressure at all.

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Where we work

We're based in Taunton and cover Taunton, Bridgwater, Wellington, Bishops Lydeard, the Quantock villages and the surrounding area.

Switching agents?

We'll handle the handover with your current agent and tenants, including the deposit and paperwork, so the move is painless.



Neil Hudson



Cheryl Hudson



Hattie Rogers

Quantock Lettings Ltd. Registered in England and Wales, company number 15929562. Registered office: 1 The Crescent, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4EA.

This guide is general information about letting a home in England and reflects the law as we understand it in October 2026. It isn't legal or tax advice, and the rules continue to change, so please ask us or a qualified adviser about your own situation.