

L&F News

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**Lambert
& Foster**

PART OF THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEW YEAR

■ PETER HODGES, DIRECTOR

 After a busy summer with many auctions, sales and other projects successfully completed we are looking forward to what the new year may bring.

The following articles highlight our achievements along with interesting thoughts to the future for the property industry.

With many divisions of the firm, and offices situated throughout Kent and East Sussex it is important to understand how our various divisions, all connected, are working with one another to provide a full and professional property service.

GREEN FINGER WINNERS!

■ WILL MATHIAS, RURAL PROFESSIONAL

 The Mayfield Office have kept their fingers green this summer and have been pleased to support several local horticultural shows.

At the Mayfield Horticultural Show this summer, Will Mathias and Claire Little together with partners and families entered a couple of dozen categories and took home two trophies and various prizes as well as Will Mathias winning various prizes at the Matfield and Brenchley summer show the same day for various fruit and vegetables.

At the Laughton & District Ploughing Match, Lambert & Foster and Bloomfields also scooped a number of prizes, namely Nicola Thomas' first prize for her chutney, Beth Watts' first prize for her scones, Will Mathias' first prize for his tomatoes and third prize for plum gin and Claire Little's daughter scooping first prize in the under 7's class. We make it clear that the impartiality of the judges had nothing to do with Bloomfields sponsorship of the domestic classes!



OAST-TASTIC!

■ HELEN HUDSON, PADDOCK WOOD RESIDENTIAL

 For everyone born and raised in Kent, spotting a Kentish Oast as we travel around the county is always a heart warming sight and reminds us all of our agricultural heritage with its associated traditions and hard working ancestors who worked the land to make Britain great and put South East England on the map as the 'Garden of England'.

Here at Lambert & Foster we take great pride when another Oast comes on with us. These homes are simply oast-tastic! Full of character, history and Kentish heritage. You can see the endless potential in the buildings and land, and become an important part of ensuring these iconic buildings remain in good condition for years to come. We currently have a fantastic collection of Kentish Oasts (including those pictured above) and we would be delighted to run you through the details - please call us on 01892 832 325.

THE HISTORY OF THE OAST: The building of Oast houses or kilns started in the 1800's, following the introduction of hops as added flavouring for beer. The hops also made the beer clearer and less perishable and gave rise to the modern British drink of 'Bitter'.

The hops were grown in 'hop gardens' and grew up wire frameworks which were tended by skilled workers on stilts. Reaching maturity in August, they were harvested by hand by thousands of workers, most of whom came

from London and travelled down to Kent to stay in 'Hoppers Huts' for the duration of the picking season.

Once picked, the hops had to be dried in the Oast on the day of harvest. They were laid out on the upper floor of the Oast, a fire was lit below and air was channelled up the conical roof of the Oast and out through the distinctive wooden cowl. Maintaining the right amount of heat at the right time was a skilful job and specialist labourers called 'Oasties' were employed for the hopping season. Once dried the hops were immediately packed into sacks or 'Hop Pockets' ready for dispatch to the brewery.

At Lambert & Foster we like to think that we carry on the traditions and hard working ethics established by our predecessors. Located on our site in Paddock Wood for over 100 years we can offer a personal and dedicated service that stems from when the company first opened its doors in 1912. Get in touch with us today to see how we can help you.

SUCCESSFUL SALE OF HISTORIC VINEYARD

■ WILL MATHIAS, RURAL PROFESSIONAL

 For the budding wine connoisseurs, the Mayfield Office have agreed a sale on a small organic and biodynamic vineyard in Battle. Whilst the vineyard was quite small, it had been part of one of the UK's oldest commercial vineyards, Battle Wine Estates, whose wines were regularly supplied to Waitrose, Marks and Spencer and the National Trust.

Being small enough to be of interest to the hobby winemakers or those wishing to make a few thousand bottles annually under their own label, the vineyard generated significant interest and following the receipt of a number of offers from both locals and those further afield, a sale was agreed following the tender deadline in excess of the £65,000 guide price for the 3.8 acre site.



NEW CHURCH HALL EXTENSION APPROVED

■ TIM DUNCAN, DIRECTOR

 Lambert & Foster were instructed to advise the Church Hall Committee about seeking planning permission for a replacement church hall at St Peter's Church in Greatstone.

On site they had a timber frame church hall that was nearing the end of its life span. This was located on a large plot, and the strategy was to obtain planning permission for 2 No. infill building plots and construct an extension to the Church which would provide the new Church Hall facilities for St Peter's Church.

After lengthy pre-application negotiations with Shepway Council and the preparation of a detailed planning application, we are pleased to say that planning permission has now been granted for the two new dwellings and the Church Hall extension. Currently, the Committee are in negotiations with a local developer/builder to build the new Church Hall extension in order to provide much needed updated facilities for the Church in Greatstone.

SALES & LETTINGS COLLABORATION

■ STEPHANIE STIRMAN, LETTINGS MANAGER

 The collaborative approach between sales and lettings is another benefit that clients can take advantage of at Lambert & Foster. We have recently experienced an increase in the letting of larger properties. This extending portfolio is encouraging for the lettings industry and we are utilising our strong position of synergy by successfully letting out the Lambert & Foster residential team's buy-to-let properties.

Whether you have a small or large property, letting may be the solution for you. Please get in touch with us to see how we can help.

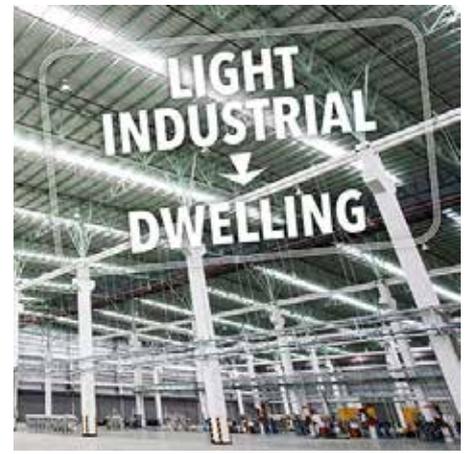
THE MOMENT YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR IS HERE - AND IT'S ALSO APPLICABLE IN THE AONB!

■ TOM OGDEN, BLOOMFIELDS

 Many would have seen Bloomfields advertising the latest permitted development rights which can, in many circumstances, allow light industrial buildings to be changed to houses without the need to submit full planning applications.

If you have a building which was being used for a light industrial purpose on 19 March 2014 or was last used for a light industrial purpose before this date then you may be able to utilise these new rights to maximise the value of your property.

Like many of the existing permitted development rights certain criteria have to be satisfied before any change of use can occur. Address these matters correctly and you could find yourself benefiting hugely, address them wrongly and you could prejudice your ability to release the full potential of your asset now and in the future. Contact Bloomfields on 01892 831 600 to see how they can assist you.



THE NEW AGE

■ CLAIRE LITTLE, MAYFIELD RESIDENTIAL

 I was recently interviewed by a reputable firm of solicitors on whether traditional estate agencies can continue to thrive in the brave new online world. They were interested in gaining professional opinions on what the traditional High Street agencies thought about the appearance of the online estate agents.

Solicitors have also experienced a similar issue with the rise of online conveyancing services so it was interesting to compare thoughts on the matter.

Change is necessary and unavoidable, however, it is imperative when offering a professional service that all clients are accounted for. The demographic of the younger clients and buyers may well feel comfortable booking viewings and submitting offers online, but for many, the face to face contact is reassuring and a must. At Lambert & Foster we still have a large number of clients that do not have access, or do not want to have the faceless interaction that occurs through the screen of a computer. At 35 years old, I always prefer to pick up the phone or speak in-person, rather than send an email. As agents we are often dealing with delicate matters that can be easily misinterpreted by emails and texts.

The driving force behind choosing an online agent seems to be the cost. Although there are "optional extras" the fee tends to be in the region of £100's rather than £1000's. I personally find it quite disconcerting that people will entrust one of their most



valuable assets to the hands of what is basically a marketing company.

Many a time have I heard that "good properties sell themselves". As much as I wish this was true, it is indeed far from. The amount of time, effort and sometimes blood, sweat and tears that go into selling and progressing the sale through to completion is something not to be underestimated. Feedback from both solicitors and agents is that, if there is an online agent involved in the chain it is easier to bypass them completely as you will never receive any help, progression or updates.

To conclude, I strongly believe that the traditional agencies can not only survive, but thrive in this new age. The firm I spoke to said that if clients used an online conveyance firm, it was only ever once. I don't believe there is a substitute for agents with local knowledge, experience and professionalism. We benefit from also being a firm of chartered surveyors and there are virtually no property related matters that we can't deal with. Upon the publication of this article, it is my understanding that the online agencies that were contacted for an unbiased interview were yet to respond.

FARMS AND LAND

■ ALAN MUMMERY, DIRECTOR



2017 has seen an increased volume of land sold by our farms and land department.

Our major sales in the first half of 2017 have seen several significant properties sold privately without the need for a full marketing programme. Working with vendors, who have initially wanted to explore selling to neighbours, we have secured several million pounds worth of sales very discreetly. We have also had some high profile sales including our very successful Rural Property Auctions in March and May. Both of these sales included some interesting probate sales.



Development land and barn sales have flourished with regular instructions secured from successful planning projects from the Bloomfields planning team. Notable examples of this great teamwork include the 4,400 sq.ft Green Barn in Horsmonden sold in excess of the £420,000 price tag, and two modern barns at Brent Orchards, Upchurch, where 10 acres and two buildings have released nearly £600,000 for a retiring client.

New instructions are always welcomed. Please get in touch with Alan Mummery at the Paddock Wood office.

IMPROVEMENT OF HIGH STREET OFFICES

■ CARL BLACKFORD, BUILDING SURVEYING



Following the approval of planning permission, we were instructed by an existing client to progress the approved works to their property. We were employed to provide a full package which included: obtaining Building Control approval, producing detailed working drawings, preparing a specification of works, receiving competitive tenders and overseeing the works as a Project Manager under a JCT Contract. The client had a tight deadline which we were able to meet in spite of having to deal with a few unexpected "surprises" along the way.

The project involved working alongside existing tenants of the building, one of whom



had a re-occupation date that had to be met, as well as overseeing the works on behalf of the owner. This was successfully achieved and handover was carried out on the agreed date. As the premises were within a High Street location extra consideration had to be given to the health and safety of the general public.

The new flat and office were stripped back and all new fixtures and fittings installed, including a full rewire and individual heating systems, as well as bringing the thermal efficiency of the building up to current standards. This has dramatically reduced the carbon emission and increased the energy rating of both flat and office refurbishment to well over the existing rating. Both units were let prior to works being completed, so a good result all round!



STRONG DEMAND FOR NEW HOMES WITHIN THE CRANBROOK SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA

■ ANTONIA MATTINSON, CRANBROOK RESIDENTIAL



The Lambert & Foster team at Cranbrook are pleased to be offering for sale Badgers Mews, a quality new development comprising two pairs of three bedroom semi detached houses (Plots 8 and 9 have already completed), four two bedroom apartments and a second floor penthouse. With the benefit of the Help to Buy Scheme these apartments can be purchased with a £12,750 deposit making them an attractive proposition.

Within the development is allocated parking, a wildlife conservation area and communal cycle and bin storage areas. Plots 1 and 2 ground floor apartments both have an area of private patio garden. The properties have been built sympathetic to the traditional Wealden architecture with a mixture of brick, tile hung and weather boarded

elevations. Antonia says "features include traditional style cottage kitchen/dining rooms with integral appliances, bi-fold doors are fitted to the semi detached houses. Interest has been received from a range of buyers, from young professionals, retired persons and investors. A particular feature of the development is its convenient position within the town being walking distance of the historic High Street and the comprehensive amenities available".

The developer, DBS Building Group Ltd, has specialised predominantly in building prime homes in Greater London and this has been reflected in buyer's feedback, the quality of finish and proportions of rooms. Apartment prices start at £255,000.

To arrange a viewing please contact the team at Cranbrook on 01580 712888 or email cranbrook@lambertandfoster.co.uk

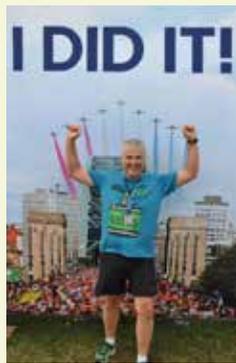
SPORTING UPDATE



SPONSORS OF THE 2018 PADDOCK WOOD 1/2 MARATHON

Lambert & Foster have been in Paddock Wood for more than 100 years and are proud to be sponsoring the 2018 Paddock Wood Half Marathon. Look out for our very own Lambert & Foster team running on the day!

The half marathon will be held on Sunday 8th April 2018 at 9.30am. If you would like to sign up you can do so at www.paddockwoodhalfmarathon.co.uk



Continuing the running theme, Director Alan Mummery recently completed the Great North Run half marathon raising £325.00 for Demelza House Children's Hospice.

■ ALEC COX, DIRECTOR



Lambert & Foster sees yet more similarities between the Brexit talks and property negotiation. Every negotiation begins with conflict of some sort - different points of view where both sides have strong and seemingly entrenched initial opinions about what each wants. This is the argument stage.

But negotiations can't proceed if both parties don't move from those entrenched positions. Deadlock has to be broken otherwise neither party can proceed to any sort of end, never mind an agreeable one. This means one side has to take the plunge and be the first to make a proposal - to show that they are prepared to soften on their original stated position. This is not weakness. It is strength. It is clever. It is part of the negotiating process, for without a proposal there is stand off.

Theresa May has just made this first move in the Brexit negotiations. After months of squabbling and posturing on both sides of the channel the British prime minister made a proposal during a speech given in Florence. Any decent negotiator knows that they should reward a reasonable proposal with, at least, a reasonable counter proposal. What will the European Union negotiators do next? Will they stay in the argue stage and stall the negotiation further? Or will they do the smart thing and signal that, they too, are ready to make reasonable concessions which will help kick start the constructive stage of the process?

Property negotiation is just the same. Without concessions there is no progress. Skilled and experienced negotiators

understand this. They understand how to read the negotiation road map. Which is why employing an experienced negotiator in the form of a talented estate agent is so important.

The secret to good negotiating is in understanding when to argue and when to make a proposal. For house buyers the final quarter of 2017 may be precisely the right time to make a strong proposal. So far the property market has had a slow year. This we can really put down to higher property taxes, the general election and Brexit. We certainly can't put it down to employment and mortgage interest rates.

It may be too soon to call, but there are certain signs that we are approaching, or may even have reached, the bottom of the market cycle. Knowing when to make a move is always difficult. But one thing is certain those people who think they will wait until after the Brexit negotiations are over may well be too late - all the good deals will have been done by people who understand that making a reasonable proposal early is better than reacting when it is too late. The Brexit negotiators should also bear this in mind as they enter the next round of talks this autumn.



COULD YEARS OF FARM DIVERSIFICATION LEAD TO BROWNFIELD LAND OPPORTUNITIES?

■ SAM FINNIS, BLOOMFIELDS



Many of you may have already heard that the Government is currently seeking to maximise the number of new homes built on suitable brownfield land and has set out its intention to ensure that 90% of suitable brownfield sites have planning permission for housing by 2020.

A new requirement, through the Housing and Planning Act (2016), has been placed on local planning authorities to prepare, maintain and publish a register of

brownfield land (also known as previously developed land) which the Council has assessed as being potentially suitable for residential development.

The register must be published by 31 December 2017 and reviewed at least once a year. The register will then be used to monitor the Government's commitment to the delivery of brownfield sites.

Agricultural buildings and land do not currently fall under the criteria of previously developed land. However, those who have diversified over time and



who now include other commercial uses at their sites may yet be considered as suitable.

As a result, many sites in the countryside could be viewed more favourably in the forthcoming reviews and emergence of Local Plans with many sites outweighing any potential harm.

Should you wish to enquire about the potential of your site please contact us.

PROPERTY PROFESSIONALS FOR OVER 100 YEARS

lambertandfoster.co.uk

PADDOCK WOOD 01892 832 325

77 Commercial Road, Paddock Wood,
Kent TN12 6DS

MAYFIELD 01435 873 999

The Estate Office, High Street, Mayfield,
E. Sussex TN20 6AE

CRANBROOK 01580 712 888

Weald Office, 39 High Street, Cranbrook,
Kent TN17 3DN