

L&F News

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Lambert & Foster

PART OF THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE

Another successful year at L&F

■ PETER HODGES, PARTNER



It has been a busy 2016 with many auctions, sales and other projects completed and we are looking forward to what 2017 will bring.

If you have visited Paddock Wood recently you will have seen our brand new signs at our auction site and our office. They bring a welcome fresh new look and our office now stands proudly along the high street.

The interior is also going through a refurbishment which we hope to have completed in early 2017. Pop in and see us soon!

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.

Welcome Helen!

We are very pleased to welcome Helen Hudson to the Paddock Wood residential sales team.

Helen says "Teamwork is what estate agency is all about and I am delighted to have joined the Lambert & Foster team."

"I have worked in estate agency for 17 years, starting in North East Scotland and then returning home to Kent five years ago. It is a career I thoroughly enjoy, helping people to find their 'dream home', guiding them through the conveyancing process and then handing their keys to them on completion day. After all these years it still gives me enormous pleasure every time. Apart from houses, my other passion is 'la belle France' where I visit whenever possible to indulge in the wonderful food, wine and countryside."

We are sure you will join us in welcoming Helen Hudson to the team!



A year in the making...

The advantages of instructing a professional firm with a range of disciplines at their disposal came to the fore when the Whapham family engaged Lambert & Foster to sell their 105 acre beautiful traditional Wealden farm comprising a farmhouse, cottage, buildings and 105 acres.



■ ALEC COX, PARTNER & ALAN MUMMERY, PARTNER



The sale was a classic example of how Lambert & Foster were able to maximise all aspects of the property to achieve the best possible overall price. Agricultural Partner Alan Mummery quickly identified residential potential in the agricultural buildings. Through our Chartered Town Planners, Bloomfields, a Class Q Prior Approval for the change of use to residential for the former farm office and neighbouring agricultural building was obtained.

Offered for sale by Private Treaty, as a separate lot, healthy interest was generated and suitable, ready, willing and able buyers were found for both buildings. Residential Agency Partner Alec Cox and his team at Cranbrook were actively involved with the promotion, accompanied viewings and negotiations of offers. 1 Frogs Hole Cottage comfortably exceeded its guide price generating interest from multiple buyers with best and final offers being invited at the end of a set marketing period.

The farmhouse, which was subject to an Agricultural Occupancy Condition, offered for sale with 105 organically certified acres also generated a good level of enquiries with the eventual sale going to a local buyer. Prior to the spring launch of this year, Lambert & Foster spent the previous 6 months getting the property ready for sale and obtaining the relevant planning consents.

The sale culminated in our firm organising the on site dispersal sale of the farm machinery, which was conducted in September and enjoyed a similar success. Lambert & Foster were fully involved from the embryonic stage to completion, fully utilising the specialist departments and services our firm has to offer.

Neighbourhood planning bill

■ BETH WATTS, BLOOMFIELDS



2016 has been an exciting year for planning, with an extensive amount of planning legislation and reform. In September, the Government released the Neighbourhood Planning Bill 2016-17, which is currently being considered through Parliament. The bill is good news for planning; the measures in the bill offer the opportunity for more housebuilding and provide more of a say at a local level for development.

Given the Government's drive to provide more housing, the bill will pave the way for additional housing in areas where local people need it. The bill also offers opportunities to streamline the planning system in terms of planning conditions, the planning register as well as the neighbourhood plan process. Stay tuned to find out if the bill is written into legislation; 2017 will be another exciting year for planning.

Land under the hammer

■ ALAN MUMMERY, PARTNER



Lambert & Foster's October Rural Property Auction achieved sales of 10 of the 11 properties catalogued with exceptional interest from potential buyers throughout. A mixed and varied catalogue of mainly land lots throughout Kent created a huge number of pre-sale enquiries.

Full results are available on the Lambert & Foster website, but notable sales were the sale of the Grade II Listed Farmhouse at Boughton Monchelsea, selling after the auction in the region of £500,000. An excellent fruit farm at Newington near Sittingbourne, totalling 49 acres selling prior to auction in excess of the guide price of £500,000. Amongst the smaller lots 1.6 acres of land in Staplehurst sold significantly above the guide price of £40,000. Good interest was created in a number of lots in the Dover area which included 19 acres of conservation woodland which sold for £80,000.

**NEXT AUCTION
MARCH 2017**

For a no obligation appraisal contact Alan Mummery at our Paddock Wood Office on 01892 832325.

The best approach

■ CLAIRE LITTLE, MAYFIELD RESIDENTIAL



I am often asked what a guide price means and if it is achievable. With three homes selling in the last month at the prices they have been marketed at, the answer has most definitely been yes! In the second half of the year we have found that over inflated values have not been supported. Lenders are becoming increasingly keen eyed when it comes to property and will not think twice about a down valuation if they deem it to be too expensive.

With a combination of years of knowledge in the property market as well as extensive knowledge locally, we have hopefully managed to counteract a risk of a down valuation by pricing property correctly. Our aim is to do the best we can for our client, which means not having their home sitting on the market for months with no viewings. If you would like an honest, impartial opinion as to what your house could be worth then give the Mayfield Office a call. We would love to hear from you as we have nearly sold all our houses!



Property professionals for over 100 years

Award success for Bloomfields' client - AC Goatham & Son



Huge congratulations go to our client AC Goatham & Son who picked up the top prize of Overall Winner at the 2016 prestigious Medway Business Awards



AC GOATHAM DIRECTORS ROSS GOATHAM (LEFT) AND HIS FATHER CLIVE. PHOTOS BY MEDWAY BUSINESS AWARDS.

AC Goatham & Son, a family-run fruit grower which supplies supermarkets with apples and pears, has an extensive new packhouse at Flanders Farm in Hoo, which Bloomfields obtained planning permission for. They were among 12 finalists to be commended at the ceremony held at the Priestfield Stadium in Gillingham.

They were delighted to be chosen as the 2016 overall winner and made their win that extra bit special by donating the £1,000 winner's cheque to the awards' charity - the Oliver Fisher Special Care Baby Unit at Medway Maritime Hospital.

Our very own Nick Brandreth and Tom Ogden (both pictured above) were absolutely thrilled to be there to see them collect their award. May the success of worthy winners AC Goatham & Son continue into 2017!

Homes using permitted development rights

■ TOM OGDEN, BLOOMFIELDS



On the 15 November the Government confirmed that nearly 190,000 units were added to the country's housing stock in the last financial year. This was an increase from the previous year by 11%. Of this, just short of 14,000 homes were provided using permitted development rights. Not an insignificant amount considering this is based on completions, not permissions obtained. Bloomfields continue their success in using permitted development rights to convert offices, agricultural, and storage buildings to dwellings and these continue to sell well through Lambert & Foster's sales and auction team. Although the system is not as streamline as one might have hoped with Council's taking conflicting views on different matters, it appears this is still a much quicker and cheaper way of releasing value in your property.


We look forward to the year ahead and the potential to help people convert their industrial buildings to residential units under permitted development rights.



RICS UK Residential Market Survey



■ CLAIRE LITTLE, MAYFIELD RESIDENTIAL


 The RICS reported a modest improvement with confidence gradually recovering in their October UK Residential Market Survey. Buyer demand has modestly increased for the second consecutive month which in turn is edging up the number of sales nationally.

The outlook for price growth in London is more subdued than any other area. Surveyors in the South East have been reporting that properties above £1m are proving much harder to sell quite probably due to stamp duty implications. Top values for property are seeming harder to achieve and a shortage of instructions seems prevalent especially in the Buy to Let and investment sector.

In the lettings market, demand is outstripping supply in all areas other than London. The demand from tenants for property picked up firmly in the three months running up to October compared to the previous. Let's watch this space and see what the New Year brings...

Five year housing land supply

■ SAM FINNIS, BLOOMFIELDS

 Through our continued monitoring of local authorities, it remains the case that despite an increasing level of housing completions, many Councils in the South East still cannot demonstrate the five-year land supply required by the National Planning Policy Framework. This leaves planning policies relating to housing in a state of flux and puts the balance in favour of sustainable development.

Using our knowledge and expertise we have obtained a number of permissions for the creation of housing. See our website case studies for success stories relating to new residential housing development.

The importance of the letter 'E'...

■ KATIE HURLEY, ASSOCIATE PARTNER



There has been a lot of discussion over the past year and a half regarding the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) and their impact on let commercial and residential property. March 2015 saw the introduction of MEES through the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 which originates from the Energy Act 2011. The MEES will be set to an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of 'E'. The proposed time frame from which these regulations will be enforced is; 1st April 2018 for new leases (including renewals, extensions and overriding leases) for both commercial and residential property, the 1st April 2020 for all privately rented residential property (including where a lease is already in place) and 1st April 2023 for all privately rented commercial property including where a lease is already in place.

The MEES not only affects landlords of such properties but also developers, investors and lenders. There are some cases where buildings maybe exempt. Lambert & Foster are on a number of bank panels for providing valuations for secured lending purposes and in a recent request to provide a valuation, we were asked to specifically include within the report a commentary on the impact of the MEES regulations on market value/market rent and costs associated with improvements to improve the EPC rating if it does not meet the minimum standard. Whilst you may be thinking that 2018 is some time off, if you are looking to use the building as potential security for the bank, it would be worth looking at the building's EPC and whether it would meet MEES sooner rather than later. If the EPC rating is F or G it may be prudent to carry out the necessary improvements prior to contacting the bank manager. Whilst it is thought unlikely that a bank would refuse to lend against a building that did not meet the MEES it could result in a lower value being apportioned to the building and time delays with the loan arrangement.



To conserve and enhance

■ TOM OGDEN, BLOOMFIELDS



At the beginning of the year Anna Bloomfield, the founder of Bloomfields Chartered Town Planners, stepped into retirement (of sorts!) having built a most reputable company priding itself on professionalism, integrity and approachability.

Of course it goes without saying that Anna's daily presence in the office is missed. However, much like the A.O.N.B can be conserved and enhanced to everyone's benefit whilst accommodating change, so too can Bloomfields.

It was a privilege this financial year to welcome Gary Mickelborough to the team of Directors and it is clear to all, he has a most technical planning mind. Amongst his other skills, I firmly believe, as do many others, that he is the leading local (I would argue national) expert in the analysis of permitted development rights to achieve houses.

As many of you will also know, the team was strengthened in the summer by Sam Finnis, a Chartered Town Planner who has worked in four local authorities including Eastbourne, Rother, Tunbridge Wells and most recently, Wealden.

Meanwhile, Beth Watts, who has worked in private planning practice for 8 years, has embarked on extra curricular activities to become an Associate Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, whilst Rob Adley one of the technical drawing assistants has enrolled in further education to obtain an HNC in Construction.

I think it is safe to say that we plan on building on Anna's reputation. Whilst knowing what I do from my "pre-application" discussions with Anna, she won't be objecting to this case, despite the material change in circumstances.

Football Update (not quite Premier League!)



Lambert & Foster enjoyed a thoroughly energetic game of football at Hawkenbury Astroturf against solicitors Thomson Snell & Passmore. Unfortunately we did not do too well on the goal front but all our men (and woman) made a valiant effort and we are all winners in our hearts!

Well done to the team; Ben Brandreth, Alan Mummery, Alec Cox, Jon Booth, Carl Blackford, Ross Banes, Sam Finnis, James Little and Beth Watts. And thank you to our loyal supporters including Beth's family, Will Mathias and Claire Little (who provided much needed refreshments at half time!) We are looking forward to our next match and most of all, having Gary Mickelborough back!

From the Council to Bloomfields

■ SAM FINNIS, BLOOMFIELDS



As many of us are aware the planning system is becoming increasingly complicated, is full of jargon and includes many traps for the inexperienced. As a former planning officer with 15 years' experience of working within local authorities in the South East I have gained valuable knowledge and a broad ability in negotiating the snares within the planning process. I have found this knowledge particularly useful in offering advice to colleagues and clients.

My familiarity with the public sector has helped me to appreciate that the main concerns for officers at local authorities when dealing with submissions, is the provision of adequate detail and clarity. I believe the key to submitting successful schemes lies with not only identifying key issues to each situation and building a robust case, but also in providing clear advice and reasoning to clients and local authorities. Making sure everybody understands the positives and comprehends the challenges is crucial in the successful outcome of any submission.

Lambert & Foster and Bloomfields are proud to be sponsoring the Young Leaders at Marden Hockey Club

■ TIM DUNCAN, PARTNER



We are always happy to help the local community where we can and our latest endeavour is with the Young Leaders at Marden Hockey Club. Seen below sporting their brand new hoodies, they are a credit to the hockey club and we are looking forward to seeing them develop within their roles.



Public rights of way

■ WILL MATHIAS, RURAL PROFESSIONAL



The definitive map is a legal document that must be produced and kept up to date by every county council or unitary authority showing rights of ways open to the public. Most landowners are understandably reluctant to ever grant any new public rights of way over their land unless there is a very good reason for doing so.

However, there are various ways that members of the public might try and claim rights of way over private land and it is often down to the landowner to rebut any such claims to rights of way. One such way that landowners can help to prevent their land being dedicated as a public highway on the definitive map on the basis of presumed dedication is by making a statement and declaration under Section 31(6) of the Highways Act 1980 and lodging it with the appropriate unitary authority. This needs to be completed accurately and every 20 years to have effect.



Basic Payment Scheme update

■ WILL MATHIAS, RURAL PROFESSIONAL



With many farmers still waiting for reconciliation payments from the RPA for their 2015 BPS payments, it is difficult to force oneself to look towards 2016 BPS payments with any great optimism regarding accuracy of payments. The RPA have stated that they are committed to making 90% of payments in full between 1st December 2016 and 31st December 2016. Whether or not this will happen remains to be seen.

The good news however is that with the pound falling against the Euro, the amount of money that will be paid for BPS 2016 is expected to be significantly higher than in 2015. With an exchange rate of €1 = £0.85 (compared to €1 = £0.73 in 2015) this is good news for farmers and should mean that those in the south east will receive payments of approximately £215 per hectare.

With concerns over Brexit looming, we have yet to see what the Government intends to do in the long term, but direct subsidies have been confirmed to be secured until at least 2020, even if we have left the EU by then.

Property professionals for over 100 years

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