

Rural Vision

Preparation is the Key to Letting Success

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Property Auctions Slowdown	3	The need to present your property well should not be underestimated and spending money in the right places makes a difference, as you can demand a higher rent and tenants are more minded to look after the property. When decorating your property it is important to consider the type of tenant you want and this can alter your decision on the style of a property although the following checklist is a minimum guide for preparing your property: ensure the property looks presentable, clean gardens, no rubbish bins, supply tenants with gardening tools and keep driveways and paths clean and maintained. Internally a neutral colour of paint is preferable throughout together with good fixtures and fittings and a good solid modern
Permitted Development	3	Once you have presented your property you should consider your tenancy type and situation. Many modern tenancies are Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST's) and these are normally let out on either a 6 or 12 month agreements. As a landlord you should consider your responsibilities by law and should take advice on the satisfaction of the following areas: Housing Health and Safety Rating, Gas Safety installations Act 1988, Tenancy Deposits, Smoke Detectors Act 1991, Furniture & Furnishings Fire Safety Regulations, electrical equipment safety regulations 1994, together with the preparation of a detailed inventory with photographs and undertaking of a suitable insurance policy.
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kitchen, bathroom, shower, hard wearing carpets, floors and a reliable central heating system are essential, although many properties are let unfurnished it is important to consider essential items such as a cooker.

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“Spending Money in the right places makes a difference”

Cross Compliance & ELS Update/Checks

Hedgerow cutting still permitted - (GAEC 15)

Remember to maintain footpaths (GAEC 8)

Remember to Complete Soil Management Reviews (GAEC 1)

Field Operations remember (GAEC 3 & GAEC 14)

Remember NVZ'S Closed application period (SMR 4)

ELS - Ditch management no cutting of vegetation (EB6)



“ Looking for A Room with A view”

If you go down to the Woods Today....

As outdoor learning becomes increasingly important with the introduction of such schemes as Learning Outside the Classroom the forestry commission is continuing to promote woodland education helping support both new and existing Forest Schools. Expanding on its online resources for learning such as the tree name trails and climate change the forestry commission have already supported woodland schemes in the west midlands and east of England through the forest education initiative and woodland improvement grant. If you are thinking of creating a woodland school then contact the forestry commission to see if grant funding is available to support your scheme.



“Thinking of creating a woodland school”



Looking at starting a Farm Shop?

A farm shop is a frequent site now in the countryside although the introduction of a farm shop into your business can still be a great income generator. With the introduction of many farmers markets, government initiatives for less reliance on the motor vehicle, greater health benefits, fewer food miles and affordable food to name a few farm shops are still very much in demand.

Farm shops can be opened in many buildings and can range greatly in size and layout dependant upon your budget. When considering your farm shop it is important to consider who your target customers are, your range and any other services you may offer, your services should also reflect your location. Specific advise on your shop layout and services can be obtained through FARMA.

Once you have decided on the type of shop you plan to offer you should consider any competitors and planning permissions. If you are locating your farm shop within your



“It is important to consider your market and what customers want”

be a change of use application or a new build and consideration should be given to your proposed location and the amount of home grown produce as this can have an impact on whether planning consent is needed, and if so you should also consider possible restrictions/conditions and any designations and environmental features around your holding, including the projects impact on the local highway network and how vehicles should access, leave and park safely within the site.

It is important to undertake your market research so that you know what you are taking on, and are prepared when you are ready to open. Following a marketing and budgeting plan is essential and consideration should also be given to business rates, competitors range, level and availability of goods, together with customer service to ensure repeat custom takes place.

Farm shops can be profitable if they are run correctly and it is important to talk to your customers, keep up to date with legislation and changes, offer card payment options and if applicable online services.

If your thinking of starting a farm shop, talk to us or alternatively contact FARMA.



Top Tips to consider

- Suitable Location
- Market Research
- Highways
- Layout & Design
- Car Parking
- Designations
- Planning Permission
- Marketing Plan
- Access for all
- Planning Conditions
- Range of Produce
- Competitors
- Business Rates
- Local produce

SPS Announcements

Following our last article a decision has now been made to include growers of permanent fruit and vegetable crops including commercial orchards, Nursery Crops and Vines. For eligible growers entitlements can be established by contacting the Rural Payments Agency and to register your interest and we would urge you to contact us or visit Note 2 by visiting www.rpa.gov.uk for further information



Set Aside Plans

Whilst the future of Set-aside is still being debated for the 2009 scheme year it is looking ever likely that set a side will be abolished following the recent CAP health Check. In order to minimise the environmental impact of removing set-aside an alternative environmental management programme has been suggested that it based around cross compliance and would look to see farmers implement additional management options to support the environment. As we receive further details we shall of course inform you accordingly.

NVZ Changes

Long awaited NVZ Changes were announced in October and many are due to come into affect in January 2009. It is important to consider how they affect your business, the main changes are on storage of waste, application rates, methods and timings, including greater record keeping. For further information please call us or visit the Environment Agency/DEFRA Websites.



Under the Hammer - Auctions continue to Slow!

As the credit Crunch continues to bite, both the number of properties being purchased at auction and the prices of properties being sold at auction continue to fall. Data from the Liberal Democrats treasury show that the average price of a property sold at auction are down 23% , quoting that *"the published house prices are well behind the game"* these figures are predicted to fall further over the next year. The RICS has reported that the success rate of properties Sold at auction has continued to fall, although the number of properties being offered for sale at auction has remained



"The hammer is still falling and so are house prices"

consistent. This trend looks set to continue as more repossessions are reported, financial markets continue to slow and mortgage lenders tighten their belts. The slow down is seeing a number of good quality properties coming to the market, with opportunities for investors to purchase investment properties that have not sold, as many are either offered for sale after the auction or placed on the open market.

Household Permitted Development Changes!

AS of the 1st October this year permitted development rights under the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 as amended, otherwise known as works you can undertake without the need for planning permission is changing. Typically these works are defined as small scale home improvements and alterations to your dwelling house for example extensions, minor alterations and structures within the curtilage of your property. Whilst many of the changes are minor alterations one area introduced under the changes which many householders will have to take note of is the ability to only undertake paving works of 5 square meters in front gardens for areas over this area planning permission shall be required unless

You are able to demonstrate that you are using materials that do not create run of and allow water to pass through them. Other changes are to the size of extensions, porches and other structures and it is always advisable to seek the advise of a professional consultant or in the first instance talk to your local planning authority. Whilst these changes have been introduced to allow a more flexible system to help free up the planning system, you should take extra care when looking to undertake works if your property is located in a designated area such as a green belt, area of outstanding natural beauty or a higher landscaped area.

Entry Level Stewardship Changes Announced!

With effect from October 2008 anybody interested in starting a new Entry Level Stewardship Agreement will now be dealt with through the new revised Natural England Second Edition handbook. It is important to note that ELS agreements starting before 1st October 2008 will continue to be governed by the previous first edition hand book for Entry Level Stewardship.

What are the main changes? Following on from the first edition printed in 2005, Natural England have tried to relate to their practical experiences of the scheme when they reviewed it in 2007 and have also tried to relate the new handbook to the Rural Development Programme England (RDPE).

In summary, this means the main changes are, the removal of some options and amendments to the management descriptions for others, the replacement of good

farming practice requirement with cross compliance standards, clarification of rules relating to transfer of land from one land manager to another and clarification of the handling of agreements involving Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Whilst cross compliance already applies to all farmers and landowners claiming the single payment scheme, it is important to note that when joining ELS you will be agreeing to maintain your land in accordance with the Good Agricultural Environmental Conditions (GAEC) and the Statutory Management Requirements (SMR) it is also important to note that if you are inspected for cross compliance and a non compliance is found, your Environmental Stewardship payment can also be reduced dependant upon the seriousness of non compliance. It is also important to consider your responsibilities under nitrate Vulnerable zones, farm assurance schemes,

pesticide industry voluntary initiative, avoidance of under grazing, public rights of way, protection of historic features, archaeological field work and metal detecting on your land, agricultural waste regulations, retention of necessary records more recently the display a plaque if you receive payments over 50,000 euros. The new handbook should offer clarity on many areas and many new options including maintenance of traditional farm buildings. If you are considering entering the scheme please talk to us or visit the natural England website.



"Applications will now be linked to Cross Compliance"

A Living Working Countryside

Having been contacted by the Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Liberal Democrat Matthew Taylor was surprised to have been commissioned to undertake a review of the planning system in the countryside and following his instruction recently published his finding in his report entitled "A Living Working Countryside". The report makes recommendations for planning policies to shift the growth market towns, towards new neighbourhood extensions, with more local shops, community facilities, workplaces and open spaces. The report also recommends a community led affordable housing initiative for smaller rural communities to ensure they are supported and the people who work in the communities can actually live there. For rural businesses the report suggests that planning rules should be developed to encourage more village businesses and rural diversification. The document emphasises the need to unblock the system and clearly defines the un-sustainable pressures facing rural communities. The contents of this report are a welcomed finding as it recommends that planning policy within the countryside is at a crossroads and reviewed to allow simplicity and end conflicting messages, recommending further that rural hubs should be created to bring forward new and support existing rural businesses, with those businesses seeking employees from the local community. It is hoped that the government will now act upon these findings.

Life's a Rollercoaster

As many attractions continue to expand one option often considered is the introduction of suitable rides and other attractions and planning for new attractions can be difficult. It is vital that any new attraction is considered appropriately both in terms of planning permission and cost. The introduction of an attraction such as a roller coaster or white river ride can create many planning hurdles for you to jump through and you must firstly consider the location of the development and its impact on the surrounding environment, including how the development shall be accessed and how people will flow through in the surrounding areas. With applications of this nature it is important to firstly talk to the local authority about your plans seeking an informal opinion. When considering such plans it is equally important to consider the likely effects of the development on the local community and economy by bringing increased tourism into the area and greater use of local goods and services. An area not often contemplated when looking to introduce an additional visitor attraction is the impact on visitor numbers and whether or not you will have to increase other facilities such as car parking areas and catering areas.



"It is important to consider all aspects of a new attraction"

Here at Davies & Co we recognise the need for you to maintain a secure and profitable future and would welcome an opportunity to discuss with you any aspect of your business past or present.

Forthcoming Shows & Events

LAMMA Machinery Show 2009
21-22 January 09 Newark Showground, Lincs

National Farm Attractions Conference
4 February 2009 Drayton Manor, Staffs

National Holstein Show 2009
16 February 2009 Stoneleigh Park, Warks

Tourism & Leisure Show 2009
26 February Brentwood Centre, Brentwood

British Shooting & Country Show 2009
28 Feb- 1 Mar, Newark Showground, Lincs

British Alpaca Show 2009
27-28 February 2009, Stoneleigh Park

Property Investor Show 2009
6-8 March Excel, London Docklands

Landlord Buy to Let Show
20-21 March 2009 Olympia Centre London

"Looking after your interests"

"Davies & Co is proud to Sponsor the National Farm Attractions Network"



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