

Rural Vision

Set Aside Compulsory Vs Voluntary

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As set aside is formally abolished and as many of you have recently completed your SPS forms the main question on everyone's lips is what will replace set aside and what are the likely responsibilities going to be?

The two main areas currently in discussion are a compulsory scheme or a voluntary scheme which would look to act as an extension or bolt onto cross compliance and possibly Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) the argument is whether there should be a compulsory scheme or a voluntary scheme of which a voluntary approach would hold the most benefits for farmers and landowners allowing them to manage it around their existing farm business. The current proposals for a compulsory option include managing a proportion of cultivated land for environmental purposes with further measures proposed through margins and

Conservation headlands to name a few, with top up payments under ELS just covering the estimated costs.

The voluntary option predominately would see the creation of a Farm Environmental Action Plan with farmers managing uncropped land with further discussion taking place on the management of hedge rows, water courses, soils through land management practices and promotion of farmland birds

The current situation is that if a voluntary scheme fails to deliver then compulsory measures will be introduced through cross compliance? Consultations on the proposals are being headed up by many organisations and consultations are open until the 27 May following which a decision shall be made. We will keep you informed as updates as they occur.



"Set-aside options are still in discussions"

Cross Compliance & ELS Update/Checks

Hedgerow cutting **NOT** 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 applications (SMR 4)

New Stewardship Handbooks

Looking at renewing your existing or entering into a new Environmental Stewardship agreement then you will now have to refer to the latest edition of handbooks recently published by Natural England, these 2nd edition handbooks are available for Entry Level Stewardship, Organic Entry Level Stewardship & for Higher Level Stewardship, it should be noted that there are 3 hand books for HLS referred to as A,B & C , these handbooks offer new advice and options for the schemes .

RPA Re-mapping

Under a new initiative to ensure that Single Payment Scheme claims are accurate the Rural Payments Agency shall be sending out updated Rural Land Register Maps to farmers over the next 6 months from June through to November. Farmers are advised to check the maps are accurate and advise the RPA of any errors or changes. We are expecting more details on this shortly and if you receive your revised map please contact us if you are unsure of any aspect.

Looking at starting a Rural Visitor Centre?

If you are thinking about diversifying your holding now has never been a better time to consider a Rural Visitor Centre. The most important consideration before you start is considering that you shall be opening your farm up to the public and have to meet them every day that you are open.....There are many initiatives running at present which can provide essential support for your rural visitor centre or attraction , such as the government initiative Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC), Natural England's new educational launch and further promotion through FACE, NFAN, CFE and Think Food & Farming (TFF).

There are many important factors to consider and it is paramount that you do your research before you start and a sound business plan that you can follow is the key, clearly identifying your product, costs and timescales. Once you have a sound business plan further consideration and assistance should be sought on investigating any



“It is important to consider what customers want”

implementation of your rural visitor centre/ attraction. As with every diversification project the key is achieving planning permission and achieving permission for a rural visitor centre needs a lot of preparation and pre-consultation discussions with the council, as not only will a planning statement be required to support your application but it is very likely that further external consultants shall be required to address issues such as highways & car parking, specialist drawings and layout plans, environmental surveys and possibly further studies if you are located in a green belt or designated area.

At every stage of your application it is essential to discuss your proposal with local schools, colleges, tourism boards and other professional bodies as their support can make the difference between a successful and unsuccessful application.

Further consideration should be given to marketing and promotion of your visitor centre/attraction once open and recruitment of staff, finance health and safety, liability insurances and most recently Criminal Record Bureau checks for staff. If you are considering a rural visitor centre please contact us for further information.



Top Tips to consider

- CRB Checks
- Marketing
- Competition
- Costs & Income
- Location
- Highways
- Special designations
- Support
- Local schools
- Grant Funding
- Planning Policy
- Business Plan
- Specialist Reports

Our Success Continues

We successfully obtained planning consent for a rural visitor centre in the county of Durham, after many detailed discussions with the planners and a separate consultation of the document from the Government office north east the application was finally approved.. The application site was located within the green belt and included many features such as a amphitheatre, woodland walks, tractor trailer rides, classrooms, environmental areas, hydro quest, driving school and many other great features to expand the visitor experience not only on the site but in and around Durham.

At the beginning of 2009 we successfully achieved outline planning consent for a single residential development building plot and associated vehicular access, in Desborough, from Kettering Borough Council on a previously developed site, the site is now being offered for sale.

Redlands a farm with potential

We are pleased to announce the sale of Redlands Farm a traditional Northamptonshire farming and equestrian unit, set within approximately 40 acres with a range of traditional and modern buildings together with a small range of stables with great potential.

The property boasts excellent road links and a private access drive up to the main courtyard area and 3 bed roomed late Victorian farm house with many original features,



“Redlands is being offered for sale by private treaty”

The holding is located close to Northampton and offer many local facilities and road links. The property is being offered for sale as a whole by private treaty and holds potential for further equestrian development and conversions subject to obtaining the necessary planning consents, further details and particulars can be obtained from ourselves.

Barn Conversions

Despite the influx of barn conversions over the past 10 years the opportunities to develop redundant barns into residential accommodation, live/work units and elegant office developments are still out there, with the recent economic slow down and fewer planning applications coming forward to local authorities now could be a great time to secure planning consent or convert your redundant barn, as the

appeal of a barn for both residential and commercial occupation is highly sought after and can add significant value to your holding or provide a generous income if let. It is important to consider your location, the type of barn you have, your desired use of the barn, highways implications and local road networks, existing barn conversions within your area, special designations such as Green Belt or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and it is essential to ensure that you have a good architect and other professionals working alongside you to secure your consent.



Don't Dismiss the Value of Regulated Tenanted Properties

Despite the ever emerging credit crunch and declining property market, many farms, estates and private landlords may have an asset still in demand.

Many landowners, estates and private landlords have redundant farm workers cottages on the holding or in the surrounding villages occupied by former employees of the holding, and in some cases many do not realise the value of these properties and that they can be sold on the open market despite the property being subject to a statutory tenancy.

If you let the property to your employee before 15 January 1989

as part of that workers employment, even if no formal agreement was put in place and there is no or little rent passing, the cottage occupied by your redundant farm worker shall be protected under the Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976 and the service occupancy enjoyed as part of his employment becomes a “statutory tenancy”. If the property was let after this date then it is likely to be classed as an Assured Agricultural Occupancy under the Housing Act 1988.

Despite the residential slow down investors are still actively buying protected properties for their portfolios, the money that could be

realised through selling an off lying property on an estate or in the local village, could realise a sensible price and the sale of such a property could be an effective way to release capital tied up within a holding with the peace of mind that your tenant is protected for more information please call Barry Davies.



“It is important not to dismiss the value of a protected property “

To Park or Not to Park? - Car parking get it right

Accommodating visitors is the success or failure of any attraction and insufficient or ill planned car parking can turn visitors away leaving a negative thought in their mind. Or alternatively if the local council are inspecting your car park due to no formal planning permission this can also give the wrong impression. The key is to plan effectively and as attractions grow and visits to the countryside increase it can be all too easy to forget about formal consents and creating a new car park overnight can often lead to more problems. Applying for an acceptable sized car park from the outset or an increase in car parking facilities is not as difficult as it may seem, dependant upon your size of attraction the first step would be to approach your Local Authority and the County Highways Department for their advice on road classifications and requirements such as traffic flows, transport statements and traffic impact assessments as these shall be a fundamental document in securing your planning consent and it is recommended that a professional highways engineer is appointed if these documents are required. From a planning point of view the location to the attraction, access and exit points are all key and choice of surface material all need to be considered with special consideration needed if your attraction is located in a green belt or other designated area. As with all attractions peak times demand the most from your attraction and provisions for an overflow car park should be made in any application together with a suitable justification. Further consideration would be given to the accommodation of coaches, school mini buses disabled visitors, motor cycles, push bikes and goods/delivery vehicles. If you are planning or require further assistance with an existing car park please contact us.



"A good car park is one of the main keys to a successful 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

Cereals Show 2009

10-11 June 2009

East of England Show 2009

19-21 June 2009

West Midlands Show 2009

27-28 June 2009

Royal Show 2009

7-10 July 2009

Tillage Show 2009

15 September 2009

Dairy Event 2009

16-17 September 2009

Leisure Industry Week

23-25 September 2009

Property Investment Show

22-24 October 2009

"Looking after your interests"

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



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