

Rural Vision

The Need to Live in The Countryside!

Inside this issue:

Looking at starting a on Farm Storage	2	Considering the need to live on your holding, well consider it carefully before you leap into a planning application as it is essential you understand what is required before you start?	Statement 7 which clearly sets out the two tests you will be required to satisfy, namely the “functional” and “financial” tests. These tests will demonstrate not only your functional requirement to tend to the animals, crops and how much this will impact on your business, it also seeks to consider you holdings viability and requests detail over financial data to demonstrate profitability. It is important to gather as much information to support an application such as crime references, vets bills, crop loses, supporting letters etc as all these are vital to demonstrating the need to reside on the farm.
WIRE sponsorship & SPS Updates	2	Whether you are a farming, equestrian or horticultural enterprise the tests you need to satisfy are all the same, many of our enquires are for purely lifestyle purposes which of course is much harder to achieve. When considering your need to live on site it is vital you examine your farming enterprise and establish “why” you need to live on site... you will have to demonstrate this in a planning application normally through a planning statement. The main policy to consider is national guidance	You must also consider that many Authorities seek to grant temporary consents for 3-5 years prior to any permanent dwelling.
Empty Rates Charges	3		
Gas Safety and the Gas Safe Register	3		
Community Infrastructure Levy	3		
Planning for a Play Barn	4		
Forthcoming Events	4		



“ It is essential you demonstrate Need”

Cross Compliance Update & Checks

Hedgerow cutting still permitted - GAEC 15 (Remember 1 March)

Remember to maintain footpaths GAEC 8

Remember to Complete Soil Management Reviews and ensure all records up to date

Field Operations remember GAEC 14 & GAEC 3

Grazing Requirements Remember GAEC 9

Land not in Agricultural use by 1 March designated as GAEC 12

SMR 4 - No fertiliseer applications until 1st February

Campaign for the Farmed Environment Launched

As voluntary set aside is agreed so the inventively titled Campaign for the Farmed Environment is launched at arable farmers. The scheme seeks to retain and exceed the environmental benefits that used to be provided by set aside and encourages farmers and landowners to adopt voluntary land management practices... The CFE has three main focus areas, Resource Protection, Farmland Birds and Farm Wildlife.... **Resource Protection** is aimed at considering appropriate measures for water and soil protection ... **Farmland Birds** considers three key areas, availability of seed food, nesting areas and inspect foraging habitats, whilst **Farm Wildlife** considers farm habitats and wider protection measures.

If you are already in ELS then you will be encouraged to re-join considering revised management options...if you are not there are a number of voluntary options to consider. The campaign is seeking to meet targets by 2012 and if we fail to meet these targets then a compulsory approach could be adopted? The scheme is intended to be co-coordinated by local liaison groups and farmers with a holding over 10ha will receive a record form in January 2010 to record any voluntary measures undertaken.



“Can you adopt any voluntary measures?”

Looking at Starting on Farm Storage Units

So you've got a redundant barn or two as a result of changes in your farming policy, the question is what can you use them for? Well dependant upon their design you may have some worthwhile returns from storage units!

There are of course many things to consider when investigating whether your buildings are suitable for storage...most importantly is the building design and layout, a traditional range may be suitable for a different use class or even residential dependant upon location. If your buildings are of a more general purpose agricultural building then they may well be suitable.

In considering you proposed venture the first things to asses are your location, the condition of the building (a structural survey will be need for any application), are the buildings suitable for a change of use?, layout, access requirements, availability of other units within the area, typical rental returns, business rates, insurance, occupational terms of tenants or licensees and of course conversion costs.



“It is important to consider the layout and access of your buildings”

If after undertaking your research and you consider Storage units is your preferred option then it is important to note that they will be referred to a B8 Storage and Distribution uses under the Use Classes order 1987 And any discussions with planners should make this clear. The most important consultee will be County Highways and it is important to consider all highway implications from the start.

The benefits of storage units over other use options is the impact on your farming activity or standard of living as disruption levels from storage units will be considerably lower than any other use.

Storage opportunities can extend beyond the buildings but can raise concern from planners!

Once you have submitted your application with the required supporting documentation it is important to monitor the application and you should also consider/discuss the contents of conditions with the council

A carefully planned storage development can not only bring in good returns it can enhance and preserve your buildings allowing for future change of use opportunities.



Don't forget Highways

Top Tips to consider

- Suitable Location
- Market Research
- Highways
- Layout & Design
- Car Parking
- Designations
- Planning Permission
- Marketing
- Planning Conditions
- Competitors
- Business Rates
- Rental Returns
- Impact on Farm

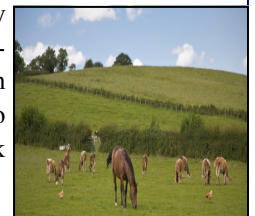
WE ARE PLEASED TO SPONSOR WIRE

Continuing our campaign to support diversification and its important role within farming and rural communities we are pleased to announce are support for Women In Rural Enterprise (WIRE). The organisation seek to support and promote women's achievements and businesses within the rural community, and they offer an excellent service for anyone looking to launch a business... if you are thinking of starting a business or looking to support your existing one check out the WIRE website www.wire.org.uk or contact Fiona Davies direct on 01952 815338



SPS & GAEC Changes

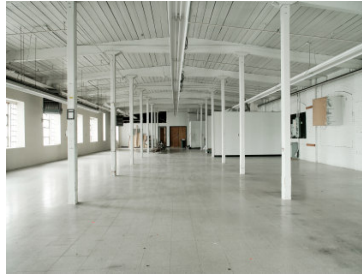
As SPS continues to evolve so to does natural refinement of the legislation that governs it... The latest changes come about as a result of the Campaign for Farmed Environment being launched and see the existing four GAEC's relating to soil merged into one GAEC (GAEC 1), Revisions to GAEC 12 are to see the management of land under GAEC 12 bought into line with similar requirements to former set aside land. Further advise is sought on the content within GAEC 14 and we are advised that a new GAEC 18 will be presented shortly with specific reference to water abstraction. Additionally a new minimum claim size has been announced of 1 hectare to reduce unjustified payments. Finally check your RLR maps as time is short...



Business Rates 2010 and Empty Rates Charges!

If you have buildings on your farm, attraction or commercial site that have received planning consent for commercial uses and that have been vacant for more than 6 months...you could be liable for Empty Rates Charges!

The Rating (Empty Properties) Act 2007 came into force on the 1 April 2008. The Act states that most properties that have been empty for 3 months or in the case of industrial properties 6 months will no longer receive relief from rates.



"Don't forget about Empty Rates on Commercial Buildings"

Empty commercial properties with a rateable of less than £15,000 will be exempt from business rates (2009/2010) these lower value rateable value properties have been targeted to help small businesses. If your building is only part occupied then it is important the valuation officer apportions the rateable value accordingly. If you disagree with any notification you may have received from the Valuation Office, please give us a call.

GAS SAFE - IS YOUR ENGINEER REGISTERED?

As with all legislation once we get adjusted to one scheme another comes along and it is essential as a landlord you are aware of the recent changes in Gas Safety... under the Gas Safety Installation and Use Regulations 1988 you are required if you rent a property to ensure that the gas system is safe for your tenant to operate and whilst you may just pick up the phone to your gas friend down the road it is essential that they are accredited! Up until the 1 April this year all gas inspections and installations had to be undertaken by an approved CORGI engineer, following a change in legislation the CORGI trademark is no longer acceptable and all engineers should be part of the newly devised Gas Safe Register...so look for the yellow triangle!

It is also important to consider the gas safe logo when having new heating systems installed, as your engineer should provide you with a Buildings Regulation Compliance certificate, in accordance with the scheme and building regulations. Additionally if your annual Gas Safety certificate—CP12 is not undertaken by a Gas Safe Engineer then should a fault arise then you could be liable for not checking...to check if your engineer is register simply visit the gas safe website, www.gasesaferegister.co.uk.



What's CIL all about? - Community Infrastructure Levy

Many of you may have or have not heard the phrase - Community Infrastructure Levy commonly known as a CIL... So what is a CIL, simply put it is a charge being introduced on planning permission, when planning permission is required for the development of a building... CIL's are proposed to aid in the scaling back of s106 agreements and aims to provide a more transparent system of funding infrastructure.

It is proposed that a CIL will be charged upon granting of a full planning permission, modifications to permissions, consent granted following enforcement or appeal and for major infrastructure works. It is suggested that GPDO works for minor household developments will not be subject to a CIL nor will change of use applications up to 100 square meters, it is also suggested that changes within use class orders is exempt as are temporary

Buildings...unless of course they become permanent?

Under the proposals one party or a joint party must assume liability for the CIL, these will be the people or parties that are responsible for paying the CIL. The level of payment will be set upon grant of planning permission and is proposed to be collected once liability has been assumed or development commences...in the case of larger GPDO applications a separate form will have to be submitted.

The amount a CIL will cost will depend upon either the geographical area or the intended use...and it is proposed that revenue generated by the CIL charge can only be used for infrastructure related uses and this could include road, drainage, parks, rights of way, etc.

The CIL system will incorporate an appeals

System should you disagree with the amount, notices etc...it is proposed that CIL's will be introduced on the 6 April 2010. Authorities that decide to adopt the CIL will be required to complete and adopt costed infrastructure plans for their area and a draft charging schedule...in light of this it could be some time before CIL's are adopted by many authorities given the timescales it can take for them to formally adopt documents...regardless this is an area not to be discounted when considering any type of development we will keep you advised.



Keep an eye on the introduction of CIL's

Planning in the Play Barn!

As attractions enter the winter months and the damp start to Spring, and for some attractions their closed season .. The question of what to offer your visitors next year is always challenging and tough decision.? One option often considered by many is the introduction of a play barn or indoor play area to offer all year round weather proof fun and enjoyment... If thought about practically and carefully the introduction of a play barn could be your biggest attraction.

So how do you simply introduce a play barn to your attraction? Firstly you have to consider is your barn suitable and safe for its intended use? We would recommend that you first discuss the idea with a play barn provider to establish suitability, time scales and of course costs, consideration should also be given to the impact of the development on you visitor flow and how it can be incorporated within the existing attraction. If after this your barn is deemed suitable, then you should engage with your local planning authority. The introduction of a play barn will be seen as a change of use of the buildings original intended use. As many play barns do not alter the external appearance of the building they are generally well accepted, it is important to note that any application will require a structural survey most likely together with an ecological survey to demonstrate the building is safe and no bats or owls etc are present, architectural drawings will also be required and consideration should be given to increased visitor numbers as a result of the play barn, and you should consider are your highway access and car parking facilities adequate (We would advise talking to county highways) and what will be the impact on the surrounding area. Further more consideration should be given to planning conditions that could restrict the operation and use of the play barn such as restricted opening times and numbers?



"It is important to consider your play barn's location and layout!"

A play barn can be a great introduction to any attraction and can become one of your main attractions adding both appeal and profit although if you are thinking of a play barn it needs to be planned carefully.

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

20 & 21 January Newark Showground, Lincs

Farm Diversification Show—FARMA

25,26,27 January, Telford, Shropshire

National Farm Attractions Conference

10th February 2010 Drayton Manor, Staffs

National All Breeds Show

16,17 February, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

Tourism & Leisure Show 2010

25 February, Malden, Essex

Landlord Buy to Let Show

5,6 March, Olympia London

INPAS Show

16, 17 March, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

WIRE Conference

22 April, Newport, Shropshire

"Looking after your interests"

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



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