



DEVON & SOMERSET
LAW SOCIETY

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER



Interview with:
Kelly Baker
DASLS Executive
Administrator



Preparing for the AGM
25th April 2023
Influence the the
future of the Solicitors'
Profession and DASLS
Page 4



Posh Nosh's latest
creation:
Beetroot and Goat's
Cheese Terrine
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CHIEF EXECUTIVE



2022 has been a difficult year - Just as we began to put Covid behind us a new headline hit the press when Russian troops began their illegal invasion of their neighbour.

The subsequent financial shock, changes at Westminster and the emergence of higher inflation rates has changed the climate that DASLS members operate in.

In the DASLS area firms have adapted swiftly to the many challenges of the last few years and I have witnessed first-hand during various meetings the collegiate way in which solicitors have supported one another through this time. We were able to celebrate this at the DASLS Legal Awards Dinner at Exeter Cathedral in May. Work is going on behind the

scenes to do so again in 2023 and I hope that by the time this falls on your desk we will have been able to announce the date for the next legal awards event.

One of the core functions of DASLS is to provide opportunities for DASLS members to meet together both professionally and socially. The second half of 2022 has seen a return to in person activities and in recent weeks His Honour Judge Paul Mitchell (pictured below) was our guest speaker at a dinner for around 80 members and guests at Somerset County Cricket Club.



We have also run several well supported 'in person' training courses back at Exeter Racecourse.

The Challenge Cup is back with two events already staged. The notoriously tricky quiz night will be back on 24th January. You

can book now via our website.

The Junior Lawyers Division is returning to full health and, together with your President, I have attended their AGM this month. Congratulations to Chris Fotheringham, Ashfords on his election to the Chair. The full Committee will be shown on the DASLS website shortly. I look forward to the annual rounders match in 2023 when I hope DASLS will be able to muster a stronger team than we managed 2022.

I hope you find this newsletter interesting. We are working hard to improve our communications and I would welcome any views about the effectiveness of what we do. We live in changing times and whilst some still like this traditional paper-based form of communication others rely on social media for their information. Those who are 'Linkedin' fans, please follow DASLS where we will be developing our forums for discussion about the issues that matter to you.

Although a little early may I wish you a wonderful festive season and new year.

Tony

Tony Steiner
Chief Executive
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01392 325164

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All information in this newsletter is correct at the time of going to print. Devon and Somerset Law Society accept no responsibility for any inaccuracies in this publication.

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When you have finished with this newsletter please recycle it.

DASLS AGM 2023 CALL FOR MEMBERS TO STAND FOR ELECTION!

Please help shape the future of your local Law Society.

The main Committee is at the heart of the work and decision making of DASLS and also helps to co-ordinate the important work of the many Sub-Committees. As a result membership of the main Committee can make a real difference to the Society and to the working life of solicitors across our two counties.

The Committee is made up of the Officers of the Society together with (see Articles §7.1.5) "not less than 10 or more than 40 elected members".

If you would like any further information please contact the Honorary Secretary Chris Hart: chris.hart@wollens.co.uk

Elections will take place at the Society's Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 25th April 2023 at the Exeter Golf & Country Club.

If you would like to either be nominated or nominate someone for election, please complete the form below. This should be returned to DASLS Honorary Secretary, Chris Hart, by no later than **5.30 p.m. on 31 January 2023.**

TO Chris Hart, DASLS Honorary Secretary
c/o Wollens, At Harbourside, 67 The Terrace, Torquay,
Devon, TQ1 1DP

I wish to nominate

(insert full name)

Of

(insert contact details)

for election to the main Committee and I confirm that the nominee is willing for their name to go forward.

Year of Admission of Nominee

Signed

Address

Please return this form by 31 January 2023.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



I am sure that I am not alone in asking the question where has this year gone. Since April, time has flown by and although I am not foolish enough to think that our lives are returning to a pre-pandemic “normal” it is fair to say that much of my Presidential time is now taken up with face to face events rather than those occupying the virtual world.

I was delighted to see so many of you at our Annual Dinner. Although it goes without saying that Exeter Cathedral provides a very imposing venue there was an overriding sense that everyone was just pleased to see each other after three very challenging years.

Having thought we had said goodbye to the virtual world, The Law Society opted to hold its annual Presidents and Secretaries Conference virtually. Despite this, it proved to be an interesting Conference with particular focus upon the role that Local Law Societies play alongside The Law Society and how to

encourage younger members of the legal community to become more engaged with Local Law Societies.

Just a few days after The Law Societies conference the County Societies Group elected to meet in person and somehow managing to dodge the national rail strikes and made it to London. It provided a welcome opportunity to meet colleagues from other regional Law Societies whose faces had only been seen within the confines of a laptop screen for three years.

Aside to the rounds of meetings and the odd Annual dinner, I have been able to spend some downtime with members of the Junior Lawyer Division. The return of the annual rounders match against the JLD did not go quite the way intended due to a larger than expected turnout of JLD members and a somewhat smaller turnout of DASLS members – in fact there were just three of us! However, the evening’s events proved entertaining with no injuries reported although it was noticeable that we did seem to spend more time in the Bar after the match than it took to play it. On a more serious note the JLD have an important role to play in the future of our Society and I would encourage any junior lawyer to become engaged with the group.

It is nearly December and the diary is starting to fill up. With Christmas not now far away it brings me on to the not so small matter of the charity that I am supporting during my Presidential year. The Baby Bank, based in Exeter but which supports families across the region will be launching a Christmas campaign this

September and I will be asking the Devon and Somerset Legal Community to support me in helping the Charity reach its target.

I am sure that I do not need to tell you that almost every charity is seeing a significant reduction in their funding brought about by a number of factors not least the current cost of living crisis which shows no sign of abating. Every charity has a worthy cause but some do stand out above others particularly those where young children are involved.

The Baby Bank seeks to support families throughout the year. Four years ago the Charity raised sufficient funds to purchase 60 Christmas present sacks for children of families who simply did not have the financial means to buy presents for their children. Hard to appreciate in this day and age but demand is such that this year the demand has increased tenfold. This year the Christmas Campaign is to fund the purchase of 600 sacks. Each sack contains a mix of books and toys. I am inviting our legal community to stand up to this challenge and ask firms to try and raise £60 to ‘buy a sack for Christmas.’ I will be doing my part and I hope you will be able to see your way to supporting the Baby Bank Challenge.

Adrian Richards
President 2022/23

COUNCIL MEMBER



I have recently given up my uneven battle with my garden hedge and brought in the services of the diminutive, formidable Sarah and her mighty Stihl machinery, which has made ridiculously short work of the job; in five hours over two days she achieved far more than I usually manage in a whole long August bank holiday week-end, from the top of my expensively-hired tower scaffold, at lesser cost in terms of both time and money, given that she cost less than the hire of the scaffold alone, and didn't take me a couple of hours to put up and another couple of hours to take down. My children can now run around the sycamore again.

I mention this in light of the recent decision that council members' four-year terms of office should now be limited to three, or twelve years, which has resulted in two significant culls, one this time last year when 31 members unexpectedly abruptly lost their seats, the other today with another 26 departing, though

with a little more notice. That's more than half of the council. Another is to come in a year's time.

I write this from the October Council meeting taking place on the morning of the AGM later today and the list of respected and famous names departing the Council today is significant. On the whole, and unsurprisingly, they are sad to leave, and I too am sad to see them go. I have grown used to their reassuring voices over my time on council – reassuring, not because they are aimed at maintaining the status quo, but rather because they take the officers and staff to task over their many and varied, and always interesting, hobby-horses. They include Lucy Scott-Moncrieff, Simon Davis and President I Stephanie Boyce, who is not staying on for a further year (as would be her right) but is nobly making way for her successor, and who left her final meeting to three cheers of acclamation for her year, which appears to have been a very successful one.

While on this point, I might add that there was a similar feeling of benevolence to her expressed by all societies present at the most recent ASWLS meeting.

No one seems to agree on quite what the role of the council ought to be but I personally rather like the idea that one of its main aims ought to be keeping everyone with whom it engages 'on their toes', ready, agile, keen to move to protect the interests of the profession, and this I can attest that many of those departing have done.

My fear for my hedge is that I may have asked Sarah to cut too deep and it may not grow back. Sarah assures me that I should have no fear, and that it will thrive. I in turn have little doubt the same holds for the council, and that along with the remaining middle-aged heads and the odd venerable one, the youngsters and newbies will shine light on and show us the way ahead.

By way of anecdotal evidence supporting this, amongst my group of relative newbies at lunch the consensus was that the new lot who replaced the 31 who left last year have collectively altered the mood from more gloomy and unfriendly to a better, happier place, so that certainly bodes well.

I myself, of course, no longer ride a hobby-horse of my own, having found the compliance heat and tangle of the profession too hot and convoluted to bear. I am therefore a free agent, and available, and any members wishing to share theirs should please not hesitate to contact me and lend me the reins.

While being careful to offer no guarantees, I can report that the SIF position appears to be that the SRA proposes largely to adopt the constitution of SIF, with (as with Monty Python's fish licence) the letters 'SIF' being crossed out and the letters 'SRA' written-in in crayon, which should mean the successor fund being operated in much the same way as the existing scheme, and our members not needing to fear being pursued for anything over the excess prevailing under

their original cover. A detailed examination of proposals is now underway, and we can expect to hear more on this from Linda Lee and her colleagues in the near future.

The Society has a new chief exec, Ian Jeffery, latterly managing partner of Lewis Silkin, a tall, calm chap who speaks well, without notes, with the most impressive c.v. Amongst many other things, he is tasked with informing the public, the profession, the judges (it seems that judges don't know why our CFA terms of business are rather complex and run to 22 pages), the media and Uncle Tom Cobley and all who we are, as a profession, and what we do, and why we do it. There will be an emphasis on highlighting our role in the administration of the criminal justice system, pointing out amongst other things that barristers need solicitors, and that, like the bar, we should receive the minimum 15% required to 'keep the patient alive', not an arbitrary 9%.

Expect to hear more from him, too, and from our new DVP Richard Atkinson, a criminal practitioner who leads on the subject, in the Gazette, and elsewhere.

And, of course, a new Bradfordian President whose agenda appears to me rather similar to her predecessor's; Lubna Shuja's targets for her year are 'to shift the dial' and:

1. to be a leading and influential voice on justice, the rule of law and the value of solicitors
2. Professional ethics
3. Business support – 'Listening to solicitors'
4. International promotion of the profession and jurisdiction, and
5. Diversity and progression within the profession and the judiciary.

Finally, for the geeks amongst us, I have checked, and it has been confirmed that the

instructions on the Chancery Lane new unisex loo doors, pictured below, are not to be taken literally, and that it is permitted to enter one on one's own – accompanying partners, and holding hands, are optional;

Richard Adams

Member of the Council of the Law Society of England and Wales for Devon & Somerset

12 October 2022



Non-Contentious Business Sub-Committee: join us!

The Non-Contentious Business Sub-Committee sees practitioners from all over Devon and Somerset meet three or four times a year to discuss current issues in, you've guessed it, Non-Contentious practice. This primarily covers conveyancing and private client work, but we would be delighted to see new members in other streams too.

The committee is a particularly active one, often dealing with national organisations and publications over issues of note to our region and practice area. Meetings usually involve a speaker on a subject of interest and also a lively discussion on subjects of the day.

Above all, though, the committee is a forum for us to meet each other across the region. Sequestered as we often are in offices and homes, our members find it refreshing to speak to other like-minded practitioners dealing with the same matters and issues – and also to have a good catch-up.

Would you be interested in joining us? We would be pleased to hear from you, if so, please email Kelly@dasls.com who will make sure you are invited to our next meeting.



Bernadette Bennett
Head of Legal Sector

Building client trust is the key to achieving long-term loyalty and the valuable revenue that comes with it. It helps to establish better work ethics in your employees, improve firm reputation and demonstrate that you are providing something of worth to your clients.

But what exactly is client trust? How do you build it? And what's the risk of failing to do so?

At its core, client trust is the belief a customer has in your brand – the belief that you will do what you say you will and treat them with respect.

Client trust is no different from the trust you put in your family and friends, other professional advisers, or even your go-to news channel. Like any trust, it needs to be earned and protected – and it's easily compromised.

How to build client trust

1. Excel at customer service

Customer service is a direct route to building trust – it inspires confidence and builds loyalty. If you want your audience to believe that you are more worthy of their business than your competitors, you need to put them first by delivering the best customer experience.

Whether in person, online or

on the phone, this requires dedicated and informed employees to listen to customers, tune into their needs and deliver an experience to remember.

Money Penny's Customer Communications Global Trend Report revealed that over three quarters of consumers consider great telephone customer service a powerful differentiator. The research also found that when those surveyed were dissatisfied with how they'd been treated, 36% would take their business elsewhere – demonstrating the intrinsic link between brand trust and great customer service.

2. Keep your word

Trust is lost when words and actions don't match. How can you overcome this? By being authentic and always delivering on your word.

Another finding in our research was that people contact businesses when they really need support – mainly because their queries are urgent, sensitive or complex. In these situations, stress is already heightened.

Putting more strain on enquirers by failing to keep your word is a sure-fire way of jeopardising any sense of customer trust.

3. Leverage happy clients

Today's consumers seek the opinions of one another – in a digital age, we can seek advice, support and recommendations with the touch of a button. Leveraging this and providing proof of the quality of your service is a brilliant way of building trust.

No matter how strong your reputation is, people naturally want to hear from other likeminded people before making a decision. Make client reviews and testimonials accessible by sharing them on your website and social media pages, as well as signposting them to platforms such as Trust Pilot.

4. Be transparent

Transparency cannot be underestimated when it comes to building trust. When you're supporting a client, be honest about what you're doing, how long it will take and the likely outcome. Also bear in mind that consumers are extremely knowledgeable about their rights, so be clear on things such as data protection.

If you come up against an issue, it's best to address them head-on and be forthcoming with how you're going to overcome it. Mistakes happen – but don't make light of a situation or hope it'll blow over. Clients will respect and trust you more in the long-run if you're honest from the off-set.

Those firms that are successful in building trust have the power to build an army of client ambassadors that can truly advocate their business. In turn this helps to increase brand awareness, attract new business and boost turnover. The value of trust cannot be denied and shouldn't be ignored.

For more information about Money Penny's report, visit www.money Penny.com/uk/calltrends/

MAINTAINING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES BETWEEN HOME AND WORK

Many of us struggle with maintaining a boundary between home and work, especially since the pandemic with the rise in homeworking. Whilst homeworking is great for some, others find it difficult to switch off at a reasonable time, and answer emails at all times of day and night. This can result in burnout.

As legal professionals your greatest asset is your brain, and it is essential you look after and protect your wellbeing in order to do your best work and stay well. It is tempting when we are stressed to bury our head in the sand and do even more work to try and assuage the feeling of panic, but in fact we need to do the opposite – take a break, set in place healthy boundaries between work and life outside of work, teach ourselves to switch off. Here's some tips to help you regain some balance.

Tips for managing healthy boundaries with work

- Have two phones and email addresses, one for work, one for private use. NEVER give a client your private mobile number or email address.
- Take regular breaks, including a lunch break, and try and get out for a walk every day. This may seem impossible but you will do better work if you do this.
- To avoid overwhelm do one thing at a time and break complex tasks down into manageable chunks. Disable notifications so you can focus.
- Breathe – if you can feel yourself getting anxious try taking ten

deep breaths, inhaling for 5 seconds and exhaling for 10 seconds. It can make you feel calmer.

- Work sensible hours – you are not doing your best work at 11pm at night. Working longer hours is often counter-productive.
- Remember you can sometimes say no to clients, colleagues, your superiors, family and friends – only you can effectively manage your time and prevent yourself from getting overwhelmed. Everyone has a limit and it's better to say from the outset that you will not be able to do something than leave it until the last minute.

On finishing work for the day

- Write a list of the must-dos for tomorrow each day and leave it where you will see it on return to your desk.
 - Put your work phone and laptop in a drawer and lock it in the evenings and weekends.
 - Pause, reflect for a minute or so and mark the moment you are ending your working day and transitioning to life outside work.
 - If you have an office at home shut the 'office' door when the day is over. If you have an area in a room to work in consider a screen, curtains or something to cover the space. You want to literally block work out.
 - Announce to yourself: 'The office is now closed'
 - Have a shower/bath, put on some music, go for a walk – do something to mark the end of the working day and the start of your evening.
- If you are struggling
- It's easy to let healthy

habits slip when we are at stressed but make sure you eat well, get to bed at a reasonable time and find time to do some exercise. These are essential basic requirements of staying mentally healthy and if you let them slide the quality of your work will suffer, as will you.

- Take some time off work. We all need time to rest, relax, recuperate and reset and something to look forward to.
- Talk to someone. Talking your problems through makes a real difference and provides reassurance you are not alone. Contact the free, independent and confidential LawCare support service on 0800 279 6888, email support@lawcare.org.uk or access online chat at www.lawcare.org.uk. You'll always speak to someone who works in or has worked in the law so understands the challenges you face.
- If you're feeling anxious, depressed or not sleeping make an appointment with your GP.



LawCare provides emotional support to all legal professionals, support staff and their concerned family members.

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CILEX NEWS



Linda Ford, CEO of CILEX reports on the first year of the CILEX Professional Qualification

CPQ: A fast-track alternative to becoming a specialist lawyer

Last year CILEX (Chartered Institute of Legal Executives) launched a new qualification - the CILEX Professional Qualification (CPQ) - with the aim of producing uniquely qualified, specialist lawyers with the skills to meet the changing demands of the modern legal market.

August saw the first ever cohort of CPQ students receive their second set of exam results, with 83% passing the assessments that form part of the first stage of the new qualification.

Those passing are on track to become specialist lawyers with not only the right legal knowledge but also the practical, commercial and interpersonal skills to make an impact on the profession from day one.

CILEX has been providing an accessible route into a rewarding legal career for over 50 years and CILEX-qualified professionals are working at every level

of the legal profession with many progressing to become advocates, partners in law firms, business owners and judges.

The CPQ builds on CILEX's core propositions of accessibility, affordability and flexibility, offering both graduates and those who did not attend university the opportunity to practise law at the highest level.

The three-stage progressive qualification recognises that a successful career in the law requires more than just legal knowledge. It introduces mandatory legal technology, business skills and emotional intelligence study for the first time in legal training.

It is designed for both graduates and non-graduates alike to study flexibly at their own pace. Students with a law degree or postgraduate legal qualifications do not have to start at the initial, Foundation stage. Instead, they are able to jump straight to the CPQ Advanced stage.

On completion of the third and final stage, CPQ Professional, students become CILEX Lawyers. This is for those who want to be a specialist in their field and have the practice rights they need to work alongside solicitors, barristers and other legal professionals.

CILEX trainees can specialise earlier than those studying for the SQE, focusing in more depth on those areas of law that are relevant to them and their employer as well building professional competence. Furthermore, qualifying through CILEX is more closely linked to day-to-day work. What students

are studying is applied to work experience from day one, vastly improving their career and employability prospects.

CILEX has long been committed to improving social mobility within the legal profession so, as well as providing a more accessible route into the law, through the CILEX Foundation, CILEX runs a scholarship programme.

Targeted at those under-represented in the legal profession and/or from a socially disadvantaged background, students can access scholarships worth up to £12,500 each.

This covers the training costs of becoming a fully qualified CILEX Lawyer, as well as all the benefits CILEX membership brings.

Eligible groups include young carers, those with a protected characteristic, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, previous receipt of free school meals or a history of being in care.

Those looking for a career in the law now have more options open to them than ever before. The choices aspiring lawyers and paralegals make about their future will come down to what suits them, their experience, circumstances and their future aspirations.

The CPQ offers a flexible approach to study that provides a fast track to becoming a specialist lawyer. For those who want to work alongside their studies and gain the additional skills needed by the legal services employers of tomorrow then CPQ is a perfect choice.

BEETROOT AND GOATS CHEESE TERRINE



YOU WILL NEED:

- Ingredients list

300g of Goats Cheese
- (to make 6 portions):

100g of Cream Cheese
- 500g of Golden Beetroot

50ml Double Cream
- 500g of Red Beetroot

Posh Nosh Beetroot and Goats Cheese Terrine

- Boil both the Golden and Red Beetroots (whole) in their own/separate pans. Large Beet-roots will take around an hour to boil.
- Blitz the Goats Cheese, Cream Cheese and Double Cream together to make a mousse.
- Once boiled, slice up all of the Beetroots and pat dry with a cloth or paper towel.
- Place a double layer of cling film in the bottom of a greased loaf tin.
- Lay down a layer of both types of Beet-root (fine to mix them together) at the bottom of the tin, then put a layer of Goats Cheese mousse on top, then repeat until you have filed the tin.
- Cover with cling film and set in the fridge for 2 hours before serving.
- Serve alongside some Micro Leaves, Honey Roasted Pecans, an Orange Dressing and some crusty bread for a delicious starter!

CROSSWORD

Spring Ed. Answers

This Ed. Answers

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INTERVIEW WITH KELLY BAKER

DASLS EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR



WHY DID YOU JOIN DEVON & SOMERSET LAW SOCIETY?

I had worked as a paralegal and wanted to remain working in the legal sector and saw this role purely by chance. I thought the job description had been written for me and it would be rude not to apply. Thankfully, the DASLS team also agreed!

WHAT IS YOUR DREAM JOB?

Retirement, I can't wait! I have always dreamed of being my own boss and running a guest house by the sea in Cornwall.

WHICH SORT OF WORK GIVES YOU THE MOST JOB SATISFACTION?

I aim to please! I am not very good at saying no to people and will always offer my services if I think I can help. I love a project and the satisfaction that comes with a successful completion and the feeling of "I did that".

WHAT GETS YOU UP IN THE MORNING?

1 husband, 2 grown up boys, and almost teenager boy, 2 dogs, 1 cat and a strong cappuccino.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT DURING YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER?

Ah, this was not my finest hour.... My two eldest boys are only 15 months apart (not planned) and when I returned from maternity leave after boy no. 1, I was moved to work on the reception desk due to only wanting to work part time hours. I was also pregnant with boy no. 2 and not getting much sleep. I kept falling asleep between calls and was often woken up by the phone and most embarrassingly by my boss who claims he had been stood at the desk for some time, oops!

WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

I live on the northern edge of Dartmoor, so love a good run out with the dogs. I also swim and sometimes cycle. I make a lot of cakes, which is why I need to exercise.

WHAT BOOK ARE YOU READING AT THE MOMENT?

I don't get as much time to read as I would like. On holiday I read "The Humans" by Matt Haig.

WHAT IS THE MOST RECENT FILM YOU HAVE SEEN?

The Rise of Gru! And before that, DC League of Super Pets and before that Sonic 2! Oh the joys of having kids. We love the cinema. Obviously, I went to see Top Gun: Maverick, but not before rewatching the original.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE FOOD / RESTAURANT?

I just love food. Curry, fish and chips, a really good jacket potato, and going out for afternoon tea. My new favourite restaurant is Margoux in Exeter. I was recently introduced to the concept of bottomless brunch by some of my younger friends and was surprised to discover that its was not all about a cooked breakfast and in fact not really even about food, but about how many cocktails you can consume in a 2 hour window very early in the day! I thoroughly recommend it.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION?

Definitely Cornwall. I grew up near St Ives and love to holiday there as much as possible. Italy is my second favourite, but I will take anywhere near to the sea to be honest.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE LAWYER JOKE?

I don't know any, probably because I am not a lawyer!

WHICH FAMOUS PERSON, DEAD OR ALIVE, WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO SPEND A DAY WITH?

This is hard... I would pass on any famous person for a day with my Dad.

TELL US AN INTERESTING FACT ABOUT YOURSELF.

I play the cornet and have been a member of many silver bands over the years. This is in fact how I met my husband.



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Landmark Planning allows you to understand any nearby residential planning applications which might impact the property transaction. All the data within the report is supported by easy-to-understand guidance and next steps.

To find out more contact your Landmark Account Manager or search provider.

Data Insights Report: Planning Applications

Landmark● Information

The last few tumultuous years for the UK housing market have highlighted one stark truth: housing supply is not meeting demand. Indeed, housing is one of the core pillars of the government's levelling up agenda, underscoring the need to radically rethink the way new housing is planned and developed. Central to meeting this need will be the planning process itself.

It is the view of many that the current UK planning process is flawed, often cumbersome and a source of frustration for stakeholders across the entire spectrum, from developers to communities. Digitisation will undoubtedly play its part in transforming this process; the wealth of technologies now available (such as interactive geospatial technology, virtual simulations, and, of course, data) to inform and shape planning offer real opportunities for change. With this in mind, the halfway point of 2022 felt like a good time to step back and take a look at the data on planning applications over the past ten years.

In our newly released *Data Insights Report: Planning Applications*, we revisited the wealth of environmental, land and property data that we gather, manage and supply to the property industry on a daily basis, and analysed relevant datasets to provide a summary of planning trends between 2012 and 2021. Overall, we saw that, year on year, the rate of planning applications in the UK is increasing. In fact, in every region - except for London - the number of planning applications submitted per 100,000 people was at its highest in 2021, since 2012.

As well as pinpointing the regions with the highest and lowest application volumes, the report draws on data that reveals:

- Planning application types
- Granted/refusal rates

- Approval rates for renewable energy projects
- Approval rates in flood zones
- Essential amenities per approved planning application

The report also features expert commentary from Landmark's **Chris Loaring, Managing Director (Landmark Legal)**, who shares his observations on planning trends beyond 'the Covid effect' and highlights the growing implications of the journey to net zero in future planning policy.

"We know that the built environment has a huge role to play in the wider net zero ambition and that new-build development is a major factor within that. Equally, we will watch with interest to see how the data evolves in regard to planning applications relating to existing housing stock and the retrofit

options and upgrades many homeowners are now choosing to undertake.

In the near future, I would hope to see a continuation - or even acceleration - of environmental considerations in new build planning policies. Concepts such as renewable energy installations on housing developments of a certain size, for example, would be great to see. Meanwhile, new build developments could well pave the way for widespread progress in new policies for establishing

electric car charging ports. This might seem, on the face of it, a small point but collectively, ease of access to electric charging points as a given would make a huge difference in easing the transition from fossil fuel based to electric transport options."

Piers Edgell, Landmark's Client Director (Landmark Geodata) closes with a powerful argument for how planning data and the levelling up agenda are inextricably linked:

"We have seen much debate and anticipation around the original Planning Bill, and now the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which supersedes it. In terms of the new proposed bill, it will be interesting to see how its content evolves during its passage through parliament, and precisely which elements are ultimately given final Royal Assent.

What is notable to me, when we consider the planning data in this report through the levelling up lens, is that planning is about so much more than simply where developments will or will not be built. Every planning decision impacts the immediate environment, and so planning data could and should become a critical tool for informing and shaping social policies that aim to improve - or level up - communities. What, for example, could the kinds of planning data shown in this report tell us, when mapped against data on increasing property values or household incomes? What could the data we have summarised on amenities within the vicinity of planning applications tell us about location-specific standards of living and local needs? From a big picture point of view, we might even wonder how this kind of data might correlate with health and wellbeing indices, mortality, employment and income figures. My hunch is that it would underscore that planning has the potential to alter communities and change life-chances, more broadly than its immediate impact on the built environment."

[You can access this insightful, timely and data-rich report here.](#)



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How important is it for technology to be malleable?



As a provider of CMS, DMS, and Legal Accounting software, we have to always ensure our software is malleable, or customisable so our clients can shape the software to suit their processes. It often raises a good amount of debate as to how malleable the software should be. So how adaptable does software need to be in order to adapt to new trends and sudden changes that companies may find themselves facing?

The short answer is software should of course be flexible enough for firms to operate but we need to look deeper into the needs of firms because to meet challenges, it's not just the software that needs to be flexible.

When building software, we consider all manner of factors, including processes and compliance with the resources available to the firm. For every large organisation, there will be smaller organisations with fewer resources available. This means we must reach a balance between customisation and what needs to be locked down to follow a certain process. This is especially true when it comes to meeting compliance and regulation and the same rules apply to every law firm, no matter their size.

However, we know the market is regularly changing and it's our belief that providers must take more responsibility to meet those changes by adapting the software where and when required. It's why we work closely with the market to really understand the changing landscape and implement changes where they are required. It's probably not unfair to suggest that leaving software too malleable could negatively impact a firm, especially when the software becomes so customised that it can become unusable.

In parallel, firms need to consider the malleability of providers in addition to the software itself. For example, we have recently launched EvolveLearning in order to deliver a way for firms to achieve more from their software and be aware of new, upcoming features and functions. We are evolving our approach to service and support because we know firms can achieve better efficiencies from their software.

With this in mind, providers must ensure there is a high level of malleability built into any software so firms can adapt to fit processes but firms must select providers they can trust to quickly adapt the locked-down areas of the software.

If you are looking to get more from your software, talk to one of our team today and request a free demo

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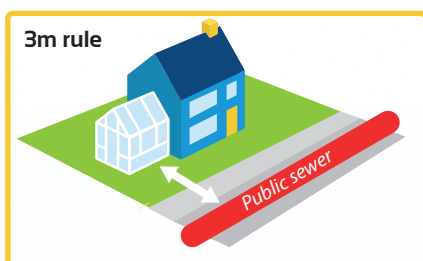
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Sewers and water pipes – What are the rules?



You may often hear people referring to the 3-metre rule, the 6-metre rule or even the 18-metre rule but what do they actually mean?

There are several rules regarding proximity to pipework that water companies have put in place to protect both homeowners and public assets. You may not be familiar with some of these rules and therefore we thought it would be helpful to provide an explanation for each scenario.

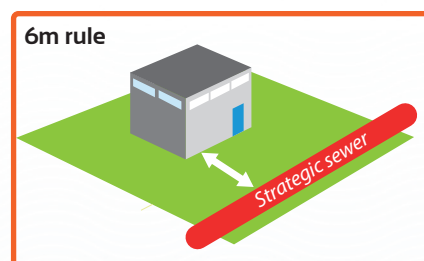


The **3 metre rule** simply means that you cannot build or excavate within 3 metres of a public sewer without consent from the water company.

If your client does decide to carry out works (eg, build an extension), there are different criteria that they will need to meet depending on whether their plans are to build near or over the public sewer.

In 2018, Wessex Water introduced self-certification for development plans where the building works will be taking place between 3 metres and 0.5 metres of public pipes. There are 6 criteria laid out in the guidance notes on Wessex Water's website. Once the client has made sure they meet all of the criteria, they will then be issued with a printable self-certificated build near agreement document. It is recommended that you keep evidence such as pictures and any survey documents to show the criteria was met, as well as keeping the self-certification

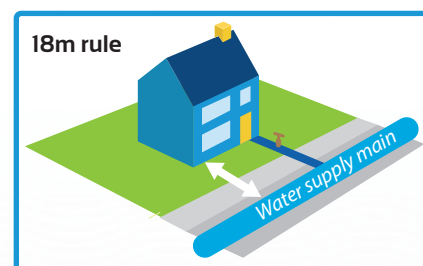
with your title deeds to avoid any delays when selling.



The **6 metre rule** means that you are not permitted to build within 6 metres of a strategic sewer on greenfield sites (undeveloped land).

By definition, a strategic sewer is a sewer of critical importance to the water company. They are generally much larger than other types of sewers and are more commonly (but not exclusively) found in urban areas. They can include pipes carrying foul water, surface water or a combination of the two. There are approximately 1300km of strategic sewers within the Wessex Water region.

On our sewer plans, we depict these as pipes with a thick black outline making them easily identifiable to readers. We will also disclose whether there is a strategic sewer within the boundary in response to Question 2.4 of the CON29DW.



Often less commonly known is the **18 metre rule**. This means that if the distance between a water supply main in the centre of the highway and the property it serves is less than 18 metres, the lateral pipe up to the property boundary and the stop cock included will be public and therefore under the ownership of the water company.

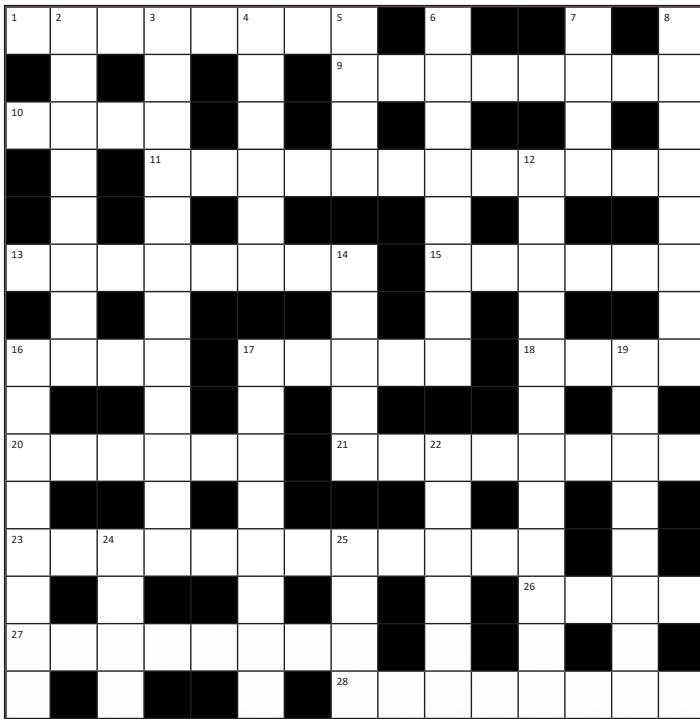
The rule also means that if the distance between the water supply main and the property exceeds 18 metres then the entire supply pipe will be private, and the stop cock will be located at the public main. This scenario often comes into play in more rural areas where the property is located quite some distance from the nearest public water main.

It is important to advise your clients that any private pipework will be their responsibility to maintain.

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ACROSS

1. Verify at point of sale (8)
9. If you're in here, you're away (8)
10. Side made short pastry (4)
11. Boding ill with senseless cargo in scenic twist (12)
13. Bar posh last duck – know what I mean! (8)
15. Give evidence of taking law finals, perhaps (6)
16. I knew if I were in this, internet would be at hand (4)

17. Hotel tucked away in Riviera town (5)
18. Old bird painted by artist about ambassador (4)
20. Rebuke something (6)
21. Daughter overlooked – radically biased? (8)
23. Multiple seller of velocipedes always coming off? (7,5)
26. Villain seen in diagonal setting (4)
27. Greek character involved with hot patient who's nervous (8)

28. Meaningful tale totally drug and bloody (8)

DOWN

2. Setter ends descent into part of underworld? – Capital (8)
3. Proved beyond doubt, at last (12)
4. Unusual peace-keepers lacking energy – surpassed (6)
5. Levy one for transport (4)
6. Doesn't sound quite right to me (8)
7. Half-standard hardy specimen of laurus nobilis (4)
8. Old Kolkata (8)
12. Boarding rail transport without romeo – diverting (12)
14. Award-winning between November and Papa (5)
16. Fagged out climber (8)
17. Fatality not fun, but nice (8)
19. Blown up by developer's kit (8)
22. Man the Spanish Alamo (6)
24. Key opens Pooh rhyme for China (4)
25. Raw ingredient of loveless bedtime rite (4)

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