

NEWS WITH YOU IN MIND

NEWS • ADVICE • TIPS



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+ hall**

WINTER 2025

Welcome to our winter newsletter

What a year it has been! We have had the pleasure of working on a variety of projects from farm sales, diversification schemes, property renovations, planning applications, party wall matters, valuations, boundary disputes, renewable energy schemes, and commercial property matters, to name a few.

Our newsletter once again is filled with articles which we thought you would find useful. You will find tips, market updates and essential advice from our experts, so it is definitely worth a read.

The year ended with the Budget and a small concession in respect of the forthcoming Inheritance Tax measures for farmers and business owners in allowing the full £1 million APR/BPR to be transferable between spouses – make sure you read our article on page 3.

We produce our newsletters twice yearly but provide regular updates throughout the year on our news page on our website. The articles are also emailed to our marketing database (email marketing@robinsonandhall.co.uk to be added). We also add useful updates to our social media platforms and share our expertise in our 'Robinson & Hall Experts Talk...' podcasts. We have launched over 25 so far. Make sure you listen to them via our website podcast page or on our YouTube channel.

If you require further information on the topics or any other land or property related matters, please contact me or one of my colleagues.

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Key considerations for farmers and landowners following the Budget

After many months of speculation, the Chancellor outlined her budget on 26th November. It has not gone without notice by many commentators, including the Office for Budget Responsibility, that it would appear to be a budget of 'spend now and tax later' with many of the changes coming in around or after the next general election.

Whilst there had been rumours of many changes to capital taxation, resulting in a flurry of property transfers being completed up to midnight on 25th November, the changes announced were relatively modest.

As outlined previously by the Farming Minister, there were no significant changes to the Inheritance Tax Reforms which will affect many of our clients from April 2026. There was one small, but crucial, change whereby the £1,000,000 tax-free amount for estates which qualify for Agricultural Property Relief (APR) and Business Property Relief (BPR) will be transferrable between spouses. We understand from the papers that this will also be applicable to where one of the parties has died prior to the changes and no APR/BPR claim was made. This will simplify some tax planning, especially

on smaller farms, as it will remove the requirement to make sure some land is transferred on the first death. However, it does not remove the much more challenging issues in respect of farms and estates with values in excess of £2,650,000 which will now become taxed. It is important to note that the industry seemingly continues to focus solely on houses, buildings and land, forgetting that all the other assets owned by the elderly generation will now be subject to Inheritance Tax.

With a year of planning meetings now under our belt, it is becoming clear that there are a number of solutions that

can help mitigate Inheritance Tax, but is it very much a bespoke solution for each of our clients, requiring careful thought in respect of the assets owned, family situation, and long-term plans.

Within the Budget papers, there was a proposal to introduce the high-value council tax surcharge, the so-called 'Mansion Tax', in 2028. This is where properties worth over £2,000,000 will pay a sliding scale additional charge of between £2,500 and £7,500 per annum. All properties above Band F will be considered for this potential tax. With many farmhouses being caught in these bands (often because the District Valuers back in the 1990s could not find the houses), careful thought will need to be given to this. A consultation is due to be launched shortly in terms of what reliefs may be applicable to this. There is reference to people who have to live in a high-value property, because of their job, possibly qualifying for some sort of exemption. We do not know if this will be brought in and whether it will be applicable

to just, say, a farm manager rather than the owner of the farm. With this being one of the more popular proposed changes, it is our expectation that the rates will increase over the years, whilst the threshold for the value of the properties being caught will likely be frozen. This will result in more properties being caught by this tax over time.

The additional income tax 2% surcharge on income from property lettings introduces three new tax rates. We understand that all allowances are to be set first against other income before applying to this rate. This will affect all our clients who let not just residential property but also commercial property and farmland.

With much of the press focusing on the changes to income tax rates, pension changes, and ISO rules, the upcoming changes to Inheritance Tax appear more certain despite the various rumours. It is important therefore that clients consider how they are preparing for succession as soon as

possible, especially as some options will only be available until April 2026. Valuation will be key to all this, but the ability to understand the farm, the dynamics of the family relationship, and likely costs of any changes result in it being evermore important to rely on good advice.

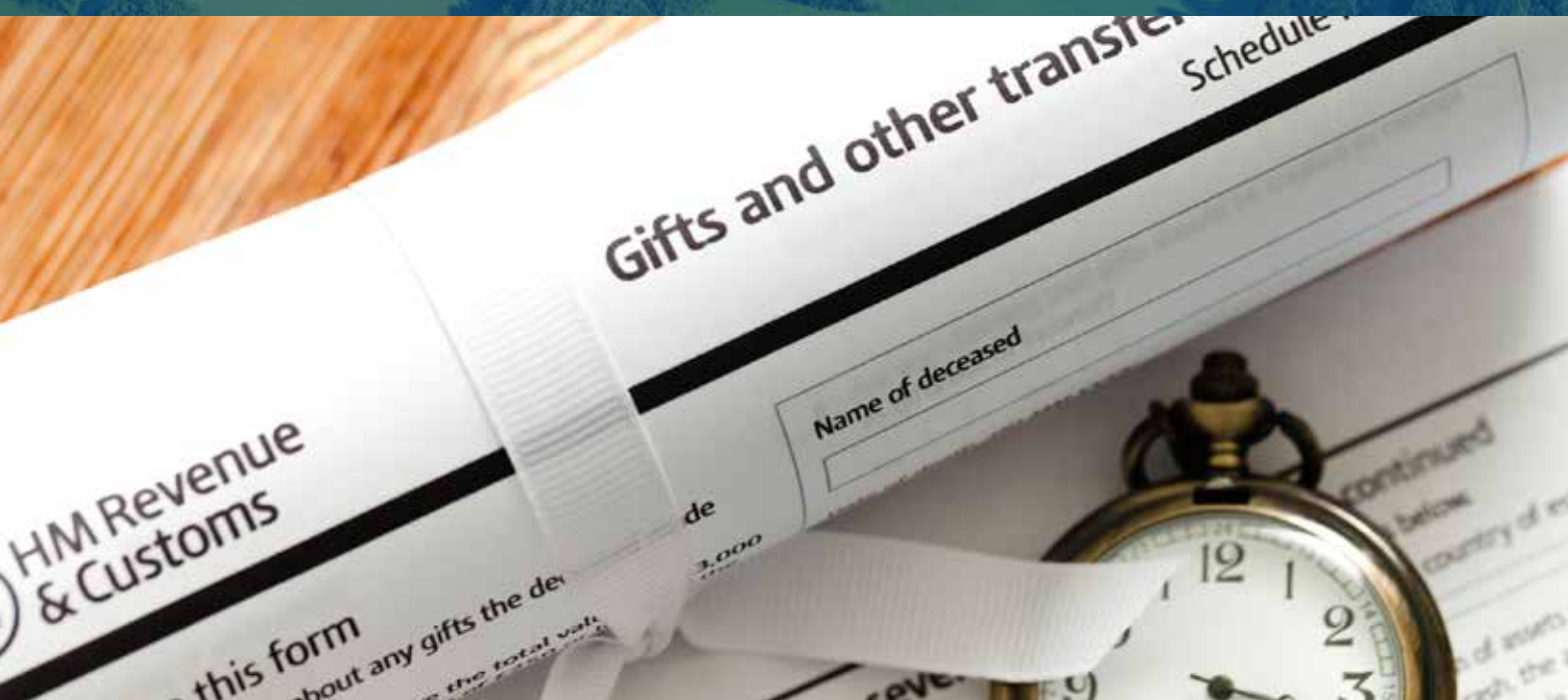
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Farmland Market Update

At the time of writing, the 2025 farmland selling season is drawing to a close. Autumn drilling is coming to an end, the leaves are falling from the trees, and Christmas is around the corner.

As usual, farming has faced a range of difficulties over the past 12 months. Arable commodity prices are disappointingly low, while input prices remain stubbornly high, interest rates are barely creeping downwards, last year's wet autumn turned into a drought in the summer, there is a severe shortage of fodder and straw, and the Chancellor seems determined to overturn some long-established advantages of owning and farming land. The wider economy also appears to be in difficulty with many sectors waiting anxiously for the Autumn Budget announcement, and ongoing instability in Ukraine and Gaza continuing to cast uncertainty over global markets. Manufacturing and logistics sectors are under strain and discretionary spending in leisure and retail remains subdued. Overall, house prices are flat or declining in many areas, and commercial property values remain under pressure.

Of course, it is not all bad news. The livestock sector has enjoyed a couple of better years recently,

few agricultural businesses are under any real pressure from the banks, development proceeds continue to be enjoyed by a lucky few, and autumn drilling has been completed in good conditions.

Perhaps as a result of the above difficulties, we have seen a noticeable increase in properties coming to the market, although this varies considerably from region to region. In our own core area, there has been little land on the market. Nevertheless, despite the increased supply, farmland values have remained remarkably resilient. Prime arable land continues to command strong prices, with few sales below **£10,000 per acre and with £12,000-£14,000 per acre** common where local demand is strong.

We sold two farms over the summer: 842.63 acres in Somerset and 356.26 acres in Buckinghamshire.

In both cases, we received strong, if not overwhelming,

interest with many parties benefiting from rollover proceeds. In both cases, we were able to conclude deals quickly and at more than satisfactory prices for our sellers.

We also sold a block of land for natural capital purposes at close to £10,000 per acre and purchased an equipped farm in Northumberland for a long-standing client.

Predicting the market for 2026 is perhaps more difficult than it has been in recent years. I would predict that the supply of farms will continue at a raised level, but I would expect prices to hold firm given the appetite from farmers with rollover funds. The price of gold remains strong, and likewise, agricultural land is regarded as a stable sought-after and resilient asset in the face of economic uncertainty.

For more information or to discuss marketing your farm or land for sale or to let, then please contact me.



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Halse Farm, Somerset

Development Land Market Update

A year into Labour's planning reforms

We are now over a year into the Labour Government's tenure; the development land market is showing signs of both renewed activity and persistent challenges. Labour's ambitious target of 1.5 million homes over five years has injected urgency into planning reform, with the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) now beginning to influence land supply and developer behaviour.

The introduction of the "grey belt" lower-quality green belt land earmarked for development has opened new opportunities, particularly in areas in which Robinson & Hall operates. The reinstatement of mandatory housing targets and the requirement for a five-year housing land supply have also pushed local authorities to bring forward more sites. Promoters who we work with have already gained success at appeal on a number of sites

where the local authority could not show a 5-year land supply.

Planning activity and strategic land

The strategic land market continues to become increasingly competitive as the number of land promoters pursuing opportunities continues to increase, which assists landowners in receiving increasingly competitive terms. However, landowners should review land promoters' terms holistically to ensure that they sign up with the right partner, not just the promotion partner offering the lowest promotion fee.

Affordable housing and Section 106

Labour's reforms have placed affordable housing at the forefront. In most cases, grey belt sites will be required to have 50% of the homes as affordable. Housing associations are currently active on certain sites as they have money to

spend to meet their internal housing portfolio targets. We are finding on smaller sites of approximately 50 units, where we have been involved in the sales process, affordable housing associations are outbidding small to medium-sized developers. This is likely to be partly due to small to medium size enterprise (SME) developers being more affected by the current interest rates, and whilst the SME developers need to make a profit, the Affordable Housing Associations (AHAs) do not need to do so. If the Bank of England's base rate is lowered, we may start to see more competitive offers from SME developers, although the Bank of England base rate held at 4% in November and it is unclear whether it will stay at the same level after the next review. Landowners should also be aware of the implications of selling to an AHA to include tax implications, which must be considered to achieve a successful sale.

Despite global trade uncertainty, inflation, and interest rate volatility, the development land market continues to be resilient, likely due to the chronic under supply of housing.

New towns

The UK Government has confirmed plans to develop 12 new towns across England as part of Labour's aim to tackle the housing crisis and stimulate economic growth. These towns are expected to deliver at least 10,000 homes each. We are actively advising a number of landowners who hold land in or around some of the designated areas. Please also see our new towns article below.

The November Budget

While reforms may unlock new opportunities, they

also introduce new risks and uncertainties which developers, landowners and investors will need to adapt to. We continue to support landowners and developers in navigating this evolving landscape, securing promotion agreements, and unlocking value from strategic and consented land.

At Robinson & Hall, we specialise in helping landowners realise the full value of their land through well-structured promotion and option agreements. With planning policy evolving rapidly and demand for new housing remaining strong, now is an ideal time to explore the development potential of your land. We work with our clients to:

- + Identify suitable sites for development

- + Identify suitable promotion partners
- + Negotiate favourable terms with promoters
- + Guide you through the planning process
- + Maximise the value of your land once planning consent is secured

If you own land that might be suitable for development, we can help you navigate the complexities of planning and development with confidence. Please contact me.



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Cambridge Arc, this is an area the Government sees as a growth corridor with billions being spent on improving the economic, social and environmental future of the area. There are already significant infrastructure changes underway with improvements to the road network around the Black Cat roundabout and Caxton Gibbet roundabout. In addition to this, the East West Rail is proposed to connect East Anglia to Oxford, and as part of these plans, Tempsford is earmarked as having a new station which the Government will now look to bring forward. Finally, there's the small matter of Universal Studios announcing it's coming to Bedford, with Tempsford only a short drive away. In addition to the Government's major proposal for a new town at Tempsford, Urban & Civic PLC, who successfully promoted Alconbury Weald, a former airfield, is promoting the old Tempsford Airfield. They have options to acquire over 2,000 acres of land in the area, which would be in some of the initial phases, and plan to bring forward thousands of homes and a new science and technology/business park. In addition to this, the development will

likely deliver other services and amenities such as shops, cafés, community, leisure and education facilities.

With there being two sides to every story, it's fair to say this latest news has split opinion. The Government's New Towns Taskforce latest report in September describes the Tempsford proposal as "a unique opportunity with potential to provide over 40,000 homes in time in a standalone greenfield settlement at the intersection of the East Coast Main Line and East West Rail, in the heart of the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor." Where the Government sees this as a potential opportunity, the locals of Tempsford are pleading with the Government to listen to the people and their concerns before making their final decision.

Bedfordshire is not the only area impacted by the drive for housing, with Heyford Park, a former RAF base near Bicester, earmarked to deliver more than 13,000 dwellings. In addition to this, Milton Keynes (MK), which was first designated as a new town in 1967, has been identified as a location to deliver more homes

in both the centre and as part of large extensions on the edge of the city. As part of the MK plans, there will be a focus on delivering a new rapid mass transport system, correcting the car dependency designed into the original new town and potentially providing a new junction onto the M1 motorway.

What is for certain is that the landscape of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire is going to change over the next decade.

Should you have land or property in the area and wish to discuss how the above proposals might impact you, please do not hesitate to contact me. Whether it be a development, planning, agricultural or commercial query, we are best placed to provide you with professional expertise.



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Growth on the Horizon, for Beds & Bucks

The 600 residents of Tempsford, a small village within Bedfordshire, face an anxious wait to learn whether the Government will push ahead with plans to build thousands of homes on their doorstep.

With the Labour Party setting

a target of 1,500,000 homes over this Parliament, it was going to require something drastic to get anywhere near these figures. In September, it was announced that the Government is to push ahead and select a number of new towns from a shortlist of 12 locations. Much to the dismay

of the Tempsford residents, they are not only on this list but are identified as a priority, along with Leeds and Crew Hill.

Tempsford is set to change dramatically over the next decade. Sitting within the heart of the Oxford to

The dream of diversification – can it be turned into reality?

The economics of many farm businesses have over recent times encouraged many diversifications. At Robinson & Hall, our team of surveyors and planners has seen a vast array of diversification, but all have required careful coordination and planning.

There are prior approval processes for reuse of agricultural buildings which ought to allow a simple approval process for certain categories of development, but there are conditions and hoops to jump through. The small print can make or

break a viable diversification, so we advise taking professional advice.

A planning feasibility study is always a good starting point to ensure site constraints and planning policies are fully understood before starting out on the development process and committing time, energy and funds to a scheme.

Where a full planning application is required, it is often imperative to consult the local authority via a pre-application enquiry as whilst

the policy is written in black and white, it is for the local authority officers to interpret their policies, and we often see that diversification schemes do not fit neatly into every policy. One such example and contradiction could be:

Policies directing employment growth to be sited within defined employment areas. With other policies encouraging reuse of redundant buildings and/or employment opportunities in the rural economy, it is imperative

to get officer opinion (as far as is feasible) to verify our interpretation of the multitude of national and local policies and importantly how the officers weigh up any conflicting or judgemental policies.

As there are many considerations when selecting your diversification project, it is important not to rush this decision and ensure you have considered a number of the below key factors:

Firstly, why?

Whether you wish to improve the tax efficiency of the business, explore a specific new interest or simply generate potential additional income streams, it is important that the decision is made for the right reason. This new venture will sit alongside your established farm enterprise, however it cannot compensate for an under-performing core business.

High level considerations

Once the decision is made to diversify, choosing the asset is important, i.e. the vacant/redundant building, where it is situated and how it will impact on the current farming operation. Does the barn/land have suitable access and services and what type of planning will be required?

Depending on the diversification, consideration may need to be given to market demand and competition, funding availability, the target audience, and the availability of workforce.

Financial aspects

Now the asset has been identified, what will it cost to change the use, whether that be conversion to an office/dwelling, servicing the glamping pods, or setting up the wedding venue?

Consideration will also need to be given to tax implications, cost of marketing, insurance, and other matters such as planning and professional services.

The green light

The once pipe dream is now inching towards reality. It is important to focus the attention on ensuring this new business venture succeeds, whilst the core business operations do not suffer.

If you require advice or are considering a diversification then please get in touch.



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Winter maintenance tips

Now is a perfect time to remind ourselves of the simple steps we can take to protect properties and avoid unnecessary expense.

Roof repairs

Undertaking small roof maintenance jobs in a timely manner (such as refixing loose tiles which might, if unattended, be dislodged by heavy winds) can prevent leaks and damp that can cause further damage and deterioration to the roof structure and help prepare your home for winter.

Check for missing or loose tiles and slates, any cracks or holes, and damaged or missing flashings. On flat roofs, look for splits and pooling water, checking for evidence of staining or damage to the ceilings below.

Gutters and downpipes

This is an essential task when preparing your home for the wet winter weather. Defective guttering can soak the structure below, and heat is lost much quicker through a damp wall than a dry wall. Moisture in walls



can also freeze in the pores of the wall, expanding and causing damage to the face of the wall leading to further problems. So take a walk around your home on a rainy day and check that water is discharging properly from gutters and downpipes and not running down the walls. Clear out the gutters and drains from time to time to remove the leaf debris which can clog gutters at this time of year.

Other building repairs

While some ventilation is essential in homes, such as trickle vents in windows, undertaking draught proofing measures to address problems can be a relatively

simple and a cost-effective way of improving your home's thermal performance. Weather sealing strips are readily available to buy online or in DIY stores and are a simple fix.

Check the property for cracks and gaps where moisture may enter including the pointing between brickwork, defective windows and doors.

Services, maintenance and safety

Get your chimney professionally swept

If you have a working fire or log burning stove, this task is ideally best undertaken before you start using it this winter.

Sweeping will not only improve the efficiency of your chimney or flue but help to prevent chimney fires, ensuring any potential blockages and soot build-up are removed.

It's best to call in a professional — find one via HETAS or the National Association of Chimney Sweeps. The job should take less than an hour.

Importantly, your chimney sweep should provide you with a certificate on completion, which is key to household insurers should you ever be in the unfortunate position of claiming for a chimney fire.

Heating systems

It's a job we often put off, but booking an annual boiler service could be money well spent, particularly in this day and age of rising energy bills. When in your home for the service, heating engineers can advise on and make efficiency measures, ensuring your home is heated as economically as possible.

Getting your chimney swept and bleeding radiators to remove air so that they operate efficiently are both steps which will allow you to get the most from your heating system.

Lagging pipes to prevent heat loss and bursts

'Lagging' or insulating pipes will help to reduce heat loss from your heating and hot water system and, more importantly, helps to prevent water freezing within pipes which could cause them to burst. Often plumbing is located in cold areas of the home, such as in uninsulated

loft spaces and garages, which can exacerbate this issue in winter.

Insulate outdoor taps

Before the winter weather sets in, it's also a good idea to turn your attention to outdoor taps. As temperatures drop, water within outdoor taps and hosepipes can freeze and potentially burst. The good news is there are some quick, inexpensive steps to help prevent this.

The first is to empty and disconnect any hosepipes connected to outdoor taps. The second is to cover your tap — purpose-made insulated tap covers cost very little and are easy to install.

Run the heating at a low temperature during void periods

If you're going to be away from your property then consider running the heating at a low temperature to prevent freezing.

General housekeeping

Make sure you are aware of the location of the stopcock and understand what to do in case of an emergency.

Check oil or Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) levels

If you have an off-mains heating system, ensuring you have sufficient fuel, be it oil or LPG, is a key step in preparing your home for winter. No one wants to be without heating and potentially hot water when the weather is at its coldest! What's more, suppliers are often busiest in the winter months and so delivery times could be longer than normal.

Keep firewood protected from the elements

If you do have a wood burner or open fire, protecting seasoned firewood from the elements is a key outdoor job in winter. So, now is the time to invest in a dedicated log store, or to build your own.

Paving

In anticipation of freezing weather, make sure you have access to salt, sand or ash for application to paving where this might become slippery.

And lastly....

Make sure outdoor lights are working

Outdoor wall lights are important both for safety (illuminating paths, drives and the front door on dark winter nights) and security. So, ensuring they are working and clean and free of debris is a quick but useful task before winter.

If you don't feel confident inspecting your own buildings, talk to us. We regularly carry out inspections and advise property owners for ongoing maintenance not only for the forthcoming year but over the next 5 – 10 years so owners can properly budget and plan.



For more information, please contact me.

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How best to approach commercial rentals

Successful commercial rentals start with an understanding of the market and an effective strategy when it comes to putting your property on the market to let. If you are a landlord who wants to let their commercial property, whether it's a warehouse, storage unit, office space or retail unit, you would need to consider the following:

1. Property type, size and layout – each commercial property has its own tenant demand, and you need to consider whether you want to let it “as it is” or “refurbished”. Another

approach would be reconfiguring the layout as some smaller units could let faster.

2. Instruct a chartered surveyor or commercial agent - working with a RICS-accredited surveyor or commercial agent would give you huge advantages such as:

- + Advice on market rents, lease terms, business rates and incentives.
- + Guidance on planning permission and use classes verification.

+ Access to various online markets such as Rightmove Commercial, OnTheMarket, LoopNet UK and many more.

+ Representation during negotiations and thorough guidance through Heads of Terms and the due diligence process.

3. Preparing your property for letting – you would need to ensure compliance with EPC regulations (currently EPC rating \geq E is the minimum legal standard), safety checks such as asbestos, electrical and fire safety, and any necessary repairs you would need to carry out to the property. Also, an important part of a successful letting is to present the property in a professional, clean and accessible way.

4. Understanding the key commercial lease principle - your commercial agent or solicitor would be in the best position to advise you

on the following legal requirements when you start preparing the lease:

+ Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 – what are the tenant's rights to renew?

+ Full Repairing & Insuring (FRI) lease – what is the repairs structure and does the tenant cover most repairs?

+ Rent review – how to set out the rent review clause and process.

+ Service charge – how to structure service charge mechanisms.

+ Dilapidations – end of lease repairs and who is responsible for them.

Case Study

Location: Bedfordshire / Hertfordshire border
Size: 958 sq ft



Our client owns an office building which was not in good condition when the previous tenant vacated.

After inspecting the office spaces, our commercial property surveyors recommended that the landlord install a new toilet and kitchenette on the ground floor and upgrade the lighting throughout the building. We were successful in identifying a tenant in a matter of weeks.

For more information or to find out how we can help you, please contact me.



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An update on the Renters' Rights Bill

The Renters' Rights Bill achieved Royal Assent on 27th October 2025. This is a significant step in the Government's ongoing reforms to the private rental sector. The next phase involves the phased introduction of the Bill's provisions, with most changes proposed to take effect on 1st May 2026. Additional measures are expected to come into force later in 2026 as part of the staged implementation process.

Following the Bill's enactment, the Government has granted additional enforcement powers to local council housing authorities. These include the authority to enter business premises, with or without a warrant, to investigate, seize documents and take enforcement action against poor practices and non-compliance. Breaches could result in substantial financial penalties. These new powers are expected to be introduced on 27th December 2025.

Landlords that self-manage their rental properties face increasing risk in ensuring full compliance to current and forthcoming legislation. Entrusting an industry specialist is more crucial than ever to offer expert guidance, ensure ever-evolving compliance is adhered to, and to avoid costly penalties.

To summarise, the introduction of the Bill includes the below changes:

Abolishment of the Section 21 – expected implementation date: 1st May 2026

One of the major changes included in the Bill is the abolishment of the Section 21 no fault eviction notice. However, there will be numerous grounds under the Section 8 notice to regain possession of a property. For example:

- ⊕ Breach of terms in the tenancy agreement
- ⊕ Anti-social tenant behaviour
- ⊕ Serious or constant rent arrears
- ⊕ If a landlord wishes to sell the property
- ⊕ A family member wishes to move in

Many industry professionals suggest the changes will increase the likelihood of accrued rent arrears across the country. Therefore, Robinson & Hall offers the additional protection of a rent and legal policy at the start of each tenancy. This offers the peace of mind that the rental income is safeguarded

and a legal team is on hand if required.

End of fixed term tenancies - expected implementation date: 1st May 2026

The law intends to give tenants flexibility by introducing assured periodic tenancies to replace fixed term contracts. However, the tenant's notice period will be extended to two months' notice, replacing the current one month's notice, to allow time to source replacement tenants. As we appreciate that a vacant investment property is costly, as part of our management service, when a tenant gives notice we immediately notify the landlord, discuss the re-letting strategy, install a marketing board, commence advertising on leading marketing property portals, and organise viewings to source replacement tenants as swiftly as possible.

Bidding wars - expected implementation date: 1st May 2026

In an aim to prevent inflated rents, lettings agents will no longer be able to accept bids over the asking price, which will therefore bring an end to bidding wars. This means it is imperative that a landlord chooses the correct agent to value an investment property to ensure market value rent is



achieved. Prior to advertising the property, we will carry out a market appraisal which is prepared using comprehensive reports which show the yearly growth in rents in the local area and recently let properties (often properties we ourselves have let previously) to ensure landlords have a clear understanding of the realistic return on their investment.

Rent reviews - expected implementation date: 1st May 2026

It is possible to propose an annual rent increase in line with market value rents with evidence of comparable properties to be supplied on request. This means it is necessary for an agent to supply accurate rental figures to the landlord each year as tenants can raise a dispute with the First Tier Tribunal. We continue to carry out market research to propose the correct rental figure, allowing us to negotiate and, once agreed upon, implement the new rent.

Pets - expected implementation date: 1st May 2026

Agents and landlords will no longer be permitted to unreasonably refuse tenants with pets. While we are unable to include blanket bans, there will be grounds for refusal including lease restrictions, the property being unsuitable for a particular breed, and severe allergies to certain pets.

National landlord database - expected implementation date: autumn 2026

The primary objective of establishing a landlord database is to promote greater transparency in relation to regulatory compliance, safety checks and property condition standards. This is to ensure adherence to legal requirements and to facilitate the identification and removal of rogue landlords from the sector. Included in our management service, a landlord will promptly be notified of any upcoming safety

checks, which we will organise to be undertaken to prevent unnecessary penalties.

Awaab's Law - expected implementation date: timing to be confirmed

Under this law, agents and landlords will be required to address serious repairs that are classed as health hazards. It is essential to carry out regular routine inspections to address issues swiftly and efficiently to prevent further complications and unnecessary costs.

For more information or to book a no obligation lettings appraisal, please contact me.



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Help! I need to make a building insurance claim

It can be a very traumatic and stressful experience if your property has been affected by the inclement weather or you have experienced an unfortunate fire.

For any significant claim following a fire, flood or structural damage, your insurance company will appoint a loss adjuster and their own surveyors to investigate the details of the damage and manage the

claims process. However, many people do not realise that under their insurance policy, you can employ your own surveyor to manage the reinstatement works on your behalf. These costs, along with all other reasonable expenses, are included as part of the claim. Assuming you are adequately insured, it will not cost you a penny to get impartial, quality and local advice for the duration of the reinstatement works.

Why choose Robinson & Hall?

- + We can react quickly and organise any emergency works to make the property safe and secure. We can arrange installation of any necessary dehumidifiers or specialist apparatus as required.
- + We provide a full service including applying for planning or listed building consent if this is required.

- + We liaise with the insurer's loss adjuster and ensure you are obtaining the correct solution and what's right for the property.

- + We prepare a detailed specification of remedial works together with detailed construction drawings to apply for building regulations consent as appropriate.

- + We advise upon local contractors to tender for the reinstatement works. As long as the contractor's tender is competitive, the policyholder is able to appoint the builder they feel most comfortable with.

- + As experienced chartered surveyors, we arrange appropriate inspections to keep an eye on the builder and provide all contract administration services to reinstate the damage.

- + Assuming you are adequately insured, our

professional fees will be included in your claim (above your own agreed policy excess).

We understand the stress and upheaval caused by events such as flooding, fire or structural impact damage and endeavour to provide swift reinstatement of your property. We have a vast array of experience dealing with all types of property, especially historic and unique buildings. Many insurance companies often have lots of projects on the go at any one time over a large geographical area. They do not have the time to provide a tailored, bespoke service to each project. Consequently, they cannot provide the same attention to detail that we can, often missing important elements critical to the smooth completion of the project.

Should you have the misfortune of suffering a significant insurance claim, we recommend you appoint an independent chartered

building surveyor to oversee the reinstatement works.

If you choose to appoint Robinson & Hall, you can be sure that you are using a qualified construction professional who understands the processes and has you and your building's best interests as their primary concern.

We can help reduce your stress and anxiety and reinstate your property. Please get in touch if you would like to appoint us to look after your interests.



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Auction results and what to expect next

This year saw our new Robinson & Hall Auctions website reach its one-year anniversary in October 2025.



The website was a culmination of a year-long project which started with us looking from a critical viewpoint and asking who we were trying to appeal and offer a service to? Our conclusion to those initial questions was that we knew we already had a following from experienced auction buyers and sellers, but for our business to grow, we needed to appeal to buyers and sellers less familiar with auction who, as a means of sale or

purchase, may find auction ideal. As with many such projects, the further we delved into it, the more we wanted to add, trying to strike a balance between simplicity and being informative. The result has been very well received. We have helpful guides for those new to buying and selling, plus helpful links to useful and proven third parties such as solicitors and lenders.

How have our property auctions performed in 2025?

We were thrilled that our first sale of the year in February gave us a strong start. Compared to February 2024, we sold more lots and raised a remarkable 50% more in capital value for our clients. Our next sale in April was our biggest sale of the year in terms of the amount raised (£7,355,500), and we maintained a consistently high success rate in terms of lots sold against lots offered. This year, our lowest success rate was 82%, and our highest was 94%, with an average

of 85.4% of lots sold. These are results we are very proud of, and for over a decade we have achieved remarkably similar and consistent results, despite some very volatile market conditions.



House in Gerrards Cross which sold in our June auction.

In our June sale, we broke another record, this time with our highest value in-room sale. This was a substantial house in Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire. Various issues had seen two aborted sales through the referring partner agent, so the sellers were delighted when they saw bidding run from the £1,200,000 guide price all the

way up to £1,640,000. This was £40,000 more than the last aborted sale, with the whole process taking just 4 weeks from instructing us to sell to exchanging contracts!

Our October sale saw another record smashed; the highest multiple of the guide price to the sale price. A small half-acre of self-seeded wood, which although had road frontage was without an entrance. It had been in the same family ownership since 1963 and was very hard to estimate where the value might lay. A guide price of £10,000 was set, yet the sale price exceeded all expectations with it achieving a staggering 16 times the guide price, proving the old adage 'the lower you start, the higher you go' to be correct. October also saw our biggest sale in terms of lot numbers with 52 catalogue entries, although late legal packs from some solicitors saw seven lots withdrawn.



Self-seeded wood which sold in our October auction.

Something of a feather in our cap is that we were selected by the program makers of a new Sarah Beeny property TV show. "I Bought It At Auction" will air in the spring and there will be six episodes. Feedback from Little Gem TV, who attended and filmed the October event, was extremely positive.

At this time of writing, our final sale of the year is ahead of us, being held on 10th December, but already we have exceeded 2024 in terms of lots offered, lots sold and the amount raised.

What to expect in 2026?

More of the same in terms of service to both sellers and buyers. We sincerely believe that in treating buyers fairly, without opaque and punitive costs, having transparent and accurate descriptions, legal packs presented in good time and open bidding, this brings better results for our sellers. Time and again we are complimented by some very seasoned buyers who say they always look to buy just through us.

That said, the auction department is never looking to stand still. As our investment in modern marketing practices evolves, we are attracting sellers from further afield. We will also be looking to expand the team with another Auction Lister, and of course we are looking forward to being on Channel 4 TV.

If you would like to discuss whether your lot is suitable for auction and to book a no obligation, free auction appraisal, please contact me.



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Jottings from a retiring Building Surveyor

What a change I've seen in 40 years! I have had the pleasure of working in and around Bedford throughout that period with two local firms.

On my second day in full time work, I was given the task of measuring stockpiles of gravel and sand at a pit in Wyboston. Now, that pit is no longer, having been buried under St Neots bypass. By coincidence, the Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet dualling will supersede that bypass in 2027, and I was involved in scheduling buildings around that proposed new road in 2024.

Drawings

Back in the day, drawing was on tracing paper with pen and ink, often resulting in ink stained fingers. Changes to drawings were laboriously made by scraping with a razor blade, hoping that your client or boss did not change their mind too often and that a hole did not appear in the drawing. The developing and printing of drawings used an ammonia-filled printer, which often jammed in damp weather. Retrieving the situation made the eyes sting, and no breathing apparatus was provided. Today, all drawings are done by computer-aided

design with the ability to change, adapt and evolve schemes at the click of a button.

Construction

Construction was significantly different. I remember my first boss, who had over 50 years' experience, being shocked when I informed him that external wall cavities need filling with insulation to meet new building regulations. Something I am not sure he ever came around to thinking was a good idea – cavities were designed to stop damp transfer and therefore should not be filled. Perhaps I had the audacity of a 'very fresh out of Polytechnic' surveyor at the time. Changes have occurred in the built environment in Bedford over my time here. Indeed, one warehouse in Kingsway was refurbished after a serious fire, only to be knocked down about ten years later to be replaced by a block of flats. Others have been revamped several times. Some have been preserved for future generations, such as Bunyan Meeting in Mill Street.

The Party Wall Act

At Polytechnic in London, we were given a lecture on The Party Wall Act – it lasted all

of 10 minutes. The lecturer stated that as it related only to London at that time and no-one on the course would want to work in London, a lecture on the subject would be pointless. Yet in 1997, the Party Wall etc Act 1996 went nationwide and in these latter years has formed a large part of my workload.

The time has come to hand over to my younger colleagues, with David Cook mainly taking on my workload. Retiring from full time employment – yes, but still continuing on a consultancy basis focusing on party wall work and a few retained clients.

Robinson & Hall thanks Stuart for his incredible work over the years and wishes him well for the future.

For more information or to discuss your project with us, please contact David Cook.



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Stuart Brown is working part-time from 2026.

Company news

New Starters

We have welcomed three new starters since our last newsletter.



Emma Ilsley joined us as Assistant Rural Surveyor in September 2025. She has worked in various roles prior, including working on a rural estate where she got involved with tractor work, giving hands-on experience to achieve strong crop yields and high specification varieties. This role developed to providing property management services, as well as analysis of farm-gathered data to achieve higher efficiency outputs across all farming operations.

Emma's goals are to maximise on-the-job learning together with gaining educational insight from her Masters in Rural Estate and Land Management, with a view to completing RICS, and later, CAAV qualifications.

Xander Bennet also joined us as Assistant Building Surveyor in September 2025. He has always had a keen interest in the construction industry, having had many family

members work in a range of construction roles. He works in our Building & Project Consultancy department so is surrounded by many staff who can offer him great advice and lead at the start of his career.

Whilst working, he is also studying a degree in building surveying, with an aim of eventually becoming a Chartered Surveyor.

Clare Rees joined us in June 2025 as a Secretary to the Rural Property & Business team. She has over 15 years of experience working in a variety of administration roles, including for the NHS and Grosvenor Limited. She acts as a support for her department, helping with a variety of administrative tasks.

Trip to the Circus!

We had the pleasure of watching 'Come Alive' in London in September, followed by a lovely meal at La Fortuna, Kensington. The show was incredible. If you like The Greatest Showman then you must go and see it. We all had a blast and thank you to the partners for treating us.

Christmas Donations

We shall be making donations to East Anglian Air Ambulance, Willen Hospice, British Heart Foundation and Great Ormond Street Hospital in lieu of sending Christmas cards.

Our offices will be closed for Christmas and the New Year from 1 pm on Wednesday 24th December until 9 am on Friday 2nd January 2026.

Podcasts

I have launched many more podcasts since our last newsletter, including a podcast on 'winter maintenance tips', 'the commercial market and property management' and 'having trouble gaining planning permission?' to name a few. Please visit our website podcast page to have a listen.

Events

We have held two seminars this winter on Inheritance Tax changes and other topical subjects all farmers and landowners need to be aware of. We hope you enjoyed them. To make sure you are on the list of seminars for next year, please email marketing@robinsonandhall.co.uk.

For marketing queries or to join our database, please don't hesitate to contact me.



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