Rostons Farming Focus
AUTUMN 2020

CHARTERED SURVEYORS • COUNTRY HOUSE & FARMS • ENTITLEMENTS • PLANNING • LITIGATION • FINANCE

Meet the team

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Director
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Director
MRICS, FAAV

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Consultant Director
MRICS, FAAV

Robert Ikin
Consultant Director
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Holly Wybergh
Chartered Surveyor
MRICS, FAAV

Jonathan Bell
Chartered Surveyor
MRICS, FAAV

Georgina Simonds
Graduate
Surveyor

Alice Kearns
Graduate
Surveyor

Louise Roberts
Accounts
Manager

Sophie Cliffe
Professional
Support

Sophie Barnes
Professional
Support

Sue Goldstone
Agency
Support

Georgina Jones
Professional
Support

Rostons Village & Country Homes

Residential sales have always been an area where Rostons have seen an opportunity but until now, have been unable to service this marketplace. We are now pleased to announce with the 'dream team' of Robert Ikin and Sue Goldstone, reunited at Rostons, we will now be dealing with residential property in the rural villages around Chester.

Robert Ikin, who is Mr Residential Agency in Chester is heading the development of this area of business, ably assisted with Sue Goldstone, who was his colleague for many years and ran the Cavendish Ikin branch in Tarporley.

The Rostons Village & Country Homes Department is centred on providing service and utilising modern technology in this ever-changing world.

With clear transparent pricing and two levels of service, Vendors will have the flexibility to choose how they wish their property to be marketed and dealt with and at what cost.

Please visit our new and improved website to see how this will operate.

If you have friends, neighbours or acquaintances who wish to discuss the sale of their property on a no-obligation basis, please do not hesitate to contact the Village & Country Homes team, based at the Rostons office 01829 773000

Rostons are pleased to announce that their new website has gone live in recent weeks.

Please visit www.rostons.co.uk to see the huge range in services which we offer together with news and topical information that will be of interest to you.

Further Successful Farm Dispersal Sale

Following the success of the farm dispersal sales which took place pre-COVID-19, in early September a further farm sale took place in Capenhurst which was extremely successful, showing the benefit of an on-farm machinery dispersal sale.

Andrew Wallace, with years of experience in conducting these sales, is readily available to talk to anyone that is considering a sale. Rostons have now invested in their own auction computer system which will enable not only farm dispersals but online sales as appropriate in the future.

If you would like to know more, please speak to Andrew Wallace or Sophie Barnes.

HyNet North West – New Major Gas Main

There are proposals for a new low carbon hydrogen production and distribution project across Liverpool, Manchester and Cheshire.

It is proposed that hydrogen will be produced from natural gas and sent via a new pipeline to a range of industrial sites over the North West. The carbon dioxide will be captured and stored in Liverpool Bay gas fields.

The scheme supports the Governments Clean Growth Strategy and will look to achieve the UK's emissions reduction target. More information will be available in the next farming focus in the New Year.

Cheshire Agricultural Trade Fair

We are pleased to confirm that Rostons will be supporting the inaugural Cheshire Agricultural Trade Fair at the Cheshire County Showground on the **29th October**, Covid-19 restrictions permitting.

This is a FREE event for you to attend and it is seen by us as a welcome opportunity to catch up with you our clients in an informal setting. Having missed so many of the agricultural shows over the last few years but also, something that is necessary from a social and welfare perspective, as we enter the lonely months of winter.

We hope Covid-19 permitting that this event will run and we would be delighted to catch up with current and prospective clients.

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Countryside Productivity Small Grant Scheme - Round 3

Now open

The third round of the scheme is now open, allowing farmers to apply for grants between £3,000 - £12,000 to invest in equipment that will help achieve improvements in welfare, husbandry and technical efficiency.

This is the last round and closes on the 4th of November. Contact us to dicuss your eligibility as soon as possible.

Rostons Covid-19 Operating Procedures

Rostons continues to operate the business under the Covid-19 restrictions imposed by the Government.

At the time of writing, we continue to be based from our offices and able to attend meetings with clients and professionals, either on-farm or in our large meeting room, socially distancing as necessary or via video conference call which in our view is the last resort as ideally more is achieved by face to face meetings, albeit usually across a large space in a farmyard or barn on the farm.

Several months ago, the team was split into two and many of you will realise we continue to operate as two distinct bubbles, so that should we get a Covid-19 incident amongst one of the teams, the business can continue functioning without the whole team having to voluntary self-isolate.

Whilst initially we worked one week in the main office and one week from home, the decision was soon made that one of the unique elements of the Rostons business is that we have a very strong team ethos and enjoy the team camaraderie that exists.

Accordingly, we made the business decision to invest in a secondary office on a short term basis such that instead of having to work from home, the team that is not in West View House can work from a satellite office, where we still get the benefits of interacting as a team which ultimately ensures that you, the client, gets a top-quality standard of service and advice.

New Team Members

Our Placement Student, Toby Galliers, has returned to his University studies to complete his final year and we thank Toby for all his efforts during what has been a challenging 12 months for a young trainee in the profession. Toby has been exemplarily in his professionalism and willingness to adopt the Rostons core values and for this reason, we are pleased to report that he has agreed to take a Graduate role with us in 12 months time.

In the meantime, local lass Alice Kearns has joined us having

completed her Masters at Harper Adams and is settling well into the team. A local girl, who for many years has relief milked in the locality, as well as working in the equine industry, she has now joined the team and is training to become a qualified Chartered Surveyor and Agricultural Valuer.

HS2 Phase 2B Western leg design refinements and safeguarding

On 7th October 2020 HS2 published further plans which include a consultation and extensions to the current safeguarding areas.

The consultation in relation to the North West includes:

- The addition of Crewe Northern Connection and changes to the design of Crewe North Rolling Stock Depot
- Changes to the design of Manchester Airport High Speed Station

In addition, there has been 3 route wide updates which are as follows:

1. A feedback report and Government decision following the June 2019 Consultation. This includes confirmation of the following:

- Temporary construction railhead and permanent maintenance facility at Ashly.
- Passive provision for two junctions at High Legh

2. Updated permanent and temporary land taken plan.

3. An update to safeguarding

The whole route has been impacted by safeguarding however more concerningly, there have been some major new land holdings included for borrow pits, both close to the

line and in the Byley area.

In the next week or so, HS2 will be issuing additional Licences for Environmental Surveys and Ground Investigation Surveys to those landowners affected, some of which would not have been contacted beforehand.

Our advice is always early engagement with acquiring authorities. If you are contacted by WSP or HS2 please contact; Jonathan, Tom, or Tony.

Property Market as Covid-19 Continues

Following the lockdown, Rostons released to the market a variety of properties ranging from residential small holdings to pony paddocks and other blocks of agricultural land.

Predominantly interest has been strong and sales have been achieved far beyond expectations.

It is, however, clear that location is even more important and equally, there is the usual time wasters in the market, who talk a good story but when it comes to the crunch, do not proceed further. Probably in our experience, the easy part of any sale is creating the interest and getting the offers. The hardest part continues to be the post-sale liaison with Solicitors, Purchasers and Vendors to ensure that the sale progresses in an orderly manner through to completion.

Let's cut the CAP!

A new agricultural policy outside of the EU is on the horizon, it is the most important piece of legislation to come before farming, particularly for England for many decades.

These proposals have landed with us at the same time as the most serious crisis of our generation, Covid-19, however, it has, on a positive note, helped focus on the matter of food security which often goes forgotten!

We could write a whole two sides of Farming Focus just on this topic alone, but as the heading says – we will cut out the unnecessary and focus on the most important points!

Payment Reduction -The first thing we will notice is the reduction in payments, with the biggest reductions to the higher payment bands. For example, for a claim worth £40,000, a reduction of up to 5% to the first £30,000 and up to a 10% reduction to the next £10,000 will be applied in 2021.

Direct Payment band**
Maximum reduction 2021

Up to £30,000	5%
£30,000 - £50,000	10%
£50,000 - £150,000	20%
£150,000 or more	25%

Delinking - Currently, you claim based on the land area you have at your disposal. This will change and payments could be for investing in productivity or retirement to allow opportunities for new/younger farmers. The earliest this will be done is 2022.

Lumpsum Payments - DEFRA is looking at potentially offering a lumpsum payment instead of the planned further years of direct payments. This is in its very initial stages and at the earliest will not happen until 2021. No real detail on this has been announced but one to certainly watch out for.

Regulation - DEFRA would like to create a new culture for regulation, with better data sharing and communication between their agencies. Something we believe would be challenging but hoped a streamlined, pragmatic approach is adopted. We are sure you will agree – this would be a fantastic achievement if it could be done – let's watch this space!

Rural Development - Grants will be honoured for all those commencing before the end of 2020.

Countryside Stewardship - If you are within CSS now, you will not be unfairly disadvantaged when a new ELM scheme becomes available. Until such time, CSS offers additional funding if the scheme suits your farming system. For some, it is an easy win, but for others, causes more obstacles.

We will closely monitor any changes or announcements from DEFRA over the coming months. Please keep an eye on our social media posts and website, we will release any findings we have here first.