

Winter 2025


GULLANDS
SOLICITORS

InBrief

The Magazine of Gullands Solicitors



P9

The
Employment
Rights Bill



P10

The Renters'
Rights Bill



P8

Changes to
Agricultural
Property Relief

Welcome to InBrief

In this edition we start the New Year on a high with a celebration of the recent business successes of the High Street Heroes Awards and the Gravesham Business Awards. Running your own business can often be lonely for those at the top, and so it is great to see their hard work and that of their teams recognised.

Following on from many changes outlined in the Employment Rights Bill, we look in more detail at what all employers should be preparing for in the first quarter of this year.

As we will be attending several events which support the rural and farming community here in Kent this year, we also look at some of the practical steps which they can consider following the changes announced in the budget to Agricultural Property Relief and Business Property Relief when considering succession planning. Also, for younger entrants to farming we look at the legal structure of farming partnerships and the pros and cons they should be aware of.

The Renters Rights Bill will bring a number of changes for residential landlords and there are a number of considerations for them which will affect how they manage and can end tenancies in the future.

Finally, we shine the spotlight on some of our team including new starters and those recently promoted.

As always if there is anything you would like more details on, please contact our team for assistance.



With best wishes

John Roberts
Managing Partner



7

Inside *this issue...*

- 3 Christmas charities
- Upcoming events
- 4 High Street Heroes Awards 2024
- 6 Gravesham's top business honours
- 7 Finances after divorce
- 8 Changes to Agricultural Property Relief
- 9 The Employment Rights Bill
- 10 The Renters' Rights Bill
- 11 Farming partnerships for young farmers
- 12 Staff profile: Harry Tekchandani
- New starters



4



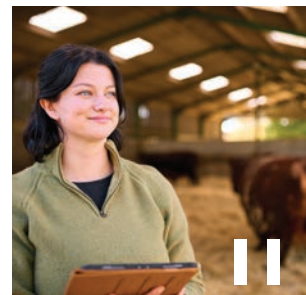
8



10



9



11

CHRISTMAS *charities*

Each Christmas, we donate to local charities to help support their work and this year we are delighted to be supporting Urban Blue Bus and Gillingham Street Angels.

Urban Blue Bus was founded in April 2009 by the late Paul Alcock. He saw that Maidstone had a thriving Night-Time Economy with its large number of bars and clubs and wanted to create a safe haven for those who may need assistance while enjoying a night out.

They offer a safe space for those becoming ill or alone whilst on a night out in Maidstone town centre. We triage injuries, treating minor issues and signposting those needing further treatment to the most appropriate service. We also offer low cost first aid event cover for community events.

They have volunteers aged from 18 to late 60s and always need extra volunteers, you don't need any medical qualifications, just a good work ethic and enthusiasm to face whatever is in front of you.



The Gillingham Street Angels are a small grassroots charity that supports local people experiencing homelessness, financial hardship and food poverty across Medway. They work with local communities and volunteers to deliver a holistic approach to the wellness support and services they offer. They simultaneously address the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual components of the people's health they support, with the view to enabling them to live better quality and longer lives. They also have opportunities to volunteer to help them to continue their work across Medway.

Upcoming events

Our teams will be attending several events this year, so please do stop by and say hello. Here are a few key dates for your diary:

Kent Farming Conference

22 January 2025, Kent County Showground, Detling.

The discussion this year is: Is regenerative farming the way forward? Doors open at 5pm and there are free refreshments and a light supper at the end of the evening.

Register for free at <https://kcas.org.uk/the-kent-farming-conference/>

Farm Expo

5 March 2025, Kent County Showground, Detling.

A great opportunity to network with those working in and supplying the farming and rural sector here in the South East. Register for free at <https://kcas.org.uk/farm-expo/>

Weald of Kent Ploughing Match

13 September 2025, Moatenden Farm, Headcorn.

Tickets will be on sale later in the year. www.wkpm.co.uk





The High Street Heroes Awards 2024 took place in late November at Maidstone United's Gallagher Stadium, and we had a fantastic response from the public who nominated 28 businesses and charities, along with some of the individuals working within them.

These awards now in their third year were run in partnership with One Maidstone and Metro Bank and they reward examples of excellent customer service from businesses and their individual employees.

This year we also had a judges award as the standard of nominations was so high, making choosing the winner in every category very difficult. Also, this year it was exciting to see some relatively new businesses to the town centre nominated, which is hopefully a sign that the town centre here in Maidstone continues to be a great place to set up and run a business.

Maidstone has also benefited this year from the extra footfall and attention from the Shaun in the Heart of Kent Art Trail organised by the Heart of Kent Hospice and we were very pleased to be a part of that with our own Shaun located on the High Street at the top of Mill Street.

This brought over 217,000 visitors into the town who engaged with the trail and while they were in the town and:

55% of them went shopping

74% of them spent money on food & drinks

and **58%** of them visited museums and other attractions.

The trail brought an economic impact of £6.8 million to the town, contributing a £2.07m Gross Value-Added benefit to the local economy.

THE RUNNERS-UP AND WINNERS

Retail *BUSINESS OF THE YEAR NOMINEES* were:

- Salamander
- N2 Sweet Lab
- Little Stars
- Grimhilda's Kitchen
- Keller News
- Zippy Stitches
- Golden Boot
- Making a Difference to Maidstone

The *RETAIL WINNER* was Salamander.

"This shop is a safe place and haven for me. I am always made to feel welcome; all staff are friendly and knowledgeable. I would like to give a special mention to one member of staff who a few weeks ago helped me in the shop with some difficulty I was having in my personal life. This shop isn't just a business who wants to make a profit, they care about each and every person who walks through the door."

Individual nominations for *RETAIL EMPLOYEES* were:

Josie Long from Salamander and The team at Making a Difference to Maidstone.

The *WINNERS* were Making A Difference to Maidstone.

"Making a Difference to Maidstone has helped hundreds of residents who have suffered from crisis in their lives. It cares for them, advocates for them, treats them like human beings instead of a number and follows up with them. Making a Difference to Maidstone aims to leave no one in need. The bookshop and community hub offers a place of safety and friendship. The High street charity shop gives a place of belonging to the volunteers and staff, some of which started as clients, and it is a great destination on the high street for quality goods at good prices."

Hospitality BUSINESS OF THE YEAR NOMINEES were:

- Pokeprep
- Matestone
- Ovation Maidstone
- Craft Brewed
- Frederic's Bistro
- Café Beck
- Café Riviera

The hospitality WINNER was Ovation Nightclub.

"Ovation is something really special. It's not like other clubs, you feel part of the family when going there. The staff are always happy, and the service is fantastic. It's rare to go to a club and see staff having a good time. I specifically want to mention Carla who goes above and beyond to look after my group when we visit. We go there every week now and it's always excellent. The security team are also really friendly and welcoming. It's a safe space for music lovers to go out with friends as well as meet new people. A very rare and special find."

Individual NOMINATIONS for hospitality employees were:

- George from Matestone
- Ajay from Craft Brewed
- Carla from Ovation Nightclub
- Marietta from Café Beck

The WINNER was Ajay Davis of Craft Brewed.

"Always greeted with a smile, always knows your drink and the way you like it. Is there more of a friend now and listens to your problems and asks how you are. He has worked tirelessly to make his shop the friendliest and most welcoming place on the High Street. Everyone of all ages and personalities gets his unique attention resulting in familiarity, comfort and regular custom. He has created a thoroughly unique hybrid of coffee shop and relaxed craft beer bar and he's a thoroughly nice guy."

The 'OTHER' BUSINESS CATEGORY NOMINEES were:

- Nationwide Building Society
- Bisi Beauty
- Mid Kent Mind
- Urban Blue Bus
- Hazlitt Theatre
- Mancave
- Maidstone United FC Raiders

The OTHER CATEGORY WINNER was Bisi Beauty.

"I get my hair done regularly with Bisi Beauty, their customer service is what brings me back monthly, not just the excellence in skill. I always feel welcomed, with a drink, great conversation with friendly and caring people. The owner is very friendly and a joy to be around."

Individual nominations for OTHER EMPLOYEES were:

- Erin Eversfield from Switch Youth Services
- Lorraine Humm, Maidstone United FC Raiders
- Zoe Burgess from Nationwide Building Society
- Steven Pankhurst from One Maidstone
- Harry from Mancave, Maidstone

The WINNER was Steven Pankhurst from One Maidstone Bid Team.

"Steven has been the bridge between businesses and the police for antisocial behaviour and criminal activity affecting businesses in Maidstone town, working day in, day out to identify the people responsible to help Maidstone to be a safe place to work and a great place for customers to shop."

The judges award went to Mid Kent Mind as they felt that their work crossed over the town centre on so many different levels that they should be singled out and thanked.

"Mid Kent Mind are a fantastic charity that support mental health in the community, to ensure that everyone is able to gain support. They offer social groups, counselling, youth support such as going into schools and holiday workshops. They have helped over 2,000 people within the last 12 months and have exceptional staff to support face to face, via zoom and telephone."

Paul Mannering, Business Manager at Gullands was the host for the night and comments: "Once again we had a terrific response from the public who nominated all of the businesses, and it was a pleasure to see so many new businesses on our list this year. Maidstone is a vibrant place for businesses and the town centre has great support with the many different initiatives taking place to encourage people into it. Congratulations to everyone and we wish you continued business success over the coming year."

The 2025 High Street Heroes Awards will open for nominations later this year.



Gravesham's top business honours

It was a sellout evening with exceptional companies attending the Gravesham Business Awards 24 gala night at the Inn on the Lake also in November.

Competition was high for the category finalists with the judges facing a difficult task. Head judge Keith Mason, partner at Barnes Roffe said it was good to see such business buoyancy.

Gravesham MP Dr Lauren Sullivan said the area should be proud of the number of high-quality companies trading in Gravesham.

There were 15 finalists receiving certificates from Cllr Lenny Rolles and Keith Casson of the University of Greenwich.

Moving towards the winners the first prize was the People's Choice voted by the public online and presented by Phil Walton, MD at Softforge. This went to the family-run Compass Alehouse.

Next up was the Best Community Business Award presented by Keith Mason from sponsor Barnes Roffe. This went to the popular charity, Ellenor.

Micheal Sears managing director at Sealeys estate agents presented the Best Hospitality Business to the Iron Pier Brewery Limited.

Gravesham's Best Family-Owned Business presented by Julie Hobson at Gullands, solicitors, went to the Cornerstone Property Group.

Local member of Parliament Dr Lauren Sullivan gave the Best Youth Owned Business to entrepreneurs Total Line Marking Ltd.

Councillor Christina Rolles awarded the Best Not-for-Profit Business Award to the youth theatrical company Gravesend Network Development.

Best Innovative Business presented by Andrew Vickers, manager at Handelsbanken went to equestrian business White Horse Farm.

Julie Hobson at Gullands came back on stage to present the Best High Street Business to the popular Revitalize Clinic.

Best Professional Services / Consultancy Business went to Embridge Consulting (UK) Limited which received its trophy from Keith Mason senior partner at Barnes Roffe, chartered accountants.

Keith Casson at the University of Greenwich presented the Best Health & Wellbeing Business that went to Cyclopark.

The finalists were: Amax, Austen Allen Homecare, Cornerstone Property, Cyclopark, Ellenor and Embridge Consulting, Gravesham Network Development, Iron Pier Brewery, Leisure King, Marie's Tearoom, Nell's Café, Panic Room, Revitalize Clinic, The Compass Alehouse, Total Line Marking Ltd and White Horse Farm.



Above: Gravesham Business Awards 24 winners
 Top Right: Best Family Run Business Winners - Cornerstone Property Group
 Bottom Right: Best High Street Business - Revitalize



Finances after divorce

A question we are often asked when a couple divorce is “how can I afford to live on my own after we have come to a financial settlement?”

Getting divorced can be a major setback for your finances, which can take several years to recover, which is why it is important to consider this scenario before getting married or cohabiting.

Pre-nuptial agreements and cohabitation agreements if you are planning on living together, although not legally binding, are a document which show a couple's intentions and are a good starting point to protect assets built up prior to a marriage.

Life changes after a divorce and the lifestyle you have enjoyed may also change, so it is important to put in place appropriate measures to safeguard your assets as much as possible.

Budgeting, debt and savings

If you accumulate debts during your marriage, then these liabilities may be treated as being joint debts when your marital assets are being calculated and split. Money is an area where many couples fall out, so deciding on whether to combine your finances or keep them separate should be an important discussion before you get married.

If you have a lot of debt, then you should have a plan in place for repaying it and then focus on building wealth and assets after.

Your monthly spending will change after you divorce so it is advisable to put a budget together to help you manage the first few months and years. Many people are surprised at how much it costs to run a household on their own so it is important to think about what you can realistically afford.

Child support can be a big expenditure after a divorce so should be one of the primary factors to consider and plan for to minimise disputes in this area and the overall settlement.

Other practical steps you can take is to remove the financial link between you and your former spouse or partner on your credit report. Also, close joint bank accounts and open a bank account in your own name. Build up a good credit history by paying bills on time to help you in the future should you need to apply for credit or a mortgage.

You may want to take independent financial advice to help you achieve your goals for the future and to make sure the assets you have such as savings and pension are performing. If your former spouse or partner has always dealt with the finances, then you need to learn how to manage your finances and who to trust so you do not expose yourself to the risk of fraud.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of approaching and agreeing a financial settlement and your divorce, get in touch with our team today.

Sunita Chauhan can be contacted at s.chauhan@gullands.com

Changes to Agricultural Property Relief

No doubt the changes to Agricultural Property Relief (APR) announced in the Budget (October 2024) will have reached your attention. Whilst we await more information about the timing and fine details of the new scheme, many farmers and landowners will be asking themselves what they should do if all goes ahead as announced.

Just to refresh memories the key details are that from the 6th of April 2026:

- APR at 100% will be available for the first £1m of combined agricultural and business property only.
- Once the £1m allowance is exceeded, the maximum rate of relief will be 50% giving an Inheritance Tax (IHT) rate of 20%.
- There are no changes to the Nil Rate Band £325,000 and Residence Nil Rate Band £175,000 and spousal exemption applies.

As an example, a typical farmer will be able to pass on assets worth £1,325,000 free of IHT on death and £2,650,000 between a married couple, owning a farm together.

What are the options now?

1. Make a Will if you don't have one, and if you have an existing Will, review it to consider how the changes may affect you.
2. Consider early succession planning. If you know that the next generation will succeed you into the family farm business then gifting agricultural property during your lifetime can reduce the value of the estate, lowering IHT liability. Gifts are currently exempt from IHT if you live for seven years after the gift is made, so considerable tax savings could be made.
3. Consider using a Trust to settle some assets worth more than £1m that qualify for 100% relief into a new Trust. A Trust can help you to retain some control over assets whilst ensuring they are passed to the next generation(s).
4. Review the ownership of the farming business and change its structure to own a lower percentage of the shares, reducing the size of your estate.
5. Consider an insurance policy to cover some or all of the potential IHT liability and write the policy into Trust so the proceeds are kept out of the estate on death, giving the estate liquidity to pay the tax due without having to sell assets.

All these options should be reviewed along with your tax adviser, before making any final decisions and we are happy to work alongside them to provide you and your family with the best outcome for your family farm.

If you would like to arrange to chat to our team about some of the options available to you now, we can advise not only on your Will but also on the different options for structuring your farm business.

Whilst the debate and protests are likely to run on into the New Year, having some options available which are relevant to you and your individual circumstances can be reassuring.

Get in contact to arrange a call back or email a.astley@gullands.com



The Employment Rights Bill

The Employment Rights Bill (October 2024), set out the new Government's plans and it's ambition to "make work pay". It is anticipated that after the conclusion of the forthcoming consultation, much will come into force in 2026. The proposed changes to employment law will affect all businesses, in one way or another.

We await the details of how the new restrictions on the use of zero hours contracts will work in practice and they are subject to consultation and possibly further change.

Whilst a ban on zero hours contracts isn't yet taking place there are significant changes around working hours.

A requirement to offer guaranteed hours for staff

Employers will be required to make an offer of guaranteed hours to a qualifying worker at the end of every reference period which is expected to be 12 weeks. A qualifying worker will include workers who are engaged on a zero hours contract and those with a low number of guaranteed hours.

We don't yet know what amounts to "low hours" but the offer must reflect the hours worked during the reference period.

There are going to be exceptions, so an offer of guaranteed hours can be on a fixed term basis due to periods of high demand or at busy times of the year.

A worker who isn't offered guaranteed hours may be able to bring a claim in the employment tribunal so it will be important to review future needs and plan accordingly.

Rights to be given reasonable notice of shifts and changes to them

All employers will be required to provide reasonable notice to workers of the shifts they will be working and changes to shifts. Reasonable notice will be dependent on the circumstances and employers will be obliged to compensate staff where changes are made

at short notice and calculated in a way that is proportionate to the change.

Businesses might more broadly need to review their own terms and conditions to reflect costs that they may incur due to customers cancelling and changing plans so that these costs can be recovered from them rather than incurred by the business.

Businesses that have genuine changes in staffing needs from one day to the next, will find it harder to respond to and manage these employment changes.

In situations where an offer of guaranteed hours is accepted, the worker will be entitled to be offered that level of work, whether it is available or not. Changes at short notice to working hours will come at a cost for some business owners and they may have too many staff and risk incurring significant costs where shift changes are needed at the last minute.

Flexible working

The right to request flexible working has been a day one entitlement since 6 April 2024 however The Bill will go a step further and make it the 'default' position from the first day of employment. Employers may still refuse a request, but the refusal must be reasonable, and they must explain in writing to the employee why this is the case. The penalty for breaching the flexible working rules will remain at 8 weeks' pay.

End of fire and rehire?

A new Code of Practice came into effect in July 2024 which sought to encourage employers to act fairly and responsibly in negotiations over changes to terms and conditions and it also emphasised 'fire and rehire' should only be used as a last resort. While not legally binding the Code is admissible in evidence in legal proceedings and a failure to comply could result in awards being given a 25% uplift.

Employers' use of fire and rehire will be severely curtailed as The Bill will make it automatically unfair to dismiss an employee for refusing to agree a variation of their terms and conditions because an employer intended to employ another person on varied terms to carry out the same role.

Other considerations of the Bill

Employers who want to make redundancies will in the future need to carefully manage the process as the right to claim unfair dismissal will apply from day one. There are further details needed here with reference to what length a probation period may be and how it may be used to terminate unsuitable members of staff without risk of a claim. This should become clearer as the consultation proceeds. Also, an employee will be considered to have been automatically unfairly dismissed if the principal reason for dismissal is because they previously accepted guaranteed hours.

Day one rights - Parental leave, paternity leave and sick pay will all be available from day one of employment.

Bereavement Leave – a new statutory scheme has been outlined in the Bill.

Protection against sexual harassment – an allegation of sexual harassment will be a protected disclosure for the purposes of whistleblowing legislation.

Extended maternity protections from day one of employment removing the current six-month wait and prohibition on dismissing new mothers for an extended protected period of six months following their return to work.

Equality action plans for employers with more than 250 employees including gender and menopause.

Fair pay agreements including provisions for introducing sector-wide collective bargaining for school support staff and workers in adult social care.

Businesses should start to prepare for how the changes will impact on them which may include:

- Auditing your workforce and where you rely on zero hours workers.
- Determine which of your workers would be entitled to an offer of guaranteed hours under the new rules.
- Look at your business and where you have fluctuations in demand and whether you can use fixed term contracts to address this or agency workers as the new rules won't apply to them now.
- Review your approach and processes for managing of shifts and consider changes to customer contracts so that the cost of cancellations can be recovered.
- Review employment contracts, employment handbooks and training for managers.

If you need help navigating the new employment bill and how it will change the management of your workforce, get in touch.

Amanda Finn can be contacted at a.finn@gullands.com



The Renters' Rights Bill

Since a White Paper was launched in June 2022 by the previous government which pledged to *'level up the quality of housing in all parts of the country so that everyone can live somewhere which is decent, safe and secure'*, renters reform has been slowly gathering pace.

The current government's Renters' Rights Bill continues the scope of the Renters Reform Bill, but goes further in some areas pledging to 'act where the previous government has failed'.

It has now had its second reading in Parliament and a call for evidence finished in November. With the new Bill expected to become law by Summer 2025, what are the key points to be aware of:

- There will be an overhaul of tenancy structure with no fixed terms, abolishing shorthold tenancies.
- Section 21 so called 'no-fault' terminations will be abolished and there will be significant reform of a landlords' grounds for repossession.
- There will be a ban on rent bidding wars for prospective tenants.
- Landlords will need to sign up to a new mandatory database.
- A new ombudsman for tenant disputes will be appointed.
- There will be changes which require a Decent Homes Standard for all tenancies and new requirements for landlords to deal with issues such as mould and damp.
- Landlords who are non-compliant will face action from tenants and local authorities who will have greater powers and new offences and penalties will apply.

Whilst there is much for landlords to consider within the new Bill, they also need to think about costs as the new Bill will ban rent review clauses in new and existing tenancies (except for low-cost tenancies of social housing by Registered Providers). All new and existing tenancies will automatically become rolling tenancies under the new legislation.

The only way a landlord will be able to increase the rent will be to rely on sections 13 and 14 of the Housing Act 1988 Act allowing them to serve two months' notice on the tenant of a proposed increase and only one section 13 notice per year can be served.

Once this is served, the tenant may agree to the increase, both parties may agree an increase but at a level lower than the proposed figure in the notice or the tenant may challenge the proposed increase by applying to the First-tier Tribunal and they will decide an appropriate increase based on comparable market evidence. Tribunal costs will typically not be awarded to the successful party, so landlords will need to factor this in.

To gain possession of a property in the future the landlord will need to wait until the tenant issues a notice to quit with two months' notice or satisfy one of the statutory grounds for possession for a termination process under section 8 (Schedule 2 – to be amended) of the 1988 Act.

Landlords who haven't yet considered how these changes will affect their property portfolio should now, given the progress of the Bill. They may wish to make changes or dispose of properties that might be problematic to let in the future, without the need for significant investment. Those landlords that are intending to gain possession or take back their property would be wise to seek independent legal advice. There will be lots of trips and traps which could give rise to costly and protracted litigation if they do not get both the substantive and procedural steps correct.

Jonathan Haines can be contacted at j.haines@gullands.com

Farming partnerships for *YOUNG FARMERS*

For young people wanting to establish themselves in farming, a question they should consider is should they join an existing farm partnership, or should a new one be created?

This question might also be more pertinent as older generations seek to reduce their exposure to IHT and they might be considering gifting land or property to the next generation as part of this planning.

A farming partnership involves two or more individuals jointly running a farm business. This can be family members, spouses and grandparents, parents or children. A partnership should have a properly drafted partnership agreement, although it still isn't a requirement of the law. Undocumented partnerships are governed by the Partnership Act 1890.

For a younger person wanting to establish themselves in farming, consider setting up a new farming partnership with an agreement which sets out how the business will be managed and what happens when the business is dissolved.

Different generations may have very differing views on how a business should be run and you want to know you will all be able to get on.

Having a new agreement has several benefits as it will reduce the likelihood of disputes by establishing clear terms, it will outline how a dispute is dealt with, and it will help avoid the unintended consequences of relying on the 1890 Act.

Consider which type of partnership is right as there are three types:

- General Partnership – this gives all partners a share of equal rights and responsibilities and profits/losses are distributed according to the agreement.
- Limited Partnership – This will consist of general partners who manage the farm and limited partners who may contribute capital but have limited involvement in the decision-making.
- Limited Liability Partnership – this type of partnership offers the partners limited liability protection and can be used to help shield the personal assets from business debts.

New partners should be wary about joining existing partnerships where they could be bound by existing contracts with third parties which expose themselves to financial risk and legal responsibilities. All partners may be able to enter contracts on behalf of the partnership, so it is important to fully understand and discuss exposure to risk.

In most farming partnerships the assets such as land and property are held outside of the partnership with machinery and livestock held within the partnership. Incoming partners should ask to see a full inventory of assets and ownership along with an up-to-date set of accounts. Where land is owned outside of the partnership then it is advisable to have an up-to-date lease to protect the interests of the partnership on the event of the death of the land owner.

In the future if you decide to end the farm partnership then typically the remaining partner/s will buy out the share owned by the departing partner. The assets are then divided according to the terms of the written agreement.

Don't be afraid to seek independent legal advice to secure your farming future.

Stacey Irwin can be contacted at s.irwin@gullands.com



Staff profile:

Harry Tekchandani

Position: Solicitor

Time at Gullands: Since November 2023

Main responsibilities and duties:

Acting for clients in a broad range of commercial property transactions including sales and purchases, landlord and tenant matters, option agreements, overage agreements, commercial lending and property portfolio management.

Why did you decide to pursue a career in the legal sector:

My father used to dabble in property development and organised some work experience for me at his solicitor's office one summer when I was a teenager. It seemed as good a career as any at the time!

What is the best part of the job:

I get real satisfaction from helping my clients to achieve their objectives, whether it be growing their businesses, consolidating

or winding down toward retirement. Getting good legal advice from the outset is usually extremely beneficial and it is especially pleasing when I know that I have added real value to a client's outcome.

If you were not in this job, what would you be doing:

Probably something numbers or engineering related... failing which, probably working for my dad!

What changes would you like to see happen in the law in the next 10-20 years:

It would be good to see increased and more efficient use of electronic resources to reduce transaction times.

What do you like doing in your spare time:

I have three young children, so my spare time usually involves entertaining them! Other than that, I enjoy running, watching most sports and am learning how to play the piano.

New starters

We welcome new fee earners and those who have been promoted into new roles this month.



Wendy Gudgeon joined Gullands in December as a Conveyancing Executive in the residential property team. Wendy is experienced in dealing with all aspects of residential property purchases and sales.



Sophie Burroughs joined Gullands in August 2024 as a Paralegal in the Residential Conveyancing Department. After completing her undergraduate degree in Criminology, Sophie went on to earn a Masters in Law. With a keen interest in the legal field, Sophie in the future aspires to qualify as a Solicitor, by taking the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) route.



Tigerlily Merrett joined the firm in May 2024, initially starting as an Office Administrator before progressing to the role of Legal Secretary. Since then, she has gained valuable experience in the probate department, working closely with clients on a variety of matters. Tigerlily looks forward to expanding her knowledge as she takes on a more hands-on role in her paralegal career.