

Update

Your quarterly bulletin on legal news and views from Lanyon Bowdler

Shropshire company leading global revolution in motor vehicle training

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A company in Shropshire is leading a worldwide revolution in motor vehicle training - all based in a studio in Church Stretton.

Our Virtual Academy is an online video training tool for mechanics and has been launched by Shropshire-based businessman, Ben Stockton.

Mr Stockton, who has previously worked with Porsche and the Arrows Formula One team, said the system had racked up 2,000 users since its launch in October and was attracting a huge amount of interest worldwide.

Our Virtual Academy employs seven members of staff at its Church Stretton base and Mr Stockton said there were plans to grow the business further in the coming years.

"We have been developing the website and researching the training modules over the past three or four years," he said.

"We started filming the courses in October 2015 and launched the service to customers towards the end of 2016."

"Motor vehicle technology is constantly evolving so mechanics need to be trained on a regular basis. The main benefit of Our Virtual Academy is that it saves people time and money, vastly reducing classroom time and making training far more efficient and memorable."

"It has grown rapidly and we have plans to keep growing – we are in discussions with many colleges, car parts distributors, garage groups and independent retailers throughout the UK."

"We are also hoping to work with firms in other parts of the world, particularly the Far East, so it's certainly an exciting time."

Mr Stockton said support from fellow Shropshire-based professionals had been instrumental in getting Our Virtual Academy off the ground, such as legal

New partner joins the commercial property team

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Laurence Lucas has joined the partnership at Lanyon Bowdler following a period of strong growth for the commercial property department over the last two years.

Demand for the team's services has steadily increased, despite the uncertainty surrounding the EU referendum, with strong demand for support with development, renewable energy and planning services in the last 12 months.

Head of the commercial property team, Praveen Chaudhari, said Laurence would add real strength in depth to the department, bringing the total number of partners working in property to eight across the firm's six offices in Shropshire and Herefordshire.

"The commercial property market in Shropshire and Herefordshire has been very busy and we have seen a good number of transactions being completed," he said.

"The quality of work being undertaken by the team has enabled us to attract the strong lateral hire of Laurence who joins us from Willans."

"His experience and expertise across a wide range of commercial property matters will be of real value to businesses in Herefordshire and the West Midlands looking for accessible, friendly



“Excellent communications, personal touch and value for money.”

Norman Quin Developments Ltd, Telford

Shropshire needs more new homes says planning expert



A call for new development sites by Shropshire Council is a “great opportunity” to accelerate much-needed house building in the county.

The council is currently consulting on the Shropshire Local Plan, which sets out the strategy for house building until 2036 - with 13,000 new homes potentially being built over the next 20 years.

The existing Local Plan said that 27,500 houses would be built between 2006 and 2026, and the council says about 15,400 of those units have now been built.

That means that a further 12,100 of the initial target still need to be built - and the council is now extending the Local Plan to 2036 and asking if people think that more homes are needed.

Abbie Pritchard-Hooper, a planning specialist at Lanyon Bowdler, said the answer had to be a resounding “yes”.

She said: *“I don’t think there is any doubt that there is a shortage of housing supply in Shropshire, particularly homes which are suitable for first-time buyers.”*

“Part of the consultation involves a ‘call for sites’, with landowners able to submit new sites which they think might be suitable for housing, and that presents a great opportunity.”

“The Government has just published a white paper on housing which sets out plans to boost the number of new houses being built across the UK, so we welcome this consultation which could make a real difference here in Shropshire.”

“We are working with our colleagues in the commercial property team at the firm to advise our clients on the best way forward to potentially submit suitable sites for assessment.”

Abbie said the council’s indicative figures for the number of new homes to be built in the next 20 years were relatively modest, although she did not underestimate the work that the Council and prospective developers could face to persuade communities of the benefits of accepting more housing in the interest of sustainability and meeting future housing needs.

She added: *“The existing Local Plan had provision for 27,500 new homes by 2026, and the council says that 15,400 have so far been built, which leaves 12,100 to be built by 2026.”*

“Under the extension of the Local Plan to 2036, the council is now proposing three options of building 26,250, 27,500 or 28,750 homes by 2036 - so virtually the same amount as already set out but over an extra 10 years.”

“We think the market needs more than that, so we are hopeful that this consultation will result in a good number of potential sites being identified.”

Shrewsbury-based planning consultant at the Planning Group, Martin Parrish, who is also working with Lanyon Bowdler to advise clients of the potential opportunities, added: *“The Council is looking to allocate new development sites in sustainable locations, the submissions will need to show how the proposals integrate with existing infrastructure and the community together with safe access and minimal impact on the environment.”*

SHROPSHIRE COMPANY LEADING GLOBAL REVOLUTION IN MOTOR VEHICLE TRAINING

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advice from Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors who had been with him from the start.

Edward Burrell, of Lanyon Bowdler’s corporate and commercial law team, said he had advised Mr Stockton during the establishment of the company and assisted him on a variety of corporate and commercial matters.

Most recently the firm had been instructed in relation to Our Virtual Academy’s innovative range of customer contracts.

“We are delighted to be part of the support team helping to establish Our Virtual Academy.” Edward said.

“Ben and his team have big ambitions to make it a global platform and they certainly have the passion and commitment to make it a big success.”

“As a full-service law firm, Lanyon Bowdler has been able to assist Ben on a range of legal issues, including the provision of specialist property and employment advice, together with areas such as early stage corporate finance and assisting with international contract negotiations. We are looking forward to continuing to offer our support in the future.”

For more information visit: www.OurVirtualAcademy.com, email: info@ourvirtualacademy.com or call: 020 3286 2228.

“Quality of service.”

Lilleshall Hall Golf Club, Newport



Lanyon Bowdler expand education team

Lanyon Bowdler has expanded the education team as it continues to advise an ever-growing number of schools as they convert to academies.

Education specialist, Emma Swann, has joined the firm as a consultant with more than 15 years' experience of dealing in education law.

Head of education at Lanyon Bowdler, Will Morse, said Emma would be a real asset to the team, advising clients across Shropshire, Herefordshire and the Midlands.

“Emma is known as one of the leading experts in education law and we are delighted she has joined the firm.” he said.

“She has a rich array of experience, having led on more than 130 academy conversions, as well as advising schools and Church of England Diocesan Boards on all aspects of education law, including admissions, exclusions, parental complaints and governance matters.

“We have seen a steady increase in the amount of work coming into the firm from schools who need specialist legal advice on how to convert to an academy and who need day-to-day support post conversion.

“We are predicting that demand to grow as we are seeing schools prefer to buy their legal support locally from lawyers who have the expertise they need but are accessible and can support them at close proximity.

“Lanyon Bowdler is the only firm ranked for education work in Shropshire and Herefordshire by the independent legal directory, The Legal 500, which identifies the best firms offering specialist legal support for schools and academies and recognises Lanyon Bowdler's unique position in its local markets.”

Emma said the education sector was in an interesting - if challenging - position at the moment.

She added: *“Funding is of course the biggest challenge facing schools, and many see converting to an academy as a means of taking full control of their own budgets.*

“There are lots of advantages to being an academy, but it has to be the right approach for everyone involved, and our job is to help schools make the transition as smoothly as possible.

“Having worked on more than 130 conversions, I understand the issues very well, and I am also a regular contributor to the Department for Education working group regarding the development of the academies programme.”

Short term lettings



Are you considering letting your property on sites such as Airbnb?

If you own a residential property on a long lease you should be aware of the decision of the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) in a case in September 2016. The Tribunal decided that short term Airbnb type lettings were a breach of covenant in the lease, which prevented the use of the property other than as “a private residence”.

The case concerned a flat which the owner lived in during the week, but let out for short term holiday lets for around 90 days each year.

The lease did not expressly prevent the use of the flat as a holiday let. The lease specified that the flat must be used as “a private residence”.

The Tribunal found that use as “a private residence” required some form of permanent occupation, more than staying at the flat at weekends or for a few nights in the week. It was irrelevant if the owner had another residence as well.

Each case is very fact specific and it is always necessary to carefully consider the terms of the lease. The case clearly shows that it is essential to obtain appropriate legal advice before acquiring a property for holiday letting, or if you are considering advertising a property on sites such as Airbnb.

“Prompt action, sound advice, there for support when we needed it.”

Trustees of Rosemary G Gittins & Geoffrey E Gittins Settlement 2013, Wombourne

Refurbished offices in Hereford



In Hereford we are now based solely in Offa Street, having previously worked from two offices in Hereford following the merger with Beaumonts Solicitors.

Charles Almond, partner at the Hereford office, who was with Beaumonts for 30 years prior to the merger last year, said this was a landmark moment for the firm.

“We are delighted to be consolidating our presence in Hereford by moving all of our staff into the Offa Street offices, rather than being spread between Offa Street and Lanyon Bowdler’s previous base in Broad Street.” he said.

“We are fully committed to providing a comprehensive range of services to people and businesses in Herefordshire, and the firm has made a significant investment into the Offa Street offices to provide a thoroughly pleasant environment in which to do business.

“Our full range of legal services can now be accessed from the Offa Street offices, including employment, commercial property, planning, corporate, education, agricultural law, dispute resolution, PI and medical negligence claims amongst other specialisms.”

Will Morse, head of the market leading

education team, said demand for the firm’s professional services had steadily increased over the past year.

“It’s a busy time at the moment.” he said. *“We have just welcomed a new partner to the Hereford office, Laurence Lucas, who joins us from Willans in Cheltenham and has a wealth of experience across a wide range of commercial property matters.*

“We are also working with a growing number of schools who are converting to academies and we have seen strong demand for support with development, renewable energy and planning services in particular.

“We are proud of our growing reputation as a firm of warm, friendly lawyers who have the expertise of a city firm but are accessible right here in Hereford.

“David Brammer, who heads up our planning team, has just been named as one of the top planning lawyers in the country by the independent national ‘Planning’ magazine, which is a real accolade.

“We have expanded the planning department in recent months and are keen to continue our work with a wide range of organisations and individuals across Herefordshire and the Marches.”

NEW PARTNER JOINS THE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY TEAM *Continued from page 1...*

lawyers who can support them with their property matters.

“We are delighted he has chosen to join us, and it signals our commitment to continuing to develop our team in spite of uncertainty around Brexit.

“We know that we also need to invest in grass roots development to ensure our clients have the support they need in the long term.

“We have been pleased to be able to recruit a number of trainees into the team over the past year who will learn from the more experienced lawyers in the team.”

Laurence has joined the Lanyon Bowdler team in Hereford and has worked in commercial property since 1987, most recently as a partner at Willans LLP in Cheltenham.

He has acted for a wide range of local, national and international clients in connection with commercial and residential developments, property finance, the acquisition and disposal of freehold and leasehold property, as well as landlord and tenant work.

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