

NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2015



Membership

Welcome to the latest CRELA Newsletter. You have received this because either you are registered as a current member with CRELA or have been registered as a member in the past. We do hope you find the information contained in this newsletter informative and would welcome any feedback that you wish to supply.

Just a brief reminder regarding the annual subscription for CRELA which remains unchanged at £25.00. If you have not already paid, can you please pay your renewal subscription personally or arrange for your firm to pay it for you, perhaps in conjunction with your other colleagues? You will probably have been sent a renewal notice recently, but otherwise if you have not renewed please log on to the website and complete the form or contact Tim Power, timpower@tpsnorfolk.co.uk, at TPS.



Website

If you haven't done so for a while, click here at www.crela.org.uk and follow the link through the Members' Area.

You will see that we have added some new items over recent weeks and a list of the events scheduled for 2015 will appear as they are confirmed. We are currently reworking the website further to split it into two main sites, namely updates and a main forum for members to log their views. Due to software changes this is currently an ongoing work in progress but in the meantime our specific thanks to Peter Williams of Falco Legal Training who is assisting with that process.

As mentioned above, the forum software has just be revamped and has been re-launched. It's a much simpler platform and we encourage you to register for an account by following these simple instructions:

1. Click on Members' Area.
2. Click on Log In.
3. Go to Register.
4. Enter a Username and Password.
5. Follow the on-line instructions.

*An email will be sent to the CRELA Administrator to approve the application.
Please leave 24 hours for your account to be activated.*

6. You can then log in.
 7. Click on 'CRELA Forum' for the list of topics on which you can comment.
 8. Click on 'Announcements' to see the CRELA Committee's message to members.
- Once you have registered we will be able to bring you more content and seek ways to canvas your own views as members of CRELA.

Recent Events

Social Media – you mean it's just a conversation? By Helen Hammond, Elephant Creative



Helen Hammond from Elephant Creative has wide experience of advising law firms on how to use social media to promote their businesses. In this talk, which took place at Berwin Leighton Paisner's offices on 2 December 2014, she discussed the social media tools commonly used by law firms (and other businesses), and showed us some examples of what particular firms are doing. It was impressive to see both the money that some firms are spending on development (particularly websites), and the freedom that is being given to individual lawyers in far-sighted firms to write tweets and other online updates.

The key sites that solicitors need to bear in mind when considering how to use social media are LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, but other social media sites are available, as people say.

Social media presents a great opportunity for law firms to obtain value out of their marketing materials, which can be reused in a variety of different ways. Blogging is a particular effective medium, as it is a way for professionals to be able to incorporate their "character" into their product. An article for a professional journal is likely to be worthy but dull; a blog article, on the other hand, is likely to allow the writer's character to show through.

Other advantages are that the costs are low or even non-existent; you can easily contact thought-leaders who are usually more difficult to reach; the results are measurable and anyone can get involved, with virtually no start-up costs.

However, Helen emphasised that if you are going to take social media seriously, it needs to be done properly. Social networking is like any other form of networking event. It needs to be done carefully and with as much initial research as possible. You wouldn't host a drinks party for clients without researching the backgrounds and interests of the people you are inviting. Social networking is no different.

A longer note about this event is on the CRELA website as are Helen Hammond's slides. They include a number of screenshots of firms' websites that demonstrate imaginative use of social media applications. Have a look for inspiration of your own!

2015

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The Committee have received a number of suggestions for seminars from various members of CRELA and wish to express their thanks for those suggestions. We are in the course of finalising the details of those events and details will be posted on the website shortly. We will be doing our best to accommodate where possible throughout the course of this year.

Any further suggestions of topics for seminars are always welcome. Here is a flavour of what we are considering for during the course of this year.

- A talk from the Serious Fraud Office and also an appropriate money laundering officer to speak about the practical examples and keep us all on our toes.
- A potential of a joint event between CRELA and the BLA which would include a visit to an iconic building.
- Chancery Bar Association drinks function at Temple Garden.
- Further presentations outwith London in the regions to try to increase attendances from regional members.

Next Event

Commercial Real Estate Update

This will comprise a 90 minute session carrying three main topics on current commercial real estate issues. If there is an up-to-date seminar that you should be attending to cover as much as possible in 90 minutes then this is the one! The three topics will be in the following order by the following presenters:

1. *The Law Commission's Land Registration project* by Professor Elizabeth Cooke

The Law Commission has recently started work on this new project, which comprises a wide-ranging review of the Land Registration Act 2002, with a view to amendment where elements of the Act could be improved in light of experience with its operation. In particular, this project will examine the extent of the Land Registry's guarantee of title, rectification and alteration of the register, and the impact of fraud. The project will also re-examine the legal framework for electronic conveyancing, and consider how technology might be harnessed to reduce the time and resources required to process applications while maintaining the reliability of the register and public confidence in it.

Professor Elizabeth Cooke was appointed Commissioner with responsibility for Property, Family and Trust Law in July 2008. She began her legal career as a trainee solicitor at Withers, and was admitted as a solicitor in 1988. Subsequently, she practised at Barrett and Thomson, Slough. She became a lecturer at the University of Reading in 1992, and was awarded a personal chair in 2003.

2. *Recent and forthcoming changes to SDLT* by Richard Smith and Peter Williams

In the past Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) has applied both in England & Wales and in Scotland, and significant changes were made to SDLT on residential property in all jurisdictions last December.

But in April SDLT will be replaced in Scotland by an entirely new tax, the Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT). LBTT will apply to all land in Scotland irrespective of where the purchaser is based. The Scottish Government will have control over the tax base as well as the rates, and the administrative arrangements for LBTT will be different, with an online system intended to be more modern and user friendly.

This session will provide an overview of all these changes, both north and south of the border, to ensure that lawyers in England and Wales are fully up to speed with these important developments which will affect their clients' portfolio acquisitions across the whole UK.

Richard Smith is a dual-qualified real estate partner in Brodies LLP, a Scottish law firm with offices in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Brussels. His practice includes all areas of commercial property law and he regularly acts for developers, tenants and funding institutions in retail, investment and development work.

Peter Williams is a freelance legal trainer, writer and lecturer at Falco Legal Training. Formerly a partner in the commercial property group at Norton Rose, he then worked as a Professional Support Lawyer for almost twenty years, first at Simmons & Simmons and then at Eversheds. Peter also writes and lectures for other organisations including Estates Gazette, Landlord & Tenant Review and the CPD Foundation.

3. The Model Commercial Lease by Peter Williams

The Model Commercial Lease (MCL) is an initiative from the property industry itself, intended to speed up lease negotiations while maintaining the flexibility that both landlords and tenants require to run their businesses. This session will introduce you to the MCL and consider its pros and cons (but mostly its pros).

This will be taking place at Hogan Lovells International LLP's offices at Atlantic House, Holborn Viaduct, London. Our specific thanks to Hogan Lovells International LLP for volunteering their premises to us which allows us to keep the attendance cost down to £25.00 plus VAT for members and £45.00 plus VAT for non-members and guests. You will receive 1.5 CPD points for attendance at this event.

Inaugural CRELA (Thames Valley) Event Wokingham – Thursday 19 March 2015

Join colleagues from law firms Clifton Ingram, Field Seymour Parkes, Mercers, Allan Janes and Colemans (amongst others) for the inaugural CRELA (Thames Valley) event on Thursday 19 March 2015 from 5.00 pm to 7.00 pm. The event will be held at Clifton Ingram's office in Wokingham.

CRELA's Thames Valley group will focus on the issues, challenges and opportunities that commercial property professionals in the region encounter, combined with some valuable networking.

The event will feature presentations from two accomplished speakers and is worth 1 CPD hour:

Dr Ashley Bowes, a barrister at Guildford Chambers, is a recognised expert in planning law and procedure. Ashley will speak on "The top five things every property lawyer should know on planning", which will include community infrastructure levy (CIL) and planning obligations.

Peter Williams of Falco Legal Training will provide an update on various commercial landlord and tenant issues, including the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard regulations that take effect in 2018 and the new Model Commercial Lease. Peter has been personally involved in both these developments.

After the talks there will be an opportunity for questions and then time to network over drinks.

Cost: CRELA members - free
Non-members - £25 (equivalent to the annual CRELA subscription)

To register to attend this event, or for more details, please contact Melissa Baxter at Clifton Ingram (melissabaxter@cliftoningram.co.uk or telephone 0118 912 0210).

Henry Stewart Conferences

Henry Stewart Conferences are offering CRELA members a 10% discount on their courses running from March – June 2015. This is a great offer and the CRELA committee is keen to support this and so again click onto the website for further details.



Venues

As we reported last year, we are always looking for new venues to host events principally in the London area. We are grateful to Charles Russell Speechlys LLP, Hogan Lovells International LLP, Bristows LLP and Berwin Leighton Paisner amongst others for volunteering their premises and facilities for events which we have recently held or intend to hold in the forthcoming months. If any other member is able to volunteer their premises then please contact Richard Smith at richard.smith@brodies.com.

Sponsors



We are pleased to mention that we have had a very helpful response from EGi who, along with our existing sponsors, PLC, are keen to support us throughout the year.

Practice and Procedure Committee



Chaired by Simon Schipper, the Committee meets regularly and promotes discussions with other organisations such as the RICS to bring enhanced benefits to our respective members.

Recently, the committee has considered (i) consultation papers relating to Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard regulations and Flood Re proposals; and (ii) the Model Commercial Lease which was launched in July 2014.

Articles have been posted onto the CRELA Forum website about all three issues. Please register, if you have not already done so, to access the Forums.

If you are interested in getting involved then please let us know. We are always interested to hear from those who want to contribute.

CRELA Committee's Work

The Committee wants to hear from you to make sure we represent your needs and wishes. It continues to work hard and is focused on expanding membership numbers and at the same time is striving to improve the variety and content of seminars and promoting the Association beyond London. Much effort is being expended upon trying to increase regional involvement so if you consider you could assist please contact the Committee. We continue to welcome suggestions, questions, recommendations or requests from all members to fill the diary for the forthcoming 12 months. Please direct any suggestions to those listed on the website who will be delighted to do what they can to assist.

Thanks for your continuing support.

CRELA Committee
February 2015