

Latimer Hinks helps veterans' charity establish vital hub

Latimer Hinks has supported the national charity Sporting Force to establish a veterans' hub in Darlington Town Centre, which will help former servicemen and women transition to civilian life.

Latimer Hinks, helped Sporting Force acquire its new premises on High Row by completing an assignment of a lease of offices to the charity within one month of instruction. The Firm has supported a number of businesses and charities to set up in the town as part of the ongoing "I'm Backing Darlington" drive to encourage activity.

The Charity, which was founded by Tommy Lowther in 2015 following his discharge from the army and diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), uses links with professional sports teams to retrain former service personnel for new careers.

Although headquartered in Darlington, Sporting Force has links with professional football teams across the country, including Chelsea, Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur, Leeds United, Sunderland, and rugby team the Newcastle Falcons. Ex-service people are supported to get back to work through training schemes based at the grounds in areas including retail, catering, hospitality, ticketing, admin and groundskeeping.

Tommy Lowther said: "After I left the army, I didn't know how to cope. The charity Help for Heroes offered me a lot of practical and emotional support, and while I was working with them, I came up with the idea for Sporting Force. I thought it would be a brilliant idea to use professional sport, which I've always been interested in, as a starting point to re-integrate ex-forces people back into society, as sports teams link a wide variety of people.

"The first training that we looked at was a mental health first aid class, which makes individuals aware of how to spot potential issues and deal with mental health conditions in both themselves and others. We also offer a number of vocational courses where trainees can learn on the



Rosanne Tweddle, Solicitor at Latimer Hinks and Tommy Lowther of Sporting Force.



We are incredibly grateful to the team at Latimer Hinks for all their guidance and support"

job. The hub will be fantastic for our service users, as it will give them somewhere to drop in, have a drink and a chat, and find out what we have to offer.

We are incredibly grateful to the team at Latimer Hinks for all their guidance, and support in securing a lease of the premises and in such a tight timescale. We asked the previous owners for a recommendation, and they recommended to use Latimer Hinks without a shadow of a doubt."

Rosanne Tweddle, Senior Solicitor at Latimer Hinks, said: "Sporting Force is a fantastic Charity and I am delighted to have worked with Tommy and his team to secure a location centrally in Darlington allowing the establishment of the Charity's Hub. Over the many decades Latimer Hinks has been in the town centre we have assisted a number of Charities with military links so it is particularly rewarding to have helped achieve the Charity's requirements for premises. The new hub will be a

valuable resource for them and we hope will encourage and develop football within the town centre itself. Securing a lease of commercial premises can be a daunting prospect, especially when you have commitments to service users across the country. It has been a privilege to work with this Charity whose work is inspirational, and we are all looking forward to seeing it blossom as part of Darlington's town centre.

For more information about Sporting Force, visit <http://www.sportingforce.org/>





Solicitor highlights valuable lessons from Ken Dodd's last act

Darlington-based law firm Latimer Hinks is advising its clients to check inheritance tax rules for unmarried partners following the recent news about Ken Dodd's estate.

The comedian, who passed away last year, married his partner of 40 years two days before his death. It was recently revealed that this act resulted in his wife receiving the full £27.5million estate, and HMRC missing out on £11 million in inheritance tax.

At present, the estate of an unmarried person is generally subject to a 40 per cent tax on any value in excess of £325,000, unless certain reliefs and exemptions apply, whereas when one person from a marriage or civil partnership inherits the estate of their partner, the full amount would pass to them tax free as the "spouse exemption" would apply.

Ken Dodd did not have a will at the time of his death, and had he and his partner not married, she would have faced potentially lengthy and costly legal proceedings, and she would have been forced to file a claim with the High Court.

Elizabeth Armstrong, a Director and Solicitor in the Private Client Department at Latimer Hinks, said: "It is a common misconception that unmarried or 'common law' couples have the same rights as married couples. At present this is not the case and unmarried partners can find themselves faced with a large inheritance tax bill, as well as a lengthy legal battle if their partner dies intestate.

"Ken Dodd's case is particularly interesting, as the decision to get married was made days before his death, making it appear to be a deliberate move to protect his long-term partner from issues after his death.



Elizabeth Armstrong, Director and Solicitor at Latimer Hinks

"We would recommend that any unmarried couples contact their solicitors to discuss their rights and to plan their estates, and remind couples that if they do marry, any existing wills will become void, and will need to be updated."

For further information call Elizabeth Armstrong on 01325 341500.

Local professionals take on London Marathon for National Charities

Two Darlington business women are donning their running shoes for this year's London Marathon to raise money for worthy causes.

Nikita Noël, a 28-year-old solicitor at law firm Latimer Hinks, and her friend, Ginny MacFarlane, a 27-year-old assistant buyer at Clinkards, are participating in the Marathon, which takes place on 28th April 2019.

The pair are both running for charities close to their hearts, with Nikita running the gruelling 26.2-mile race on behalf of the charity Scope, a disability equality charity, which provides information and support for disabled people and their families and Ginny running on behalf of Macmillan Cancer, a charity which she has supported for many years.

Nikita's inspiration to take part in the Marathon stems from the recent loss of a close family friend, whom from a young age she always considered as a grandparent. Nikita describes her as "the kindest person you could ever meet".

Nikita says that she is "proud and inspired to be running for Scope – an amazing charity that provides support networks for disabled people and their loved ones."

Ginny's motivation to run comes after the loss of her Grandad, who sadly passed away several years ago. Ginny said "The Macmillan nurses were amazing all throughout his



Ginny MacFarlane of Charles Clinkard, Nikita Noël and Anne Elliott (Latimer Hinks) and Charles Clinkard

treatment process, and right up towards the end of his life."

Nikita has worked at Latimer Hinks for five years and is thrilled with the support and encouragement she has received from her colleagues there.

Nikita said "Ginny and I have also been raising funds with events inspired by the Great British Bake-Off and organising quiz nights, a charity 'spinathon' at the gym which consisted of 8 hours non-stop cycling, as well as receiving donations from friends and family and colleagues at Latimer Hinks and Clinkards"

With less than six weeks to go before the London Marathon, Nikita and Ginny have stepped up their training despite the recent cold weather and snowfall.

Nikita said: "Previously, Ginny and I were getting ready to start our 18-mile run when the snow arrived, but this didn't stop us.

"We are constantly motivating each other and recently ran the Northumberland Ponteland "Big 20-miler" as preparation for the full London Marathon distance of 26.2 miles."

Anne Elliott, CEO at Latimer Hinks Solicitors said: "I am incredibly proud

of Nikita, and her friend Ginny, for their dedication to an intense training programme. At Latimer Hinks, we are delighted to give our support in helping to raise funds for Scope, a very worthy charity that campaigns for fairer treatment for people with disabilities."

Charles Clinkard, Managing Director at Charles Clinkard, said: "Ginny is part of our buying and merchandise team and very sadly we lost Lucy Russell from this team last year to cancer. Lucy was one of the bravest, lovely young ladies we all had the pleasure of working with at Clinkards and so it is very fitting that Ginny has chosen to run on behalf of Macmillan Cancer as they do some amazing work supporting people affected by cancer.

"We wish Ginny good luck and any support you can give her is much appreciated."

Nikita and Ginny each set up Just Giving pages, with fundraising targets of £2,000 and £2,500 for their chosen charities.

To make a donation and to read their full fundraising stories, visit:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nikita-noel5> and <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/virginia-macfarlane>

Rosanne Tweddle appointed to Council of National Agriculture Association

Rosanne Tweddle is celebrating after her appointment to the Council of the Agricultural Law Association (ALA).

Rosanne, a senior solicitor at Latimer Hinks who specialises in agricultural law, was elected for a three-year tenure on the Council of the prestigious national organisation.

Rosanne secured one of three available positions on the Council, alongside industry specialists Julie Robinson, a Partner at Roythones in Alconbury and Clive Beer, Head of Professional Services, (Rural) at Savills in London. Five candidates nominated themselves for the role, which acknowledges experts in law and business of the countryside.

The ALA promotes understanding of the agriculture, food and environment sectors, and provides a forum for professionals to discuss relevant topics and share best practice. The ALA consults with many Government and national agricultural bodies, including Defra, the Tenant Farmers Association, the Country Land and Business Association, and Tenancy Reform Industry Group.

Rosanne said: "I'm absolutely delighted to have been elected on to the ALA Council. With five nominees for only three positions there was intense competition, so it was incredibly humbling that members voted for me. I am thrilled to be able to bolster the Northern presence of the ALA at National level.

"With Brexit on the horizon, we are facing an interesting and challenging time in agriculture, and it will be incredibly rewarding to be involved with any changes to policy that are being made. Alex Carson-Taylor is our newly elected Chair with Nerris Llewellyn-Jones appointed as Vice Chair and together, with existing and new Council members, we have a Council brimming with energy and ready to face what is already looking to be a turbulent time in agriculture and farming."

Mike Holland, Secretary and Adviser of the ALA, said: "We are delighted to welcome Rosanne back on to Council, she having previously served on the Council from 2010 to 2014. The Association



Rosanne Tweddle, Solicitor and Anne Elliott, CEO at Latimer Hinks

has a diverse membership of legal, surveying, accountancy, farm business consultancy and banking professionals, all with a common focus on the rural and agricultural sectors. Our strength is the ability to bring together members from all professions under one umbrella, which is important particularly at a time where there is such significant change in agricultural policy and practice.

"As a UK wide Association, Rosanne's presence in the North of England will strengthen our increasing activity in the region and will further enhance our work on regional specific matters of interest to members."

Anne Elliott, CEO at Latimer Hinks Solicitors said: "I am incredibly proud that Rosanne has again been elected to the Council of such a prestigious organisation. Latimer Hinks has an extensive history supporting the agricultural community and employs a number of experts in the sector. It is an honour that one of our team is representing both the firm and the region on a national scale."

Laura rises through the ranks at Latimer Hinks

Latimer Hinks has promoted one of its younger team members after she completed a two-year training contract and qualified as a solicitor.

Laura Richardson, 29, a former law student from Newcastle University, joined the firm in 2014, and balanced her role as a junior secretary with part-time study towards her Legal Practice Course (LPC). She then completed a two-year training contract, before qualifying as a solicitor.

Laura is taking up a new position in Latimer Hinks' property department. Having focussed on residential conveyancing during her training period, she will now

also be working with colleagues in the commercial property team specialising initially in sales and purchases.

Although one of the youngest members of the Latimer Hinks team, Laura also has experience as a paralegal having previously worked for firms in Gateshead and Washington.

Laura said: "It's always been my dream to be a qualified solicitor, and after spending three years at university, 18 months working towards my LPC and then a further two years on my training contract, I'm absolutely delighted to have finally made it."

"The team at Latimer Hinks has been so supportive throughout

my training. I couldn't have asked for better mentors during the last four years. It's a great firm to work for, and I'm proud to be able to play a part in its future."

Laura added: "I'm going to focus on my work in the property department, and give studying a rest for a bit. I think I've earned some time away from the books."

Adam Wood, a Director at Latimer Hinks, said: "Laura is an asset to Latimer Hinks, and I am in no doubt she will be a brilliant solicitor. The property team will benefit greatly from her skills, and she has already undertaken some more complex work for our clients as part of



Laura Richardson, Solicitor at Latimer Hinks

her training, which she handled professionally.

"We are committed to developing talented individuals, and helping them work to the highest levels possible, in order to ensure we have some of the finest legal minds in the region working for us."

Contacts and services

You & your family

An understanding approach to all your personal legal requirements – from buying and selling your house, your wills, trusts and powers of attorney to tax, long term care, succession planning and retirement issues.

Private Client (Wills, Trusts, Probate, Tax Planning, Long Term Care, Succession Planning and Retirement Issues) **Team:** Anne Elliott, Andrew Way, Elizabeth Armstrong, Natalie Palmer, Jennifer Quayle, Gillian Ibbotson, Luke Busbridge, Daniel Williams, Nadine Kilvington, Kelly Maguire, Nikita Noël, Claire Conway, Julie Porter, Hollie Catt.

Residential Conveyancing Team: Martin Williamson, Joanne Cowie, Rosanne Tweddle, Jonathan Sturgeon, Laura Richardson, Lisa Stronach.

Business & commercial

Advice on commercial property, employment and contract law, buying and selling a business and succession planning.

Commercial Team: Nick Poole.

Commercial Property Team: Neil Stevenson, Adam Wood, Joanne Cowie, Rosanne Tweddle, Jonathan Sturgeon, Laura Richardson.

Farms & estates

Expertise in land sales and purchases, option agreements, tenancy agreements, succession planning, diversification schemes and renewable energy developments.

Agricultural Team: Anne Elliott, Neil Stevenson, Elizabeth Armstrong, Adam Wood, Joanne Cowie, Rosanne Tweddle, Martin Williamson.

Private Client Team: Anne Elliott, Andrew Way, Elizabeth Armstrong, Natalie Palmer, Jennifer Quayle, Gillian Ibbotson, Luke Busbridge, Daniel Williams, Nadine Kilvington, Kelly Maguire, Nikita Noël, Claire Conway, Julie Porter, Hollie Catt.

Residential Conveyancing Team: Martin Williamson, Joanne Cowie, Rosanne Tweddle, Jonathan Sturgeon, Laura Richardson, Lisa Stronach.

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Move or improve

Owning property is one of life's most expensive commitments and deciding whether to improve a home that doesn't quite meet your needs to increase its future value or to move brings its own challenges.

You may be settled in the community, possibly with children in the local school, and are familiar with the nearby amenities. You may have a favourite restaurant, pub or café nearby, or a fixed routine at your local gym.

There are of, course, financial implications to consider. This will guide whether you feel it would be best to move immediately, or if renovating your house would give a better return when selling in the future.

In the end, it will be a decision that only you can make.

Moving

The first question to ask is do I want to move? If the reason you're considering a new home is due to location or neighbourhood rather than number of rooms or a small kitchen, then improvements may not suit your needs, regardless of the added value down the line. Conduct a search and see what properties are available within your budget. This can be done online as well as visiting an estate agent in person. Check your commute and the schools nearby, as well as aspects of your home life you cherish, like walking the dog in a local park or having shops close by.

If budget allows, moving may enable you to upgrade to a larger house or a property without the upheaval of construction. Of course, you may still need to do some remedial work and decorating. It is rare that you find the perfect house that does not require any work, so consider that you still may need to invest in a new bathroom or extend your kitchen.

Improving

Improving first may seem more appealing than moving, especially if this will increase the value of your home when you do come to sell. If your house search does not reveal any suitable properties immediately, then consider the option of staying put for a while and remodelling your house to get a greater return in the future.

The benefits to improving your house are that it allows you to think about exactly what you need now, and what will make it more aesthetically appealing to future buyers. This could be a new kitchen with breakfast bar or a room in the loft, or maybe a quiet office space. Most changes to a property will add value in the long term.

However, it is imperative to seek any necessary planning permission and building regulation approval before considering renovations or extensions, to avoid running into problems with the local council. You must also produce these when you come to sell.

Henry Carver of Carver Residential says: "Every day we meet clients who have to decide if they should extend their property and stay put or find a house that is more suitable to their current circumstance.

"The decision will more often be swayed by the financial implications of extending, rather than the upheaval of living on a building site. At Carver Residential we always welcome the opportunity to visit the client at their home and discuss, in detail, their options. This will include looking at available properties within their price range and undertaking a full market appraisal on their home as it stands today, giving them the likely sale price if they decide to modify.

"We often find that the cost of the building works actually exceeds the increase in property value, therefore if a client can see themselves moving in the following 3-5 years, our advice is usually to move home now, rather than going through the expense and hassle."

In the end, it is a tough decision, but you need to sit down and think about what you want and have the budget for. Do your homework, obtain quotes and valuations, check on planning permissions if needed and ask the experts!



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