

Rightfocus



Latimer Hinks pledges £1000 to help save historic Darlington church

Above, left to right: Andrea Tobin, Marketing Manager at Latimer Hinks, Brian Johnson, Treasurer at St Cuthberts Church, Anne Elliott, Partner at Latimer Hinks.

Latimer Hinks has pledged £1000 from funds raised at its Charity Ball to help save one of the region's most iconic churches.

St Cuthbert's Church in Darlington has been described by English Heritage as one of the most important examples of early English Gothic architecture in northern England.

Treasurer Brian Johnson has highlighted the two major tasks faced by those charged with running and maintaining the 900-year-old building.

He said: "The heating system is totally inefficient and must be replaced. On top of that, there is a need for major repairs to the roof."

To that end, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has awarded development funding of £26,500 to help progress the Church's plans for a full grant at a later date. It is estimated that the whole project will cost £150,000, with the HLF providing £106,000. The funding will allow the church authorities to renew lead coverings that have been in place since the 1950s – these have started to split and allow water to enter the building. This has damaged ancient roof timbers that date back to the 13th Century – believed to be the oldest in the area.

Anne Elliott, marketing partner at Latimer Hinks Solicitors, said: "As a firm with a long history in Darlington – this year we celebrate 122 years in Darlington and last year we celebrated 60 years in our town centre offices in Priestgate - we are keenly aware of the plight of St Cuthbert's Church. It is a wonderful and historic church located only a stone's throw from our offices and so it was easy to come to the decision that their fund was something we want, and need, to support.

"St Cuthbert's is a vital part of our town's heritage and its plight is one that should resonate with anyone who has at any point been part of its congregation or is keen to protect our historic heritage."

Anne added: "I encourage other businesses and concerned individuals to dig deep to help the church. Anyone interested in donating should contact the church direct to do so."

A host of other charities and initiatives are set to benefit from the law firm's annual charity ball, which this year raised a record £16,000. The event also generated funds for St Teresa's Hospice and the County Durham Community Foundation, as well as a variety of smaller local charities.

Welcome to Rightfocus...

In this issue we lead with great news of a local Church which is benefiting from the Latimer Hinks Charity Ball Fund.

Inside you will read of the Legal 500 & Chambers UK endorsements of our services and also of the expansion of our Court of Protection Team and we warn of "capacity" issues following a recent dementia ruling.

Adam Wood, solicitor in the Commercial Property department has helped the owners of a local family butcher pass the reins on to his son, and finally on the back page Martin Williamson provides some topical tips on how to winter proof your home.



Latimer Hinks receives endorsements from Legal 500 & Chambers UK

Solicitors with Latimer Hinks have received national recognition from two of the UK's most influential legal guides – The Legal 500 and Chambers UK.

The firm has been mentioned in the latest Legal 500, which gives in-depth information and recommendations on law firms in more than 70 countries.

The UK Legal 500 says:

Personal Tax, Trusts & Probate - The 'professional' Latimer Hinks advises on a range of matters including succession planning, inheritance tax planning and capital gains tax issues. Anne Elliott is 'at the top of her game', and Andrew Way, Elizabeth Armstrong and Natalie Palmer are also recommended.

Commercial Property - Tim Haggie's team at Latimer Hinks advises on option agreements, developer agreements and landlord and tenant matters. Neil Stevenson and Nicola Neilson are key names in the team.

Corporate & Commercial - Nicholas Poole at Latimer Hinks predominantly represents local SMEs.

Agriculture & Estates - The 'excellent' Latimer Hinks advises on mineral rights, sales and purchases of farms, and agricultural land and wind farm negotiations, among other matters. Department head Anne Elliott is 'exceptional'.

Anne Elliott and Nicholas Poole are also singled out in the Chambers UK Guide which prides itself on the independence and objectivity of its research and carries out thousands of in-depth interviews to assess the reputation and expertise of business lawyers. Its rankings take into account technical legal ability, professional conduct, client service, commercial awareness, diligence and commitment to clients.

Chambers UK says:

Agriculture & Estates - Latimer Hinks is a substantial practice advising farmers and landed estates on trusts, succession planning and tax. Also handles wind farm developments and the acquisition and disposal of agriculture property. Partnership disputes and agricultural holdings are other areas of expertise.



"Practice head Anne Elliott has an excellent reputation for assisting farmers and landed estates with private client matters. One satisfied client comments: "She was able to come up with an innovative solution to our problem."

Corporate & Commercial - Latimer Hinks has a broad corporate practice with an emphasis on the care home industry, as well as employment issues. Nicholas Poole frequently assists SMEs with all corporate aspects of their businesses, including the acquisition and sale of assets and financing arrangements.

Tim Haggie, Managing Partner at Latimer Hinks, said: "Legal 500 and Chambers UK provide totally impartial and independent validations of the quality of services that Latimer Hinks provides.

"Every legal practitioner cited in the Legal 500 & Chambers UK has been identified by researchers as being highly recommended in their particular areas of practice. Superb client service is at the heart of everything we do and we are delighted this has been recognised by The Legal 500.

Landmark deal for well known family butchers

Latimer Hinks has assisted on a deal which has seen the owner of a longstanding family butchers pass the reins on to his son.

W. Alderson & Son, which is based in Cockerton and is in its third generation, previously traded as a family partnership between Derek Alderson and his son, Nigel.

Following Derek's retirement after 52 years in the business, which his father, Wilf, started in 1934, Nigel is now the new owner. Nigel has more than 24 years' experience, having worked in the business since 1990.

Adam Wood, property lawyer at Latimer Hinks Solicitors, completed the amendments to the shop's lease so that it is now in the sole name of Nigel Alderson.

Nigel said: "I am delighted that the leasing arrangements have been completed. It has been a pleasure to work alongside my father, who has passed on his wealth of knowledge to me, and I am grateful to our loyal customers who have helped the business continue to grow. We're fortunate not to have been affected by the recession, which is a testament to the values that have been passed down through the family.

"I have known Adam for a long time and, as always, he was very approachable. He has acted on my behalf previously and his knowledge and professionalism ensured a smooth process, in what is an exciting time for the business."

Adam Wood said: "Having known and worked with Nigel before, I was delighted to assist with such a significant change to the business. With a loyal customer base and reliable workforce, it is no wonder that Alderson's has performed so well over the years, and I'm sure Nigel will carry on this tradition. I would like to wish Derek a happy retirement and Nigel all the best with his business."





Above, Court of Protection Team, left to right: Helen Thomas, Daniel Williams and Natalie Palmer.

Latimer Hinks is expanding its Court of Protection Team

The firm's Court of Protection & Contested Estates team provides expert advice to clients on a wide range of issues, primarily concerning mental capacity and vulnerable adults.

The team regularly prepares applications to Court to appoint a nominee - known as a 'Deputy' - to manage the financial affairs or health and welfare of those who lack mental capacity.

They also advise clients in relation to more complex issues including Statutory Wills - where in very particular circumstances the court can make a Will on behalf of those who do not have the required mental capacity. In addition, they advise and assist clients involved in contested applications to the Court, often where families are in conflict.

The Court of Protection team comprises Natalie Palmer, partner in the private client department, who is a 'Dementia

Champion' and holds the Society of Trusts and Estates Practitioners (STEP) qualification, Daniel Williams and Helen Thomas. Between them they have more than 25 years' experience and they are all members of Solicitors for the Elderly.

Helen Thomas has recently become an associate member of the Association of Contentious Trust and Probate Specialists (ACTAPS), which is an organisation for lawyers specialising in contentious trust, probate and Court of Protection work and is one of only a few lawyers in the North East to gain associate accreditation.

Helen said: "We have an ageing population and the economy is still very much in a state of turmoil. This had led to a huge increase in demand for specialist legal services surrounding Mental Capacity and conflict issues. We recognise this and have a dedicated department that specialises in this type of work.

The Darlington based firm has a team specialising in issues of capacity including property and financial affairs, health and personal welfare, the registration process for Enduring and Lasting Powers of Attorney and Court of Protection matters.

The team also advises in contentious Probate, Trustee and Attorney cases where capacity may well be an issue.

Daniel Williams, a solicitor at Latimer Hinks, said: "This is an example of the seriousness the Government is attaching to dementia. It also emphasises that there will be a growing number of cases of dementia being diagnosed in the coming years, which makes it more important than ever that everyone is aware of the issues surrounding capacity.

"If individuals lose their mental faculties and they do not have in place an appropriate Power of Attorney, then an

“Our specialist knowledge of Court of Protection matters enables us to deliver a “boutique” service to our clients during what is inevitably a very distressing time”

"The team is part of the larger private client department at the firm advising and assisting in relation to Wills, Trusts, Probate, Tax and Estate Planning and our specialist knowledge of Court of Protection matters enables us to deliver a "boutique" service to our clients during what is inevitably a very distressing time."

Anne Elliott, Marketing Partner at Latimer Hinks Solicitors, said: "We have always advised clients on issues surrounding mental capacity and Court of Protection matters and we recognise that demand for these services is increasing.

"This is why we have developed a dedicated team with specialist qualifications. The issues involved are often difficult and sensitive and clients need a compassionate and knowledgeable solicitor to guide when capacity problems and the Court of Protection are involved."

application would need to be made to the Court of Protection for the appointment of a Deputy empowered to act on their behalf. Such applications can be extremely lengthy and costly."

"We always encourage individuals to put in place Powers of Attorney as a precaution to ensure that people of their choice are appropriately authorised to act on their behalf should the need arise."

Although GPs are already paid for conducting asthma reviews and ensuring patients with high cholesterol counts are prescribed statins, they are not rewarded for identifying any particular condition.

Jeremy Hunt, the health secretary, has condemned diagnosis rates of dementia, which were just 37% as recently as 2010, as shockingly low and "a national shame". There are thought to be up to 400,000 people in England with dementia who have not been diagnosed.

Latimer Hinks issues warning over 'capacity' issues following dementia ruling

Latimer Hinks Solicitors has welcomed proposals for advancements in the diagnosis of dementia but warns that relatives and carers should be aware of issues surrounding both diagnosis and misdiagnosis.

The NHS has proposed that it will give GP surgeries £55 for every patient on their list who has been diagnosed with dementia in the six months up to next March, as part of a drive to get the rate of diagnosis up from about 50% to two-thirds of all those who develop the condition.

**Solicitors for families,
businesses, farmers &
landowners**

Contacts and services

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An understanding approach to house buying and selling, long term care and retirement, wills, trusts and probate.

Private Client Team: Anne Elliott, Andrew Way, Elizabeth Armstrong, Natalie Palmer, Helen Thomas, Gillian Ibbotson, Nadine Kilvington, Kelly McLoughlin, Daniel Williams, Claire Conway, Julie Porter

Residential Conveyancing Team: Nicola Neilson, Martin Williamson

business & commercial

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

Commercial Team: Nick Poole, Anne Elliott

Commercial Property Team: Tim Haggie, Neil Stevenson, Nicola Neilson, Adam Wood

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

Agricultural Team: Tim Haggie, Anne Elliott, Neil Stevenson, Nicola Neilson

Private Client Team: Anne Elliott, Andrew Way, Elizabeth Armstrong, Natalie Palmer, Helen Thomas, Gillian Ibbotson, Nadine Kilvington, Kelly McLoughlin, Daniel Williams, Claire Conway, Julie Porter

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Don't forget to winter proof your property

Winter has now officially arrived and so if you haven't yet moved wooden garden furniture indoors now is the time to do so to avoid it being damaged by the elements. There are many additional measures home owners can take to stop Jack Frost wreaking havoc on property and to keep energy costs in check.

Properties can be at risk both from the outside elements and the moist, warm conditions that build up inside during the winter months. The outside of a house takes a battering in the winter so a realistic assessment of its current condition is vital – remember to check the roof, walls, floors, windows and doors and, if they are found to be wanting, invest in better insulation and ensure that windows are properly maintained.

Good ventilation can be as crucial as stopping the cold air from coming in. Condensation can be an issue if a property is poorly ventilated. This problem can be prevented by simply opening the windows every now and then. Unfortunately security and ventilation are conflicting requirements.

Roof - Inspect the roof and replace any cracked tiles.



**Martin Williamson, Head of
Residential Property.**

Loft - Check the insulation is in good condition (up to current standard.)

Gutters and drains - Clear them of leaves and debris. Take particular care that the gullies are clear

Overflowing gutters can drench walls and cause damage. Insulate external drain pipes (e.g. those for central heating) with waterproof tape or similar material.

Walls - 33% of heat lost in the home is through the walls. Cavity wall insulation is a good option and can boost its value and saleability while reducing your energy bills.

Also remember to check the pointing – frost can play havoc with poorly maintained walls.

External paving - In very cold weather, water on paving will freeze. Ensure the paving is well drained and avoid water collecting, freezing and causing accidents.

Windows - Check perimeters of all windows to make sure water flows away from glass and doesn't collect on the sill, or drain behind it. It is important to minimize draughts. If double-glazing is not in place consider fitting cheaper options such as secondary glazing or put polythene across the window frames.

Doors - Stop draughts through letterboxes by fitting a cover and put a sealant around the door frames.

Chimney - Have wood and coal burning flues swept.

Boilers - Have your boiler serviced. If you have a condensing boiler, insulate the external condensate and ensure it is of the correct bore.

And finally, check the heating system is in order; insulate hot water tanks, and bleed radiators.

These are just a few hints and tips that should help to make properties better able to bear the brunt of the elements this winter season.

**For further information: visit
www.latimerhinks.co.uk or call
01325 341500.**