



DAVIDSON & ROBERTSON

RURAL SURVEYORS & CONSULTANTS

Autumn Bulletin

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News from offices across Scotland & Northern England



People Power #pullingfortheteam

Celebrating the power and passion

It's people that make a business - whether that's farming or in related services. We're pleased to announce our team is still growing and we're proud to continue supporting the SAYFC in the RHASS Tug Of War finals.

Congratulations to Carluke YFC Men's team - Tug of War Champions at the Royal Highland Show- with Ayr YFC Ladies in their winning ways again. And well done to Callander YFC for fielding so many teams.



Up and running

This summer we've been developing our website - it's smarter to use and easier to search for what you are looking for - have you seen it? www.drrural.co.uk



Announcing Meaty Sponsorships:

Wed 13 Nov Prime Meat Exhibition:

Cally Mart - D&R sponsoring Overall Live Cattle Champion

Sat 23 Nov LiveScot:

Lanark Agricultural Centre - D&R sponsoring Heavyweight Champion and Reserve

See you at AgriScot - stand 138

The rise of the Rural Entrepreneur



Unlocking development value



Into the ring with Cally Mart



Adding value to your business

@DR_Rural

www.drrural.co.uk

The rise of the Rural Entrepreneur

Necessity is the mother of invention. In recent years there has been a big drive to encourage businesses to diversify, consequently there's more business variety in our countryside than ever before. This is driven by numerous factors, but primarily the need to generate more income from farm assets.

There is also the succession argument for farm businesses (or businesses with farming at the core) where the next generation has worked off farm, often in other professions or industry. Generating enough income to support another family often relies on alternative income. This is often sought either by utilising the property assets, or by utilising the diverse skillset available – diversifying the farmer, rather than the farm. Developing the rural business owner – the rural entrepreneur.

Today, there's more encouragement to give people in rural areas the confidence to have a go – be that the successful Scottish Enterprise Rural Leadership Programme, SAYFC Cultivating Leaders

Business Programme, or other business skills courses. There is also a transformation in the way information can be accessed via technology, broadband, etc.

What can D&R do to help? As rural businesspeople with a broad awareness and experience of what works, we can:

- Appraise existing businesses
- Assist in delivering new enterprises
- Manage existing assets in new ways
- Enable succession of rural businesses
- Provide key cover for businesses with staff



Practice what we preach

At D&R, we develop our people, we encourage progression and succession, and we look to the future to see how we can help you to add value to your business in the future. We also participate in many training courses, as well as looking at the future skill requirements of our broad client base, to make both you and us fit for the future.

Author: Martin Hall MD (Edinburgh) sits on the CAAV Future Skills Group and ScEnt Harvesting the Growth.

Unlocking the value of development - the proactive approach prevails

It's fair to say there has never been a better time to review your assets – that includes looking at development opportunities to unlock your land value.

Proactivity is the key to **make things happen** and getting involved in anything at an early stage gives you a better chance to look at wider issues and opportunities. We've had some good results recently with this approach, adding value to clients' land by engaging early with the planning process and evaluating how to influence this with our clients' objectives in mind.

Think big; we looked at a block of land which had previously been refused planning for a small-scale development. Identifying a much larger strategic opportunity resulted in a competitive tender process to bring a developer on board. Elsewhere, we looked at a site which had been considered and dismissed numerous times. With a fresh approach we secured permission for 200 new homes.

South of the border - Class Q rights are an effective way of adding value to redundant farm buildings and converting them to residential use.

There are prospects with larger scale residential schemes throughout Scotland and Northern England including Carlisle, Penrith, Bathgate, Aberdeen as well as new opportunities across Central Scotland. **Getting advice at the earliest opportunity pays dividends down the line.**



Author: Chris Edmunds (Cockermouth). For more information, contact your local D&R office.

Solar power is back on the horizon



We have renewable developers once again looking for viable sites to create solar farms in Scotland and Northern England. Developers are looking for sites of 200 acres plus, which are (ideally) flat, not at risk of flooding and clear of any cultural heritage constraints. Principle areas of interest lie along the following coastal areas:

- Newcastle to Berwick
- Solway Coast of Cumbria and Dumfries & Galloway
- East Neuk of Fife

Just like onshore wind development, the cost of grid connection and grid capacity are key elements of site viability. Rental expectations vary, but typically fall within a range of £400-600 per acre per annum.

Author: Derek Bathgate (Ayr). For more information, contact your local D&R office.

D&R is a Registered Letting Agent



Our staff completed the Level 6 Award in Residential Letting and Property Management (Scotland) and this Spring, D&R became Registered Letting Agents. If you'd like a copy of the Letting Agent Code of Practice or have a property to rent, contact your local D&R office.

Author: Murray Philp (Forfar).

Survey results – your input

We'd like to say thank you to everyone who took part in our survey this year, the response rate was very good, and your feedback has been invaluable.

How do you see us?

You said you feel we are approachable, professional, friendly, efficient and good at what we do. Thank you – that's what we aim for.

Keeping in touch – you said you find our bulletins a good source of information – so we'll keep sending them to you unless you ask us not to.

Project Progress reports – one or two people felt our progress reports could be better – we have improved how we keep clients up to date with progress – it's good to talk!



Sales update

Overall and year to date, D&R has seen properties secure good interest with strong offers received, with offers averaging 28% over asking price. In the current market, the level of interest and speed of sale is determined by the quality of the property and its location.

The lifestyle market is dominated by buyers looking for properties in commuting distance of Central Scotland with a manageable amount of land, often between 5 and 20 acres.

Land sold for tree planting this year has sold for 32% over asking with a value range of £1650 to £2000 per acre for plantable land. The market price has been rising in the last few months with increasing demand, especially for good quality planting land.

The agricultural sector is still dominated by key trends like neighbouring businesses taking local opportunities. Buyers are also looking to buy land with funds that are external to agriculture due to the tax advantages of agricultural land.

Although uncertainty over the future of subsidy continues and

recent farm gate prices have dipped (especially in the livestock sector), the availability of long-term funding at low interest rates continues to support progressive businesses.

If you are considering selling property in 2020, it pays to plan ahead.

If you are thinking of bringing a property to market or are looking to buy, contact Fiona Paul, Sales Co-ordinator on 01506 811 812.



Fiona Paul

Forestry Minister visit to explore tree planting opportunities



David Rutley MP & Iain Kyle

This summer, Forestry Minister David Rutley MP visited Iain Kyle's (our Forestry Manager) farm near Haltwhistle. Iain has practical experience of how the processes for tree planting schemes work both sides of the border. He has planted trees on his own Northumberland farm, and, in his role as Forestry Manager with D&R, has valuable experience of delivering schemes across Northern England and Scotland too.

Iain gave the Minister a pragmatic insight to the issues faced when planting trees in England. They discussed the barriers and frustrations faced by landowners looking to plant trees and discussed the successful processes adopted across the border in Scotland.

The Government launched the Clean Growth Strategy in 2017 (updated April 2018). Its objective is to establish a new network of forests in England, funding larger-scale woodland and forest creation, committing to plant 11 million trees this parliament, and increasing the amount of UK timber used in construction.

Iain said "At D&R, around 70% of our woodland planting and management work is in Scotland, but with less English red tape we're looking forward to that changing. Anything that can make it easier will make tree planting more appealing in England."

Commenting on his visit, the Minister said "Iain has a positive attitude and a can-do approach, looking at the challenges as opportunities in a very practical way and looking for lessons to improve rather than just seeing problems. Planting alongside farming for sustainable income, his story is an excellent case study."

Forestry and Timber update

Following an extended period of price rises and increased activity, both UK and foreign timber markets are seeing a price reduction of 10 - 20% on figures reported in 2017/2018. This global slowdown has predominantly been caused by a large volume of timber flooding the sawmill market.

Across Europe a combination of catastrophic wind blow and beetle infestation has resulted in significant areas of Sitka Spruce being harvested and reaching the market much sooner than anticipated. As a result, the domestic markets have been placed under pressure, which has slowed production and in turn, the demand and price for the raw material.

Hardwood/ firewood and biomass products are still sought-after and with winter on its way, there are signs of an upturn in prices. This is encouraging for farmers looking at their unmanaged woodland / shelterbelts for potential income.



For a full forestry and timber update visit our website or contact Iain Kyle on 01900 268 633 or your local D&R office.

GROWTH IN BUSINESS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

D&R steps into the ring with Cally Mart

On 1st July, we announced a new strategic link with Caledonian Marts, providing a comprehensive range of property services for 'Cally' clients that go beyond valuations and sales.

John Kyle, Managing Director at Caledonian Marts said "It's an exciting collaboration and good news for our clients. D&R are very proactive. We believe they have the expertise, energy and enthusiasm to provide the wider range of services our clients are looking for and we can see the benefit of clients getting D&R involved at early stages. The feedback from the farmers has been very encouraging".

D&R's first visit to the mart was 1st August with the full Linlithgow branch team. We now have a meeting room at the mart, staff on the ground each week and for special sale days.

Working more closely with the Cally Mart is a natural progression for both businesses. It's going better than we first thought, with referrals every

week providing a range of support to Cally clients across a wide variety of issues from sales and utilities to landlord and tenant issues.

It's a fantastic opportunity to have a Stirling base from which to support existing clients and to open new opportunities in the area and it's mutually beneficial as we've been able to cross refer clients to the Cally Mart.

DIARY DATE:

Wed 13 Nov - Prime Meat Exhibition D&R sponsors Overall Live Cattle Champion

Meet us at the mart or make an appointment: contact Linlithgow team on 01506 811 812



D&R joins forces with NFU Scotland: new Waygo helpline

The window of opportunity to make use of the 'Waygo' amnesty is closing. In its final year, the amnesty allows landlords and tenants to rectify any outstanding issues around notification of tenants' improvements that should qualify for compensation when the tenancy comes to an end - a process known as Waygo.

D&R joined forces with NFU Scotland to create a new service for members to help them engage with this process. Announced at the Highland Show, NFUS members seeking help can take advantage of

a free D&R helpline service by calling **0131 449 6212**. They can also attend the various Waygo Amnesty events taking place across Scotland. The amnesty presents a one-time-only opportunity for both landlords and tenants to properly record improvements implemented.

With less than 8 months remaining to complete the amnesty process, we would encourage eligible tenants and landlords to take this opportunity.

The partnership between D&R and NFU Scotland offers a practical way

for members to take advantage of the remaining time window before the **deadline of 12 June 2020**.

For more information contact your local D&R office.



Commitment to home grown surveyors

Strategically, it is great to have a pool of graduate surveyors that develop with us.



New staff in 2019

D&R is committed to recruiting and developing talented young graduates. Each year we introduce at least 2 graduates or work placement students, encouraging them with clear progression paths within the company.

Many of our qualified surveyors are home grown, 100% of our Directors and Branch Managers are Fellows of CAAV. Within the company we have 15 CAAV Fellows – with new surveyors going forward for the exams each year.

New staff

During 2019, fourteen new people have joined our team across all disciplines and various branches.

New Branch Managers



Hannah Matthew, Colin Beattie

Colin Beattie, Branch Manager, Castle Douglas. A Senior Surveyor with years of experience, Colin grew up on a farm in Dumfries & Galloway. He has an MSc in Agricultural Economics and qualified as a Rural Surveyor in 2004 and achieved FAAV status in 2014. Colin is a member of the Scottish Agricultural Arbiters & Valuers Association.

Hannah Matthew: Branch Manager, Forfar. Working with a range of private and institutional clients on the management of rural land and estates, Hannah has particular interest in landlord and tenant work with a wealth of experience in agricultural holdings. She has a MA (Hons) in Rural Surveying and Spatial Planning, is a Member of RICS and a Fellow of CAAV.

D&R challenge - Walk the Wall

In June we walked Hadrian's Wall (well, most of it) and made a donation to the Farm Safety Foundation's #mindyourhead campaign, focusing on farm safety and farmers' mental health issues.

We presented a cheque for £1,500 to the **Farm Safety Foundation** at SRUC Oatridge Campus in October, when it was delivering Farm Safety training lectures to students.



Staff Training Day

Our autumn training day to Wellsfield Farm Park gave everyone a chance to meet up and see an excellent example of farm diversification. This included equestrian activities, fishing, fun park, holiday cabins and more. It was also a great day for our new recruits to meet the full D&R team.