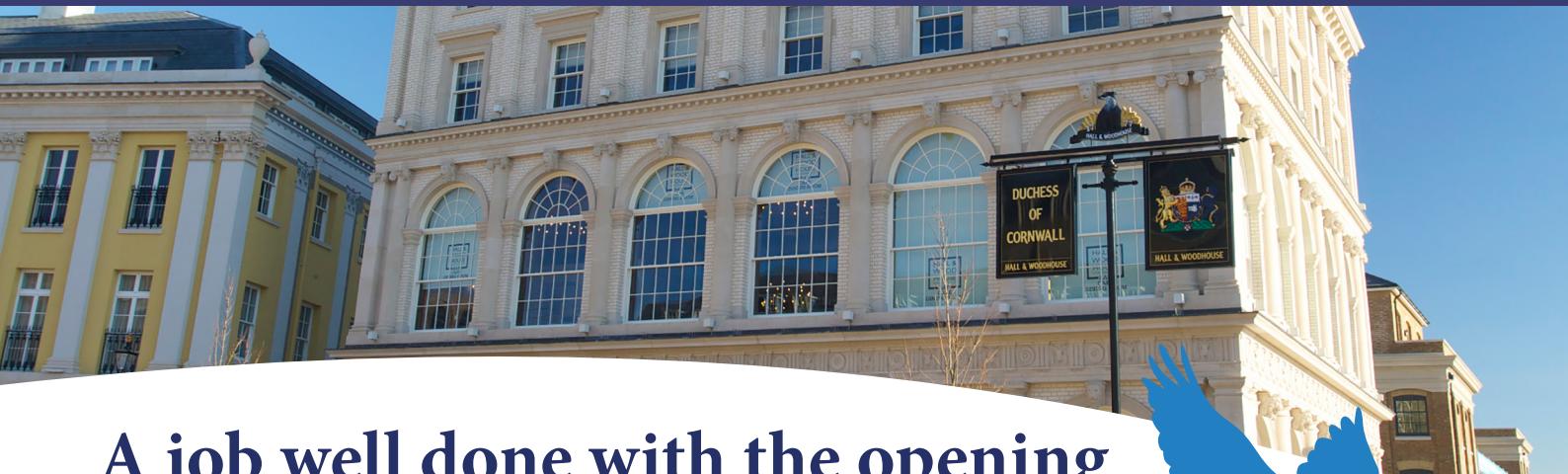


# Law for Life

Your update on the things that matter most



## A job well done with the opening of the Duchess of Cornwall Inn

The opening of The Duchess of Cornwall Inn on Queen Mother Square in Poundbury last October was a grand occasion which will live long in the memory of those present.

But perhaps not so well known is that Blanchards Bailey's Principal, Sarah Heath, was instrumental in the deal which culminated in the construction of this jewel in Poundbury's crown.

Sarah and her team of commercial legal experts spent almost three years negotiating the complex documentation between The Duchy of Cornwall and client Hall & Woodhouse which saw both parties reach agreement for the development of the site to a public house with 20 guest bedrooms.

Blanchards Bailey secured a Development Agreement and Lease and Option Agreement working with The Duchy of Cornwall - in particular the Duchy's technical team and London based legal team - on behalf of Hall & Woodhouse.

"Sarah and her team offered commercial and pragmatic advice throughout, which was a welcome breath of fresh air."

Such complicated agreements form a core part of the work which the commercial property team deliver. Blanchards Bailey acts for a number of property investors

and developers throughout England and Wales and Sarah was recommended for her expertise and quality of advice in related matters by The Legal 500.

Following Sarah's pivotal role, she was invited to attend the opening ceremony, where she spoke with their Royal Highnesses The Duchess of Cornwall and The Prince of Wales about the project.

Earlier in the day before the official opening, Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh also visited the hotel as part of their tour of the area, adding further pomp and ceremony to the occasion.

Speaking of the event, Sarah said: "I'm proud that Blanchards Bailey played a part in such a prestigious and complex project which will bring so much to the area. I was honoured to be personally invited to attend the opening and to have the opportunity to meet with The Duchess of Cornwall and The Prince of Wales.

"Knowing The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh had also undertaken a tour of the hotel prior to the event was wonderful."

Mark James, Director of Hall & Woodhouse who headed up the project, added: "We are delighted to have opened the Duchess of Cornwall Inn. It is a truly magnificent building in the heart of Poundbury, with a stunning interior and bedrooms. The deal to secure the site was complicated, and Sarah and her team offered commercial and pragmatic advice throughout, which was a welcome breath of fresh air and instrumental in completing the transaction."

The next time you are near Poundbury we suggest you visit this classic English inn which features a welcoming pantry and bar showcasing a range of award-winning Badger ales, as well as a beautiful dining room focusing on simple, quality British food. For more information see: [duchessofcornwall.co.uk](http://duchessofcornwall.co.uk)

If you are interested in finding out more about this work or want to speak to one of our team about your commercial property challenges then contact us today.

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## Impressive growth amidst uncertainty

The past year has seen much uncertainty both in the UK and globally.

Opinion polls predicting the outcomes of elections and referendums were proven inaccurate. The value of the British pound wavered over the economic ambiguity stemming from the Brexit vote.

Yet, amongst all this uncertainty, Blanchards Bailey is proud to say that it has seen tremendous growth and is optimistic about the future. The firm saw an increase in turnover of 10 per cent from December 2015 to a year later in 2016 and a considerable 40 per cent increase over the last three years.

Sarah Heath, Principal and Head of Commercial Services, said: "We saw an increased number of clients coming to us with concerns for advice in the current business environment. Having been able to achieve steady growth over the past few years, we are well equipped to guide them through any uncertainty they may have and can impart them with a strong sense of confidence moving forward."

"Our upturn in business also sparked a recruitment drive that led to a number of key staff additions including Senior Associate Ian Campbell, expert family law Solicitor, Clare Cherry, and residential conveyancing Senior Associate, Caroline Doman, as well as Private Client Assistant Catherine Hardy. Jane Eldridge also joined as HR Manager to lead our innovative new HR Consultancy service.

"The new HR Consultancy reflects the growing demands of our widening client base, while also marking a change from traditional services usually offered by solicitors – something that can also be seen with the development of our financial services offering through which specialist advice is given."

Jerome Dodge, Principal and Head of Private Client - Wills and Estate Planning, said: "The year has seen increasing demand for new personnel and services to meet growing business needs.

"We reacted quickly to the challenge, successfully bringing in new talented members of staff both to strengthen the expertise in existing services and to lead the launch of a new one. This has allowed us to retain our excellent personal client service along with seeing rapid growth as we continue to support people through the good and bad times."

## New Inheritance Tax law changes means families may lose out

New rules introduced in April may have spelled good news for homeowners by removing millions from Inheritance Tax liability. Despite this, though, many could still miss out or on some or all of the extra allowance unless they take urgent action to review their Wills.



The Government's new rules mean there is a potential to extend the Inheritance Tax allowance by using what is to be known as the residence nil rate band (RNRB) from the current tax-free threshold of £325,000 to £425,000 for an individual, and from £650,000 to £850,000 for a married couple and those in a civil partnership.

The new provision allows individuals and married couples to pass on their main home with a smaller tax liability. However, the rules state it must include a 'family home' which must be the main property. Buy-to-let and second properties will add to the total size of the estate as normal.

The new changes mean many risk losing out unless they update their Wills to reflect the new legislation. By making simple adjustments, Blanchards Bailey can secure the extra allowance for clients – ensuring their estate does not pay more Inheritance Tax than is necessary.

"It is essential for people who think they will benefit from the extra allowance to review their Wills immediately as otherwise they may face losing out," Jerome Dodge, Principal and Head of Private Client - Wills and Estate Planning, said.

"While the new allowance could save people significant sums of money, the fact the legislation is full of strange anomalies, combined with the reality that most Wills were drafted before the changes were introduced, may mean they will not benefit unless their Wills are updated."

Not everyone, though, will qualify for the new allowance. For example, where estates are worth more than £2m, the allowance is reduced on a sliding scale.

**Make sure that you don't miss out on some or all of the extra allowance by contacting Jerome Dodge today.**

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# Data Protection changes will affect everyone

Next year will see the largest overhaul of data protection laws – with these having massive consequences for many businesses.

Yet despite the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on 25 May 2018 many companies have not even started preparations for the new legislation, while others are not even aware



of it, even though it demands 100 per cent compliance.

Organisations which do not comply are running the risk of receiving hefty fines – up to €20million or four per cent of a company's worldwide turnover, whichever is higher – loss of consumer and supply chain confidence, as well as significant damage to their reputations.

The need for businesses to ensure they have robust policies, procedures and processes in place has never been greater, on which the team at Blanchards Bailey can advise you. For more information, contact Paul Dunlop today.

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## What you need to know to avoid maternity discrimination claims

A recent parliamentary report stated pregnant women are facing 'unacceptable levels' of discrimination in the workplace.

Over the last decade, the number of new and expectant mothers forced to leave their place of employment due to discrimination has doubled. The number now totals 54,000 women.

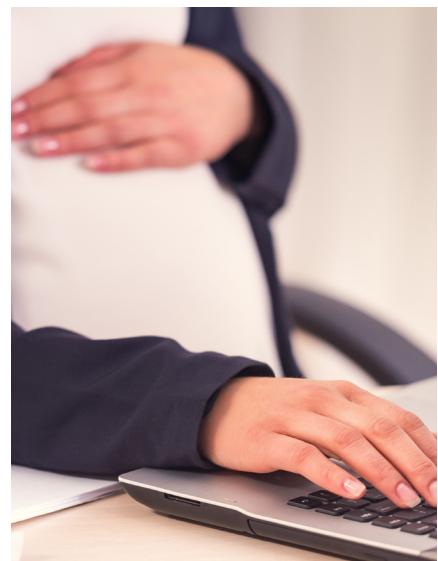
The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee has proposed employers be forbidden from making women redundant during and after pregnancy, except in very exceptional circumstances such as a gross violation of workplace conduct.

The law strictly prohibits unfavourable treatment of a pregnant employee or job

applicant by a business. A woman cannot be discriminated against in her place of work or be denied a career opportunity due to her pregnancy, or an illness she has suffered as a result of her pregnancy.

The ban on unfavourable treatment is also applicable to new mothers whom, for example, should be considered for promotion equally to all others while on maternity leave.

**Whether you are an employee or a business and would like more information, call Edward O'Brien today.**



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## Have you budgeted for stamp duty?

When buying a property, it is important to budget for Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT). Depending on the purchase price, SDLT can add a sizeable amount to your total costs even at the standard rate, but in the following circumstances SDLT is payable at a higher rate and can have a significant impact on the amount you will be liable to pay:



- If you are an individual buying a second property which is not replacing your main residence, for example, a property which is purchased as an investment or to pass on to your children at a later date. Importantly, joint purchasers are liable to pay this higher rate on the full purchase price if either party owns additional property which they will be retaining.
- If you are a company or trust purchasing residential property.

The higher rate is 3 per cent more than the standard rate of SDLT and is payable on any land or property which you purchase for over £40,000. In certain circumstances SDLT is payable at the rate of 15 per cent.

This is a complex area of tax law so speak to us at an early stage so we can assess your liability to help you structure your transaction most effectively.

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# Experts recruited to meet increasing demand



Pictured: Jerome Dodge (Principal), Ian Campbell (Senior Associate) and Catherine Hardy (Private Client Assistant)

To meet increasing demand in our Estate Planning and Administration department we have recruited two new experts.

Ian Campbell and Catherine Hardy bring a wealth of experience to the firm as we continue to attract highly experienced staff.

Ian joins as a Senior Associate in Wills and Estate Planning to head up the department in Dorchester, while Catherine's appointment sees her become a Private Client Assistant for Probate and Estate Administration at the Blandford office. We have seen a 54 per cent increase in turnover in this area of work in the last three years.

Ian's appointment marks his return to Blanchards Bailey in a senior capacity after he began his legal career with us in 2005. His extensive experience has resulted in him being a fully qualified member of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP) since 2013, before also receiving the Advanced Certificate in Will preparation.

He is also a full member of Solicitors for the Elderly (SFE) – joining colleague Cordelia English as the only other solicitor in Dorchester and Weymouth to have the full accreditation, which reflects Blanchards Bailey's expertise in dealing with issues affecting elderly people.

Catherine worked within a large private client department in a prominent local firm for 10 years and has been a paralegal for the last four years.

Jerome Dodge, Principal and Head of Department for Wills and Estate Planning, said: "Ian's addition means we now have two lawyers who have Solicitors for the Elderly accreditation, which shows we are particularly qualified to support clients at every stage of life's journey."

## Age UK selected as our charity of the year

We are delighted to announce that Age UK Dorchester (Rowan House) has been selected as our charity of the year for 2017.



Age UK is an independent charity working to improve the lives of older people across rural Dorset. Cordelia English, solicitor, said: "We are extremely proud to be

supporting this worthwhile charity and are looking forward to a year packed full of events where we will be able to raise much needed funds for their vital work."

## £2,000 raised for charity

We presented a £2,000 cheque to a Dorset children's charity after raising much needed funds during the past year.



The Blandford Opportunity Group - a pre-school for children with additional needs - received the cheque after being our charity of the year for 2016.

We carried out a host of fundraising activities throughout 2016 including a quiz night, raffle, Trailway Challenge, dragon boat racing, bake sales, dress down days, social evenings and an Easter egg hunt. The team also supported the charity at various events such as the Dorset Steam Fair and its Christmas Yuletide celebration.

Pictured: Lisa Holden (Principal, Blanchards Bailey), Colin Stevens (BOG Committee Chairman), Bob Henley (BOG Treasurer) and Laura Martin (Solicitor and Mediator, Blanchards Bailey)

## Support for no-fault divorce

Our team has lent its support to the campaign led by Resolution, the family lawyers group, to introduce a no-fault divorce procedure in the UK.

Divorce and separation is a time of extreme conflict and heartache. It puts families under great pressure when there is a lot to sort out, such as trying to manage finances and making sure the impact on children is minimised. Sadly, present divorce law makes things worse by forcing couples to blame each other unless they can wait two years to obtain their divorce. Blanchards Bailey's family team believes the law urgently needs to change to allow people to end their relationship with dignity and within a reasonable period of time.

**Lisa Holden**  
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## Ongoing Artsreach partnership



Blanchards Bailey has announced its continued partnership with Dorset's rural touring arts organisation Artsreach throughout 2017 - helping bring high quality events to the community.

The announcement comes following a successful partnership during the autumn season which delivered over 60 performances at a variety of venues across Dorset.

This year will see an array of styles and genres from both national and international performers. Crowned winners of Best Duo at the 2016 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, Kathryn Roberts and Sean Lakeman got the year off to a great start with their performances.

For more information visit [artsreach.co.uk](http://artsreach.co.uk)