



GEORGE DAVIES

SOLICITORS LLP

Autumn 2009

By

GEORGE

THE NEWSLETTER FROM GEORGE DAVIES SOLICITORS LLP



welcome

# George Davies

## goes green!



To the Autumn edition of By George in which we have gone green!

In this issue we report on our Green Day which involved Anne Fairhurst taking on the role of conductor of a walking bus for the day!

Charlie Yates reports on what businesses need to be thinking if they want to implement a corporate social responsibility policy and James Knowles helps us plan an environmentally friendly funeral. Caroline Hanratty reports on green leases, Zara Banday tells us all we need to know about energy performance certificates and Catherine Kay looks at The Manchester College's green construction projects.

Our regular feature, meet the team, has become meet the client for this edition with David White, ex-Manchester City player and managing director of waste management company The White Group, under the spotlight.

We also welcome lots of new faces to GD in this edition - none of them are green I'm pleased to say!

Finally, Mrs Jennifer Davies (wife of our founder George) turns 100 this month so happy birthday Jennifer!

*Mark Hovell*

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The GD Green Committee, made up of various staff members and headed by Senior Partner, Anne Fairhurst, has been busy looking at ways in which to reduce our carbon footprint.

### Progress so far

The firm has implemented a number of initiatives so far including:

- an "efficient printing" policy to reduce the amount of paper used
- replacing bottled water chillers with a mains-fed filter system
- printing newsletters on recycled paper
- sourcing promotional materials such as pens and umbrellas which are made from recycled materials (all our pens were formerly CD cases!)
- introducing better recycling facilities for plastic bottles and other waste
- a number of staff now run or cycle to work.



"The legs on the bus go walk, walk, walk..." the GD "walking bus" gang

### The GD Green Day

On 11 September, the firm held its first "Green Day" inspired by the Team Green Britain event in July. Events included:

- a "walking bus" from South Manchester to the office that morning
- a bring and buy sale
- staff were encouraged to abandon their hot drinks for the day and avoid boiling the kettle (but for those that couldn't resist a 20p donation was payable for each boiled kettle)
- staff were also encouraged to dress in green to add some colour to the day!

Moving forward the committee hopes to encourage greener thinking throughout the firm including greater use of recycling options and looking at the journeys to work.

# The new and improved GD website

This month sees the launch of the brand new George Davies website. With the old site dating back to 2005 it was definitely time for a face lift and what a face lift it has had!

The new site is much more informative and much easier to navigate and as part of our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, the site has features which will allow:

- Newsletters to be emailed rather than sent by post (in fact By George is the only newsletter that will remain a postal publication);
- Clients to download seminar notes (going forward we will no longer hand out notes at seminars).

Just these small steps alone will reduce our paper usage (for the newsletters and the envelopes) as well as printing inks which are also bad for the environment.

Further developments that will be rolled out in the coming months are: seminar podcasts

available to download, online quotes for residential conveyancing, Frequently Asked Questions and Hints and Tips as well as useful links to other sites.

Take a look at the site and let us know your comments by emailing to [marketing@georgedavies.co.uk](mailto:marketing@georgedavies.co.uk).



## Corporate Social Responsibility: are you doing enough?

Over the past decade the concept known as corporate social responsibility (CSR) has developed from a fringe interest associated with companies with particular links to the environment into a mainstream business activity adopted by household names the world over.

At the moment, even in the current exceptional financial circumstances, many businesses are viewing CSR as more crucial than ever. The Vice President of the European Commission recently commented that: "Socially responsible enterprises will find themselves in a better position than others" and with the recent press focus on management pay the private sectors in the case of banks and businesses are coming under increasing pressure to show that they are giving something back.

### What can you do?

If your company doesn't already have a CSR policy it would be good to put one in place. When preparing your policy here are some top tips:-

1. Be realistic. What can you commit to doing? Do you have time or cash to deliver your objectives?
2. Have a clearly defined policy drafted in plain English so all staff and customers know what your approach is.
3. Remember, even small schemes are well received – offering your services for free to local charities one day per year will be greatly appreciated!
4. Clients, employees and the public are attaching more weight to what companies give back so it is worth bearing that in mind.

For advice on your Corporate Social Responsibility or if you would like us to prepare your policy please contact Charlie Yates on 0161 234 8704.

## EPCs – are they working?

There are now lots of hurdles to overcome before you can sell or rent out your property. The latest being the requirement to obtain an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which has been introduced to help improve the energy efficiency of houses - but is it working?

### The background

Carbon emissions released from UK properties currently account for 27% of the UK's carbon emissions.

EPCs are part of a series of measures being introduced across Europe to reflect legislation which will help cut buildings' carbon emissions and tackle climate change.

### The requirement

If you are selling or renting out your property, you now need an EPC. An EPC is: valid for ten years if the property is rented out and valid for three years if the property is marketed for sale. It rates the energy efficiency of the property on a scale of 'A' to 'G' with 'A' being the most efficient and 'G' being the least.

### Who assesses?

Accredited energy assessors. During the assessment they collect information on the property. This information is fed into the approved software programme which provides the EPC and recommendation report, and is recorded on a central national register.

An EPC is always accompanied by a recommendation report that lists cost effective and other measures (such as low and zero carbon generating systems) to improve the energy rating.

### So who cares?

Although there is no evidence of people refusing to rent or purchase property because of a low rated EPC this is another factor that buyers/tenants will take into consideration so it is worth trying to make your house as "green" as possible to ensure a high energy rating. Improving the energy efficiency of your home can be easier than you think and need not cost the earth. Some sensible changes that can be easily made include: using low-energy light bulbs, installing hot water tank jackets, installing loft insulation or installing cavity wall insulation.

For further information on EPCs or selling/renting your property or if you would like us to commission an EPC please contact Zara Banday in our Residential Property Team on 0161 234 8838.



## Let's go Green.... until we die....??

We are all trying to be greener, whether by recycling more or using our cars less, but have we considered what impact we might have on the environment when we die? This is not something that is usually at the forefront of an eco-warrior's conscience.

The manufacture of many conventional coffins and conduct of remembrance services (especially Christian services) will follow a traditional pattern designed to be aesthetically pleasing to the mourner. The coffins are often made from highly varnished wood and are decorated with gold and silver plated handles and ornaments. If we then consider the carbon footprint produced by the mourners and funeral attendees at both the service and the burial the environmental pollution we create after death could be considerable.



### So, how can we depart this world in a greener way?

There are various possibilities. We can swap our highly polished coffin for a simpler casket made from strong cardboard, wicker, bamboo or hemp sacks. Each material is designed to naturally biodegrade in the soil and not leave any environmental pollution or nasty surprises for future generations. We could also consider a 'woodland burial' that provides a peaceful resting place for a loved one. Many people decide to have a tree planted on or near the grave.

So once you have got ahead in the green stakes what next? Ah yes... your Will. Don't leave any nasty surprises for your family. Check that your Will is up to date and does what you want it do. If you would like a free review of your Will please contact James Knowles on 0161 234 8842.

## Learning to be greener.

The Education Team at GD has been busy advising long standing client The Manchester College on its capital developments which are based on sustainability and a commitment to the environment.

### Wythenshawe Campus

Fronting Hollyhedge Road, the current location of Willow Park Housing Trust, the new Wythenshawe Campus will occupy 100,000 square feet and will be a national exemplar of sustainable design excellence. Through consultation with partners and members of the local community, the college's Design Team has developed the facilities as an evolutionary step forward from the college's national award winning North Manchester Sixth Form College at Harpurhey.

### Fielden Campus

A second major development has started at the Fielden Campus in Didsbury with the college having invested £9m to fully renovate the campus. The land at the back by the river has

unique flora and fauna (in England) and is likely to be designated as a site of special interest.

### Harpurhey Campus

Construction work on the second phase of developments at The Manchester College's North Manchester Sixth Form College in Harpurhey commenced earlier this month. The innovative plans for the campus include the full restoration of Harpurhey Baths, the former Victorian public baths, which is a grade two listed building. North Manchester Sixth Form College in Harpurhey is already renowned for being an eco-friendly site, having won several environmental design awards for the first phase of the building which opened in 2005, including a Royal Institute of British Architecture award.

If you would like further advice on how to construct a greener property please contact Catherine Kay in our Construction Team on 0161 234 8861.

## Carbon Reduction Commitment and Green Leases

Buildings account for almost half of the UK's total carbon emissions. Measuring, monitoring and reducing the level of these emissions will become critical to businesses following the introduction of the Carbon Reduction Commitment ("CRC") scheme on 1st April 2010.

### What is the CRC Scheme?

It is a new compulsory emissions trading scheme for large non-energy intensive businesses and public sector organisations (estimated at around 5,000) in the UK.

### How will it work?

A public league table will rank participants according to how much carbon dioxide they use in each year. It is expected that the Government will use this table as a way of praising companies who are reducing their emissions and shaming the ones that are not.

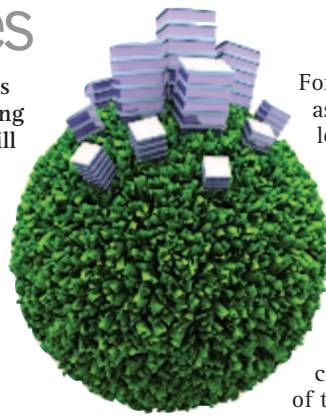
### How to prepare

If you are one of the organisations that is likely to be caught by this scheme it is important to start thinking of ways to reduce your carbon dioxide now as failure to do so could prove costly and bad for public relations.

### Green Leases

#### What are they?

Green leases are leases containing provisions requiring, or encouraging, the landlord and tenant of a building to reduce the environmental impact of the let premises.



For a while, it looked as though green leases would move close to the top of the agenda for landlords and occupiers, with some major occupiers making environmental considerations one of their key criteria when taking on new

space. However, with the economic downturn, there have been only limited examples of landlords letting buildings on green terms.

#### Why has there been limited take up?

This is because any clause with "teeth" will cost one or both parties money. With the leasing market moving in favour of tenants over the last year or so, landlords are not in a position to force green clauses on tenants and have been unwilling to push the issue where it could jeopardise a letting.

This is likely to change with the cost of the introduction of the CRC approaching and green issues heading up the political agenda.

For further information on Green Leases please contact Caroline Hanratty on 0161 234 8819.

## Meet the Client



In this edition we find out more about David White, ex Manchester City player and managing director of waste management company, the White Group.

- 1 What was your first ever job?**  
 YTS footballer for Manchester City - It was the first year of the YTS scheme. I was 16 at the time so that would have been in 1984 (showing my age now!). It was the toughest but most enjoyable two years of my life culminating in us winning the FA Youth Cup in 1986.
- 2 What was your most unusual job?**  
 Professional Footballer - I had a great career with Manchester City in the late 80s and early 90s and was even capped by England. However some of the jobs we were asked to do as apprentices were very strange. We once had to move about ten tonnes of sand about 100 yards with spades for no apparent reason.
- 3 What is the strangest question you have ever been asked at interview?**  
 Believe it or not I have never been interviewed for a job! I often go to supporters' clubs meetings and last week I answered the question 'what was your favourite away ground' very comprehensively, the very next question was 'what was your favourite away ground?'
- 4 What do you do at weekends?**  
 Taxi the kids around, walk the dogs, the usual. I occasionally manage to get out partying and love listening to Irish music.
- 5 What was your worst experience at work?**  
 My footballing career was cut short due to injury (arthritis ankle). The knowledge that it was always going to happen was horrible and it was very sad. Finally when I retired the overriding emotion was relief.
- 6 Where is your favourite holiday destination?**  
 Cruising anywhere (Royal Caribbean or Florida). Also love Ireland.
- 7 Who is your role model?**  
 There isn't one particular person, I admire qualities in lots of different people.
- 8 What is in your CD player/iPod at the moment?**  
 The Script or Christy Moore. I drive people mad with my Irish music but I love having songs that few people know.
- 9 What is the best aspect of your job?**  
 Working closely and well with my brother, Steve.
- 10 If you were stranded on a desert island what one item would you most like to have with you?**  
 My iPod or a football or both! I think I could become the world record holder at kick ups.
- 11 What is your favourite children's book?**  
 I loved the Just William series when I was a boy.
- 12 If you weren't MD of the White Group what would you be?**  
 I'd love to be still working in football - either as a coach or doing media work.

[www.thewhitegroup.co.uk](http://www.thewhitegroup.co.uk)

# GEORGE DAVIES MOVERS & SHAKERS

GD welcomes 6 new faces: Michael Chapman, a solicitor specialising in divorce and family matters; Tasnim Khalid, a solicitor joins the ever expanding Wills and Trusts team and trainee solicitors Gemma Mahon, Chris Hunter, Rebecca Nolan and (to add some glitz and glamour to the line up) ex professional footballer Colin Murdock – a very warm welcome to all.

Also this month trainee solicitors Richard Hawkrige, Jessica Kraja, Katie Edwards, Rachael Mongan and Matthew Chantler qualify as solicitors and are taking up positions in the property, litigation, employment and sports departments – congratulations!



The new GD mixed football team perhaps?

## Swot Spot!

James Knowles and Caroline Pinney in the Personal and Family Department have both passed modules in their Society Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP) exams. Kate Fletcher, who is also in that department, has passed her ILEX level 3 Certificate and Professional Diploma in Law and Practice and her level 6 Professional Higher Diploma in Law.

Joanne Frost in our accounts department has passed her final accounting module in her ACCA course.

Congratulations to you all!

## Well Done Daniel!

As part of our role of rewarding talent and supporting the community the firm sponsors a graduate prize annually at the Manchester Business School. This year Employment Law student Daniel Abrahams won the Best Performing Final Year Management Student prize and was grateful to receive his prize from GD's senior partner, Anne Fairhurst.



Daniel Abrahams receiving his prize from Senior Partner Anne Fairhurst

## Charity Update

Building on the success of the Easter egg collection, the generous staff at George Davies have been busy raising funds for the Mustard Tree, this year's chosen charity. In line with the firm's sporting traditions, the runners amongst us have been clocking up the miles on sponsored runs and training for triathlon events. The firm's annual mixed netball and 5-a-side football events were well supported once again and whilst putting the teams through their paces between them they raised a terrific £2000. Congratulations go to RE Legal for carrying off the trophy in the football competition.

Away from the sports arena, the culinary wizards spent a week whipping up cakes and biscuits which were devoured at a book sale in the office. Those in training for the running had their work cut out trying to resist the offerings.

At the annual staff summer party, the partners gamely agreed to submit to an Anne Robinson style quizzing after pledging funds to try to beat the quizmaster. Needless to say, the questions were selected to ensure that the money went straight to the charity coffers!



Kim Aucott presenting RE Legal (and guest players David Easdown and Charlie Yates from our corporate team) with their winners trophy.

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