

# LAND SPHERE

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BTF PARTNERSHIP

CHALLOCK | HEATHFIELD | CANTERBURY

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## WINTER EDITION





# WHAT HAVE WE

## WEALD OF KENT PLOUGHING MATCH

**September saw our usual attendance at the Kent Ploughing Matches, starting with the Weald of Kent.**

The sun made for a glorious day at the WKPMA this year. The event was, as always, a roaring success.

We had a particularly joyous event this year as we won the SEF Best Tradestand Award, which was a lovely surprise!

As always, it is a pleasure to catch up with clients and friends, as well as the dogs!

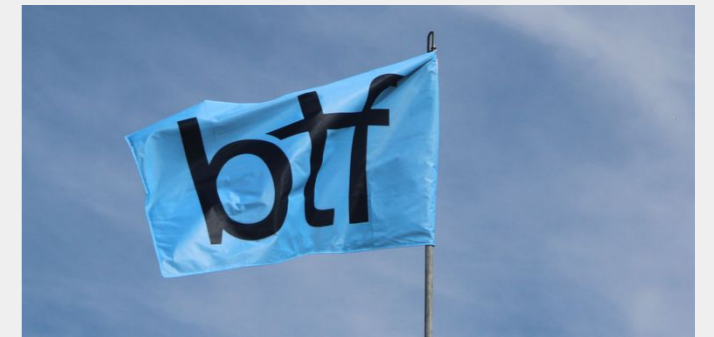
Our director Richard Thomas is a once-president of the WKPMA and continues to play a pivotal role in the running of the match, which grows year-on-year and remains a key part of the Kent agricultural calendar.



Our 2023 WKMPA Team



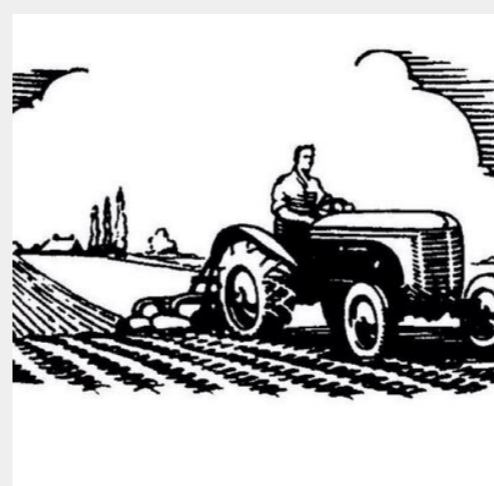
Left: Managing Director Claire Houchin



Below: Founders Richard Thomas and Mike Bax



Our Agency dogs Fizzy, Dolly and Digby



Keep an eye on the WKMPA website for news on next years event!

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



# BEEN UP TO?

## GRAA PLOUGHING MATCH

The Gravesend and Rochester Agricultural Association Ploughing Match is an event we have sponsored for many years, with director Tom French playing an active and continuous role within the GRAA for many years.



Judges at the GRAA match



Mrs V McDonald and Ed Plumptre

## EAST KENT PLOUGHING MATCH

Our East Kent team members are heavily involved in the EKPM, both Ed Plumptre and Harry Kenton are on the Board of Directors and continue to throw their best effort in every year.

This year is was kindly hosted by Mrs V McDonald in Lower Hardes and made for a very successful close to the ploughing season.

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

One of BTF's founders, Mike Bax, was awarded the Kent County Agricultural Society Lifetime Achievement Award in November.

For those within Kent's rural community who know Mike, you will know that he is such an integral part of the community and his dedication and passion for farming, sustainability and environmental causes is second to none. Mike has championed the environment long before it found its way onto today's agenda, chaired the Kent Wildlife Trust for a number of years and was privileged enough to hold the role of High Sheriff of Kent 2012/13. And they are just to name a few!

We could think of no one who deserves this more.





# SUCCEED AT SUCCESSION

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## **New rules take effect in 2024 as planning ahead for succession applications remains vital for success.**

Key components of the Agriculture Act 2020 relating to Agricultural Holdings Act tenancies come into effect from 1st September 2024.

### **'Commercial Unit Test' to be revoked**

The complex test which prevented applicants from occupying any other commercial units will be scrapped, along with the need for Units of Production Orders, making it easier for tenants with successful businesses to succeed. This means some tenants who could not pass this test may now be eligible for succession.

### **Revised suitability test**

A new shortlist test will apply, whereby the applicant must be able to demonstrate they would be identified by a hypothetical landlord in an open market competition for the tenancy as being among the candidates to whom they would be willing to grant the tenancy to.

In making their decision, the Tribunal will consider all relevant matters. These include the applicant's experience training and skills, financial standing and character, the character situation and condition of the holding, and the terms of the tenancy.

The capability and capacity of the applicant to farm commercially, delivering a high standard of efficient production and care for the environment is the key addition. Applicants therefore need to compile records that demonstrate they employ environmentally sustainable and high-welfare farming practices

The age of the person applying is excluded from the test. Importantly, this removes opportunity for dispute over the length of the term granted. All "protected characteristics" of age, race, religion, disability, marriage, civil partnership, sex, pregnancy, maternity, and gender reassignment must be disregarded.



### **Recent changes already in effect**

Some changes brought about by the Agriculture Act already apply. These include the removal of the minimum retirement age for applications on retirement; previously set at 65 years.

### **Other tests & timescales**

Where a tenant passes away, or retirement notice is served before the 1st of September 2024, the old rules will apply.

The rigorous and complex livelihood test requiring an applicant to evidence their principal sources of livelihood are from farming over a number of years and the close relative requirement still apply.

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**Early business preparation is key and typically, positive early engagement with the landlord is beneficial. BTF has successfully represented many generations of tenant farmers in successions, including negotiated agreements with landlords.**

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If you need advice on preparing a succession application, speak to our experienced team



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# CASE OF APPROVAL

**Planning requires a sensitive and knowledgeable approach, with an adaptable and individually tailored strategy to each application. BTF can help secure the approval sought.**

Alexandra Young, who forms part of our planning team, recently secured confirmation from Rother District Council that Prior Approval is not required for a new 600msq agricultural barn, which would be used for the storage of forage and machinery,

The success of this follows the refusal of this application when submitted by a different firm. However, through early engagement with the Local Planning Authority we were able to identify and showcase that the building was reasonably necessary for the purpose of agriculture.

This will subsequently allow for our client to continue to expand their enterprise. If you are contemplating applying for planning permission, contact our team for expert advice,



**Alexandra Young**

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# GRANTS AND SCHEMES - YOUR 2024 GUIDE

There are an increasing number of grant schemes of different structures available, and with BPS winding down, it is imperative that farmers and producers understand the opportunities available to them.

We have put together a concise table of approaching deadlines, as well as upcoming applications for the first quarter of 2024.

## JANUARY 2024

### Livestock

Slurry Infrastructure

**Applications open; close January 17th 2024**

### Agriculture

Improving Farm Productivity Grant

**Applications expected to run January-March 2024**

## FEBRUARY 2024

### Forestry

The Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund

**Applications open; close February 16th 2024**

Local Authority Treescapes Fund

**Applications open; close February 8th 2024**



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We have a dedicated team of people to ensure every avenue of financial assistance is explored for our clients. Head to our website for more information on all of the grants and financial schemes available throughout 2024, as well as to get in touch with our professional team.

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





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## CRANBROOK, KENT

- Exciting self-build projects with planning for three new dwellings
- Lot 1: a former grainstore with planning for a new dwelling and 18 acres
- Lot 2: an array of buildings with planning and 17.50 acres

• **Sold as a Whole or Two Lots**



# BOOK A VIEWING



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## MYSTOLE, KENT

- A ring-fenced parcel of agricultural land with significant environmental potential subject to FBT
- Situated in the North Downs AONB

• In all 42.95 acres

• **Guide Price - £300,000**



# BTF PARTNERSHIP



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## BEARSTED, KENT

- A characterful semi-detached two bedroom cottage
- Good transport links to London within 300 meters
- Detached garage and fair-sized garden

• **Guide Price - £395,000**







# Land & Property Experts



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