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Chartered Certified Accountants

Spring 2022

THE INSIDE TRACK

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What this means for you
and your business**

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THE INSIDE TRACK



**Margaret Scarrott FCCA BIAC
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Welcome to the Spring Edition of our Inside Track Newsletter

Now that the Winter months are behind us, hours of daylight are increasingly longer which means that Spring is finally here, we can start to think about the year ahead and what we want to achieve.

With the continued news headlines of the events between Ukraine and Russia, agriculture is undoubtedly going to experience further uncertainties in commodity market prices with Russia being the world's largest wheat exporter as well as the UK being highly reliant on Russia for fertilisers. Whilst these global issues might be at the forefront of your mind, let's put these aside for a moment and think about what you do have control of and that is your future.

The past two years have been a challenge for us all and sometimes looking ahead can be daunting, but rest assured we are here to help. In this edition we talk about succession planning and the importance of timing and Mark gives us an insight into his personal journey in the agricultural sector and some life lessons he has learnt along the way.

As always, should you need our support please do contact us.

Margaret

MAKING TAX DIGITAL FOR VAT & SOFTWARE



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From 1 April 2022 all VAT registered businesses will be required to register for Making Tax Digital. This will mean that you will be required to keep your VAT records digitally and you will no longer be able to submit your VAT returns through the current online VAT return system on the HMRC website. Making Tax Digital requires businesses to have a digital link between the VAT records and HMRC and the VAT returns are submitted directly through this link, to HMRC from your VAT records. This digital link must be in place for all VAT registered businesses for their first VAT return starting on or after 1 April 2022.

The most popular method of creating the digital link is by using a specially designed VAT record keeping software such as Xero, QuickBooks, Farm Plan, Sage etc however there are alternative methods if preferred, such as using an Excel spreadsheet alongside a 'bridging' software. Whichever route you choose, you must ensure that the records you keep are complete and contain all the information about every transaction which takes place for your business, including the date, value, VAT amount on everything that is purchased and sold.

As a firm, our preferred way of keeping records and submitting VAT returns would be to use Xero software, which is a cloud-based programme that can be accessed using a web browser. Xero is continually updated and enables businesses to connect directly to their bank accounts to ensure no transactions are missed and connects directly to HMRC to submit your VAT return, as well as providing many other services, including payroll. Overall, we find that using Xero can enable VAT record keeping to become more efficient and time saving, as well as enabling businesses to monitor day to day running more closely. Xero is a subscription-based software payable monthly and updates automatically, so no need to download regular updates to ensure your software is up to date. As a firm we can provide training to those wishing to use Xero to enable you to learn how to use it; however there are a vast number of You Tube videos available online which are extremely useful!

Xero is not the only software on the market, there is an extensive range of software packages available that will be compliant in providing the digital link required for Making Tax Digital and it will be your personal preference on which software suits you and your business best. Cloud-based software packages are becoming increasingly popular but there are also desktop-based software packages that can be purchased. It is important to choose the software that is most suited to you; as with the planned introduction of Making Tax Digital for Income Tax and Corporation Tax in the future, it is likely that your business will become more reliant on the software that you choose. Often software providers will offer a 'free trial' and it would be worthwhile exploring these when choosing your software.

If you feel that using a digital software is not for you, there is still an option to use an Excel spreadsheet alongside a bridging software, although we do not know how long we will be able to continue using these. There are a number of bridging softwares available, and these can be downloaded from the internet and will be added to your Excel programme on your computer as an 'add in.' You will need to input all your VAT data into your Excel spreadsheet to enable you to calculate the figures for your VAT return. By using the bridging software, you may need to change the layout of your Excel spreadsheet to be compatible, but the bridging software will be able to transmit the necessary data from your Excel spreadsheet to HMRC. Our preferred bridging software is Vital Tax however there are several available.

HMRC currently have a grant available 'Help to Grow - Digital' which has been designed to help small, incorporated businesses to sign up to a software for Making Tax Digital. Businesses will be able to receive up to £5,000 to cover up to 50% of the cost of an approved software.

Converting to a digital system may seem daunting for many, but please be assured we are here to help and assist where required. If you are unsure of what will be expected from your business from 1 April 2022, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be more than happy to help.

A GOOD TIME FOR SUCCESSION?



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So when is a good time for succession? The answer is simple - it is when you and your successors are ready - easy to say but harder to do. It will not happen unless you make it happen. You need to plan early so that it all comes together at the right time. Finance and tax are part of the plan but it is also important to consider the personal aspects as well - roles, fulfillment and homes are really key elements to success. Here are a few pointers to help you:-

Get a plan

- Get an outline plan when your children are very young and plan towards it over time - are you thinking that some will succeed to the business and others may have help in other ways? Bear in mind that your children may be considering succession for their children as well if you leave the discussions until later.
- Make your investments inside and outside of the business, in line with the outline plan and keep flexibility in your planning - if you wish to split the business or estate into more than one entity, make your investments into the business so that it is capable of being split or there are roles for each person.
- If you want to make provision for other children

outside the business then use investments outside the business to build the funds to do so. If, at a later stage, you wish to run a larger business together it is possible to put additional investment back into the business. However, if you have piled everything into the business it is much harder to make reasonable provision outside of the business at a later stage.

- If you want to make provision for other children from the income of the business, again plan it early so that investments and cashflow are planned and communicated to all.
- Use the power of time for investments for children who are unlikely to succeed to the business and also to build funds for your retirement - small sums of investments made early will work much harder for you than larger sums later and will be easier to bear in terms of cashflow. If you assume a growth rate of 5% per annum on a mixed investment, an annual investment of £1,000pa made for 20 years will produce just under £35,000. You would invest £20,000 over 20 years. If started 10 years later and you wanted to match the fund you would have to invest £26,500 over the last 10 years. As you can see the cashflow would be much more challenging for most businesses over a shorter period.
- Think about houses and who will live where at each stage - if there needs to be a house for one generation to retire into, plan towards it early so that it is in place. Again, this could be done over time and rental income used to fund the mortgage to pay for it.

Get yourself ready for succession

- Ensure that you have security for your retirement. You will need to own your own house, have a secure income and capital to fall back on. Once you have this in place it is easier to let the next generation have the reins and make the mistakes that they will undoubtedly do as part of the learning process, without affecting your income and security.
- Get yourself ready for succession - that does not necessarily mean retirement and "I do not know what I would do with my time". Plan and build a role inside or outside the business and build up to it over a period of time so that you will continue to be fulfilled. It sounds obvious but talk to your spouse about it - you will be fundamentally changing their lifestyle as well and you need to think about how it will work for them too.
- If you plan a role inside the business, try to ensure you and your successor agree defined roles and responsibilities so that you are clear who will be responsible for what and where you have the freedom to make decisions in your area of management. Agree a process for areas that will require joint decisions.

Help your family to be ready for succession

- Try to help your children have a passion for what they want to do - if it is succession to the business ensure that they see you enjoying it and want to be part of it. Spend time with them to foster their enthusiasm at a young age - try to get them involved in the interesting bits (for a child!) - this is much more difficult when all rural industries are bigger, more complex and not without danger and takes effort. It is easy to be busy or stressed and

then find that your family are not so enthusiastic about the business as you are.

- Ensure that they get the broad training that they need to succeed - get experience in other businesses/countries, encourage them to get educated, to build a network for life and to keep ahead of technological changes. Get them involved in the wider industry if you can - membership of the NFU and CLA, industry discussion groups, processor meetings and Young Farmers can all broaden industry understanding and of broader economics.
- Encourage new ideas and allow them to bring them to the table and properly assess them.
- Give them experience in the business - not just in doing the job but also in the how, why and when you do the job so that they have the understanding of management decisions. Give them experience of managing staff as well - probably the most difficult area of them all and with little technical training. It takes longer to build the experience so start early and coach them and build their skills.
- Think about getting someone for them to talk to independent of your business - someone who they would respect and who would be a good role model could help them develop.
- Involve them in finance meetings so that they understand the business and the demands on the management.
- Talk to them about the broad succession plans and plans for the wider family so that they help you manage the business accordingly.

Lastly enjoy the process of spending time with your family and seeing them develop and grow - it should be fun most of the time!



SHAPING MY FUTURE



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With a passion for agriculture and business, my involvement in Young Farmers has been invaluable in aiding me in my career. As a member of Honiton Young Farmers Club for fourteen years, I have more recently been elected as Chairman of the Devon and Vice-Chairman of the National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs (NFYFC). What an honour it is to be in these roles and I look forward to the opportunities and challenges ahead of me as they arise, although the prospect is a little daunting. As life navigates its way out of strange Covid times, many of the elements of YFC are returning to normal. This brings great opportunities and as an organisation we hope to reap the benefits by gaining new members and having a positive impact in the rural community.

Young Farmers is a fantastic organisation, not only do you have the opportunity to travel the world, but you also learn how to speak in public and can take part in all sorts of experiences which I believe no other organisation provides. Not only that, you will also make some great friends and contacts along the way. Without the skills I have learnt, I would not be sat in the position I am now both in YFC and my career. The skills that I have learnt would be too long to list, but most notably I have grown in confidence.

The exposure to the wider agricultural industry cannot be underestimated and the network of people is huge, the membership covers a vast range of professions and areas and this can be extremely valuable for all types of situations. Devon YFC have an extensive agricultural programme which consists of various mediums from debates, seminars, discussion groups and farm walks. We are lucky to have a pool of industry specialists who are past members who want to work with us to discuss current affairs with our members. At the last Devon County Show the debate in the YFC tent had the topic of "Will smarter technology produce smarter farmers". It is clear from these debates that although we all face the same challenges within the industry, there are many different views and members are excited for change. What was encouraging is that although technology is improving at alarmingly fast speeds, the consensus is that you will never be able to fully replace the farmer.

What has become apparent, within my roles at YFC, is the importance of sharing knowledge; knowledge is power after all. Farming is much more than just looking after animals and growing crops, every business needs a businessman, a scientist, IT specialists, HR

experience, the list could go on. The more we share of the challenges and opportunities the better we will become as an industry, equipped with the skills and insight to make our farming businesses work within a fast-changing world. As part of my NFYFC role, I sit on the Agri Steering Group, with farmers and professionals spanning the country. The group meets every three weeks to discuss all current affairs in the industry and are often in discussion groups with Defra and other key stakeholders.

One topic of discussion that has recently been raised is carbon and offsetting which is now becoming familiar to us all. As a group we are working alongside the AHDB to help understand the requirements for a carbon tool measurement. Alongside the carbon project the key project for the Agri Steering Group is the YFC AGRI Future Land Use research project. As a collective we are looking at ways farmers cannot only satisfy the environmental requirements but also ensuring we are effective and efficiently producing food.

A current topic which has sparked a lot of debate is Defra's 'Lump sum exit scheme and delinked payments'. As a generation we can see the intention in encouraging the older generation to pass on or sell land in exchange for cash is a step forward. In recent discussions with the Agri Steering Group, it was concluded that the biggest barrier to entry into farming is capital. As a generation, without sound financial support or farming already in the family, it is likely we will struggle to enter the industry. It is encouraged that more emphasis should be put into education and opportunities such as share farming arrangements.

The Agri Steering Group is a key part of the YFC movement and we are always encouraging feedback from everyone regarding the projects completed. I feel a real sense of responsibility that, as part of the team at NFYFC, we promote the engagement and feedback from our members as they are the future of the industry.

I feel very strongly about the mental health and wellbeing of my peers within the agricultural industry. It is little wonder that mental health is a big problem within the agricultural industry, two of the biggest influences are completely out of our control - the weather and commodity prices. The biggest area we need to combat is the stigma that surrounds mental health. I am an advocate of the saying "It's ok not to be ok". As a part of my Young Farmers involvement, right up to the national level, I work with charities such as Yellow Wellies, Farming Community Network (FCN) and RABI who are invaluable as we are able to reach a large audience of not only young farmers but their families, friends and colleagues. I am proud to be

a trainer of the 'Rural Plus Curve Module', delivered to members and their families which raises awareness of mental health and how to deal with different situations.

It is now more crucial than ever to be part of a community that cares about our mental wellbeing. Young Farmers is a powerful community and not only does it provide a safe place for members to speak up, but it is often the only opportunity members have to socialise or to get away from the farm. Everyone deserves time out from their stressful lives and for some the only time is at their local meeting or catchup. We have all been through a tough 18 months and we

are yet to come out of the other side, many people maybe struggling and that is ok. I look forward to the times ahead and know that Young Farmers will emerge from the Covid cloud stronger than ever before.

As I progress in my Young Farmers career over the next couple of years, I hope to inspire others to take on roles and push themselves out of their comfort zones, so they experience at least some of the opportunities that are out there. I would like to encourage more discussion within the industry in both agricultural and personal matters, so we all grow as better equipped individuals as we progress with our own businesses and careers.

OFFICE OF TAX SIMPLIFICATION – INHERITANCE TAX AND CAPITAL GAINS TAX REVIEWS



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Inheritance Tax

In July 2019 the Office of Tax Simplification (OTS) made recommendations to the government on how to simplify the design of Inheritance Tax, which included:

- Reduce the '7 year clock' to 5 years such that gifts made to individuals more than 5 years before death are exempt from Inheritance Tax.
- Where Inheritance Tax relief applies to assets inherited on death, the base cost of the assets should be the deceased's original base cost, rather than the market value on death. The OTS felt that uplifting the base cost on death creates a Capital Gains Tax advantage and may therefore be deterring businesses and land owners from passing on their assets during their lifetime.
- Align the Inheritance Tax treatment of furnished holiday lets with that of Income Tax and Capital Gains Tax such that Business Property Relief could apply to relieve an Inheritance Tax liability.
- Increase the level of trading activity required by

a business for it to be eligible for Business Property Relief from 51% to 80%.

In January 2022 the All-Party Parliamentary Group went further and recommended that the current Inheritance Tax regime is replaced with a more straightforward tax on lifetime and death transfers of wealth with very few reliefs and a low flat rate of Inheritance Tax, perhaps between 10% and 20%. They also recommend introducing compulsory reporting of lifetime gifts of over £3,000 even if no tax charge arises.

HM Treasury has recently responded to these recommendations to confirm that they have decided not to proceed with any changes at this stage. This can be considered as good news for those inheriting farms and businesses on death and for those with businesses which have a significant amount of investment activity.

Although it is a shame that the 7 year clock is unlikely to be reduced for the foreseeable future and that furnished holiday lets are to continue to be unlikely to benefit from Business Property Relief. There are however scenarios where Business Property Relief can apply to furnished holiday lets as part of a wider overall trading business. If you would like to discuss Inheritance Tax with us, then please do not hesitate to speak to one of our advisors.



CASE STUDY - SOME LIFE LESSONS



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We have all learnt over the past 18 months that life can change in an instant. The thing with wisdom, and often with life lessons in general, is that they are learned in retrospect, long after we needed them.

The good news is that other people can benefit from our experiences and the lessons we have learnt. So, whether you are young and starting out in business, diversifying or applying for planning here are a few of my life lessons so far:

Lesson One – Not to be afraid to say no

As a farmer's son growing up on 150 sow intensive pig unit, adversity struck the family with my father's death in 1989, I was 9 years old, through pure courage and determination my mother continued the pig unit until 1998. My ambition was to gain A levels, an Agricultural Degree with the intention and desire to build a dairy farm on the 150 acre family farm my mother inherited at the same time of my father's death. Having gained a BSc in Agriculture at Harper Adams University College, I realised dairy farming would not allow me the lifestyle I wished for me and a family one day! The best decision I have ever made was to look at the calculated risk of an enterprise and be brave enough to say no and walk away.

Lesson Two – An asset, not solely a farm

So, what does one do with 150 acres that became 190 acres in 2001? Having a blank canvas and no father figure left me the opportunity to look at all possibilities – the dream was to have a farming business but how and what, at a young age, weighed heavy on my shoulders. Surely there was something that could be done with such an asset that would mean the farm would not end up a liability. My mother and I took the farm back in hand in 2003 when I graduated and with the help of family members, I started this journey as an arable farmer. It took me over 10 years of working the soil to understand the land I was trying to farm and to realise why everyone else around me was mainly grass and eventually in 2014 the farm was grassed down. I now farm 125 Lleyn ewes, lambing outside and sell the remaining grassland as grass keep.

In terms of the farm, I have spent the last 20 years looking down most avenues, including relocating, trying to expand, you name it I have probably given it some thought if not researched it to death.

During the years mentioned above I qualified as an accountant in 2007 and in 2010 I embarked on an

opportunity to have a solar development which was finally built on 30 acres in 2015, after the option and grid connection changing hands several times. I started to approach the fortunate position of having land as an asset rather than believing I had to farm it and to this day I would rather do anything than farm the land due to too many variables out of my control and not enough acres under my control.

Lesson Three – Go with gut instinct

The year of inception: 2018, Location: the Egg and Poultry Industry Conference, it was the right time and I was in the right place. It was here that Project Cluck was set in motion – Broiler Breeders, a niche within the poultry sector that I had previous experience with as an accountant, the thought of managing such an enterprise made me smile. The wheels were set in motion and the research began.

I set off doing all the preliminary planning reports starting with a pre planning application, which gave the opinion that, due to fact and policy, there was no reason why this venture should not be possible. So, I set off gaining all the reports required, in fact, more than minimum because I knew with a residential property within less than 400m of a poultry unit and the negative pre planning meeting with my local parish council, I would have to go above and beyond to prove the minimal impact this site would have on the surrounding area. Along with supply chain experts in ventilation, we submitted plans being innovative treating of the emissions from the shed to reduce dust, ammonia, and odour – the concept of a bark biofilter was borne instead of chemical acid scrubbers.

Lesson Four – Do not be bullied

As soon as the plans were submitted, I was already being leaned on by an unsupportive Parish Council, Ward Member and neighbouring Parish Councillor to withdraw the plans before any statutory consultees had passed comment. This was the point my planning consultant was worth every penny, reminding me that, due to fact and policy, there was nothing wrong with the site and to stand up to the bully boy tactics of electorates.

Lesson Five – Do not underestimate the impact on mental health and family

Soon the neighbouring parish Facebook page started to comment on the site negatively, it was at this point I felt that this was a personal attack on me. I found this time mentally tough and had to dig deep knowing I had the support of the local farming community, friends and most of all my family. With the comments of my planning consultant ring in my ear to “grow a pair”, anyone that called me and made the mistake of

asking “how was planning going?” I was off - a chance to release the pent-up aggression and thoughts towards what I perceived to be, at the time, the most negative process I have ever been involved with – very much guilty unless you prove otherwise and left up to me to prove it rather than others disprove me – hardly any collaboration or communication was the toughest thing for me.

Lesson Six – It's a tick box exercise

The innovative design for improving air quality was the next point of frustration. Due to the lack of specific data for this concept in the poultry industry however a well-known principle in other sectors and industries, it simply did not tick the box. Returning to a more conventional design of high velocity fans did not make sense and certainly not the best way to deal with the shed emissions by dilution. It struck me to be resonant of the high chimney stacks of the industrial revolution which we are now trying to avoid. However, it allowed the application to progress and what was more important to me was to gain planning, not be innovative. This is disappointing as I feel this hinders progress if we do not have a mechanism where we can be innovative to make commercial gains towards air and water quality. This delay probably did cause the application to get caught up in the rising phosphate issues of the Somerset Levels.

Lesson Seven – Common sense, pragmatism, clarity, and consistency

Just as I thought the application was progressing and would be put forward by the planning officer with approval to the planning board, the issue of rising phosphate on the Somerset Levels put paid to all development that produced phosphate within its catchment. Natural England, in their wisdom, had put a halt on any applications that could not demonstrate phosphate neutrality. My waste management plan was to export all manures and waste off farm, therefore under current Red Tractor, Nitrate Vulnerable Zone and Cross Compliance regulations, so you would have thought there were enough regulatory bodies to regulate and implement the safe spreading of poultry manure. This pragmatic approach was something that seemed to fall on deaf ears. Firstly, the councils were more concerned with trying to resolve the issues around residential development instead of picking the low hanging fruit, in my opinion! With no framework for the non-residential planning applications, time seemed to stand still. I am very thankful for the pragmatic approach from Mendip Council for recognising the ability to export the poultry soil improver outside of the Somerset Levels catchment area as a planning condition.

I appreciate that I have friends in other authorities that have not been allowed to take the same approach. This demonstrates the lack of clarity and consistency in the planning system.

Lesson Eight – Impact of delay, cash is king!

Firstly, my cashflow! Having started a sabbatical from accountancy to make this project work, cashflow dictated I needed to become an advisor again sooner than envisaged, hence you find me writing in this Evolution ABS newsletter. As you will all know, Agflation has but only gone one way with labour hard to find and costs ever increasing, the capital expenditure of the project will have risen by 30% or more and now interest rates are on the move. Inevitable integrated supply chain discussions are going to have to happen – compromise all round between project price delivery, profitability and cashflow.

Lesson Nine – Out of Adversity there is always opportunity, nothing ever goes to plan.

When times were tough and not necessarily going my way, I would look at each situation to try and discover the opportunity that adversity might present. There has been no major alteration of course on my route map other than myself having to earn a wage again due to delays – but I listened to a podcast by Jonny Wilkinson which changed my mindset. He was asked what would he tell a young Jonny Wilkinson today, to which his response was “It would be to step on the pitch with no game plan, but to have the tools available to deal with most situations, because if the gameplan goes wrong heads drop and your momentarily out of the game, whereas with no game plan you play with what is presented to you and keep exploring the options with the tools available from your tool box”.

With this very much in mind making it from A to B on this part of my life journey, the route has changed several times and no doubt there are a few more twists and turns to come, what matters to me is that I get there not how!

Lesson Ten – The relationship

Within all the above lessons, twists, and turns the overarching common theme for me was having a solid relationship with experts in the supply chain, consultants, advisors, and family. Various issues have been presented on the route map of life but the foundation from which relationships have been built, it did not matter what the obstacle was, it was the relationship with the various people on the pathway of life which have enabled me to navigate the way.

The relationship is the constant, not the product or service, which I value the most throughout my life journey.

To Conclude

I do believe if you have passion, interest, and an exploratory mindset you end up with growth and fulfilment from your business. In turn allowing yourself to be your best with a flexible perspective on life you will feel liberated.

INCOME TAX PAYMENTS ON ACCOUNT



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You may have noticed that your tax return includes payments on account. Payments on account are payments in advance towards your tax liability for the following tax year. You are required to make two payments on account every year unless:

- Your last Self-Assessment tax liability was less than £1,000
- You have already paid more than 80% of the total tax which you owe, which can be via your PAYE tax code

Each payment on account is half of your previous year's liability and the payments are due by 31 January and 31 July each year. For example, if your 2020/21 tax liability is £4,000, you would need to make payments on account of £2,000 in January 2022 and July 2022 towards your 2021/22 tax liability.

If your actual liability exceeds your payments on account, you must pay a balancing payment by the following 31 January.

Payments on account do not include Capital Gains or Student Loan repayments however, if you are self-employed, you will pay these as part of your balancing payment.

If you anticipate your tax liability is going to be lower than the previous tax year, you can apply to HM Revenue and Customs to reduce your payments on account. You can do this online or by post.

If your payments on account exceed your eventual tax liability for the year, HM Revenue and Customs will issue a refund to you. If you have reduced your payments on account and your actual liability exceeds the payments on account, you will be charged interest. Late payment penalties will be charged from 1 April 2022 at 5% unless you have a Time to Pay arrangement.

If you would like to consider reducing your payments on account, please speak to your manager.



Protecting Yourself Against Cybercrime

What is Cybercrime?

Cyber criminals exploiting human or security weaknesses to steal data, passwords and money.

The threat to businesses and individuals of cybercrime is increasing and there is an expectation that cyber criminals will attack at certain peaks of the year. For example, cyber criminals are known to target individuals and businesses paying their tax bills at this time of year. Cyber security and taking steps to reduce the threat is more important than ever.

Cyber attacks can be prevented by taking some basic security steps:

- Use strong passwords which contain letters, numbers and symbols and do not reuse the passwords for multiple logins.
- Install security software such as anti-virus packages and two factor authentication and keep them updated.
- If you receive an email, text message or phone call that you were not expecting do not open it or any links within the email or text message and do not provide any personal information, including any passwords or bank account details.

MARK SEAGER APPOINTED AS DIRECTOR

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Mark Seager as Director with effect from 1st February 2022.

Mark brings a wealth of experience in both accountancy and rural life having grown up helping on his family farm with both the practical side and the VAT return from an early age. His passion for agriculture, interest in business and desire to help others grew after he graduated from Harper Adams University.

Passionate about his work, Mark specialises in business strategy, structure and tax planning within agriculture.



Alice Chapple ACCA ACIPP
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TEAM INSIGHT

Alice was brought up surrounded by farming but always knew from a young age that a career on the farm was not for her. Throughout life she has always enjoyed being out in the countryside and being with animals, although getting muddy was not something she really enjoyed. When leaving school, she won the award for the student in her year group who would 'Most likely stay local' so it was known for quite some time that going away to university really was not for her and this led to a career in accountancy where she could study and learn whilst working.

Alice joined Evolution ABS in 2013 having completed her A Levels at school and has gone on to complete her AAT, ACCA and CIPP studies.

Going from a school leaver trainee to where she is now as one of our managers, Alice helps manage our payroll clients as well as managing a client portfolio and the office workflow. Having a background in agriculture means Alice has a particular interest in our agricultural clients.

Outside of work Alice is an active member of Young Farmers and is currently the Competitions Chairman for Devon YFC, having previously held several roles at both her club (Axminster) and group level. Alice has two Cockapoo's who she enjoys walking in her spare time. A recent highlight is that in December she got married to her now husband Jack (you may have noticed the recent name change!).



OFFICE UPDATE

Lockdown forced us all to embrace new ways of working. At Evolution we have focused on improving new internal processes that have allowed us to work from home when required, whilst continuing to provide a quality service to our clients. This has inevitably resulted in an increased spend on IT, but over the course of the pandemic we have also noticed a considerable reduction in the amount of paper we have used and this has prompted us to consider how we as a firm can reduce our carbon footprint. Our first initiative is related to the publication of this newsletter. Where possible, rather than posting, we will be emailing this publication out to as many clients as possible. We have also worked with Carly Press to produce hard copies of this edition on recycled paper and they will be posted in envelopes also made from recycled paper. We would be very pleased to hear what you think. Watch this space for further initiatives.

Lots of happy news to report in this edition, following a particularly busy period for staff here at Evolution.

As you will have read, Alice and Jack finally tied the knot last December, celebrating their wedding in style in the family grain store – suitably decked out for the event of course! Lots of us were able to share the evening with them and what a party it was.

There was further cause for celebration at the beginning of January when Ellie and husband Steve welcomed son number 2 to the Hammett fold – mother, baby, father and big brother are all doing well.



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It's babies galore this spring, as we are also delighted to announce the safe arrival of a baby boy for Callum and wife Becky; a little brother and playmate for their 2-year-old daughter.

Congratulations to you all.

And finally, at last, on Friday 4th February Santa arrived for Team Evolution and we got to enjoy our staff Christmas meal, postponed from December. A big thank you to the Beambridge Inn in Wellington for hosting a very successful evening.



If you have any queries regarding any of our articles, or would like any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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