Welcome to our quarterly tracker of key land management, farming, planning and energy regulation and legislation.

Please contact your local Strutt & Parker rural team for further information on anything you read here.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Regulation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENVIRONMENT</strong></td>
<td>Grants of up to £10,000 per holding are available for hedgerow or boundary restoration works under this simplified, stand-alone scheme. This is an opportunity for landlords to engage with tenants to fund boundary works that are often required within tenancies.</td>
<td>Application window closes 3 May 2019.</td>
<td>Review grant. Read our <a href="#">briefing paper</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RESIDENTIAL LETTINGS</strong></td>
<td>Requires all rented homes to be ‘fit for human habitation’ at the start of the tenancy and to remain so throughout. The Act uses the 29 hazards listed in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to determine whether a house is “fit for human habitation”. Applies to any dwelling let on or after 20 March 2019 for a term of less than 7 years, including renewed fixed term tenancies. NB The HHSRS is being reviewed in 2019.</td>
<td>20 March 2019 for new tenancies and renewed fixed term tenancies. 20 March 2020 for periodic or secure tenancies in existence on 20 March 2019.</td>
<td>No action needed if let properties are reasonably maintained. Read our <a href="#">briefing paper</a> on how it affects dwellings on farms, which is complicated.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RESIDENTIAL LETTINGS</strong></td>
<td>This Act aims to prevent tenants being charged any fees or premiums when being granted with or renewing a tenancy. The aim is to improve fairness, competition and affordability in the lettings sector. The Act applies to assured shorthold tenancies and licences to occupy; it does not cover long leaseholds, tenancies of social housing and holiday lets. Most fees charged by landlords and their agents to tenants will be banned, apart from a number of 'permitted payments'.</td>
<td>Effective from 1 June 2019 for new and renewal assured shorthold tenancies and licences to occupy. It will apply to pre-existing tenancies from 1 June 2020.</td>
<td>Landlords and their agents must ensure that their practises are compliant. Tenancy agreements should be reviewed to ensure they do not charge or refer to any prohibited payments. Read our <a href="#">briefing paper</a> or contact <a href="#">Rob Malden</a> for further details.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TAXATION</strong></td>
<td>Businesses with a taxable turnover above the VAT registration threshold (currently £85,000) will be required to keep digital VAT business records and send returns using Making Tax Digital (MTD)-compatible software. Business owners are responsible for submitting returns that are MTD compliant so ensure you, or your accountant, has software that is compliant.</td>
<td>1 April 2019.</td>
<td>For more details speak to <a href="#">Alex Heffer</a>, our Head of Client Accounting Services.</td>
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### TAXATION

**Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 (England)**

- Allows local authorities to charge higher rates of council tax on empty properties:
  - Empty for less than five years – up to 100% council tax pa.
  - 5 – 10 years – up to 200%.
  - 10 years or more - up to 300%.
- The increases start to apply from 1 April 2019 and are in full effect from 1 April 2021.
- Create plans for all empty properties.

Find out more

### ECONOMY

**Increases in minimum contributions for automatic enrolment pensions (UK)**

- Minimum contributions to employees' pensions increase to 8%, compromised of at least 3% from employers and 5% from employees.
- NB Employers must 're-enrol' certain staff back into a pension scheme every three years after the automatic enrolment staging date.
- Effective from 6 April 2019.
- Be aware of and budget for the changes.

Find out more

### ECONOMY

**National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage rates (UK)**

- The hourly rates change on 1 April 2019 to:
  - NLW – workers aged 25 and over – £8.21, up 4.9% from £7.83.
  - NMW – 21 to 24 year olds – £7.70, up 4.3% from £7.38.
  - NMW – 18 to 20 year olds – £6.15, up 4.2% from £5.90.
  - NMW – 16 and 17 year olds – £4.35, up 3.6% from £4.20.
  - NMW – apprentices – £3.90, up 5.4% from £3.70.
- Effective from 1 April 2019.
- Implement changes.
- For more details speak to George Chichester.

Find out more

### PROPERTY

**Septic Tanks & Sewage Treatment Plants**

- All private septic tanks or sewage treatment plants must comply with these regulations by 1 January 2020 (or sooner if pollution is already occurring or the dwelling is being sold).
- It will not be permitted to discharge effluent from septic tanks (as opposed to sewage treatment plants) directly or indirectly into drains, ditches or other watercourses after 1st January 2020.
- Comply from 1 January 2020 onwards, or before if pollution is already occurring.
- Check all private systems are compliant and discharge less than the allowed amounts.
- Make good any obvious leaks, overflows or broken parts.
- Plan and budget for upgrades and replacements.
- For more details speak to Alistair Cochrane.

Find out more

### FARMING

**Clean Air Strategy 2019 (UK)**

- The Clean Air Strategy, which was published in January 2019, sets out plans to meet ambitious legally-binding international targets to reduce emissions of the five most damaging air pollutants by 2020 and 2030. It will be followed imminently by a wider Environment Bill.
- Defra has set a target of reducing ammonia emissions from farming and land use by 8% by 2020 and 16% by 2030. It is currently consulting
- Unknown – awaiting results of Defra's consultation
- Understand the sources and amount of emissions from your farming activities.
- Consider the effect of the Strategy on the provision of fixed equipment necessary to comply with statutory

Find out more
| FARMING | Agriculture Bill 2017 – 2019 (UK) | This draft legislation provides the Government with powers to set agricultural policy, spending and related issues once the UK leaves the EU. The most significant element is that direct payments to farmers will be phased out from 2020 to 2028. | Bill published 12 September 2018. Expected to come into effect by 29 March 2019 but likely to be postponed. | Monitor. Farm businesses should consider applying S&P’s five principles to get ready for the future. Use our calculator to see how Basic Payments will be cut from 2020 to 2028. |
| RESIDENTIAL LETTINGS | The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) Regulations 2015 (England and Wales) | A landlord must carry out relevant energy efficiency improvements if a property does not meet the minimum standard. A landlord cannot grant a lease to a new or existing tenant of private rented properties (domestic and non-domestic) in England and Wales with an EPC rating of F or G. From 1st April 2020 a landlord must not continue letting a relevant domestic property if it has an EPC rating of F or G; or a non-domestic property from 1st April 2023. | Provisions effective in stages from: 1 April 2018 1 April 2020 1 April 2023. | Monitor carefully as the exemptions are being amended. Contact Alice Robinson for our updated flowchart to plan how to implement MEES and register for exemptions. Review energy costs – contact Alexander Creed for details of S&P’s Energy Basket. |
| RESIDENTIAL LETTINGS | Electrical safety in the private rented sector (England) | Regulations requiring landlords to have electrical installations in privately rented homes checked every five years will be introduced as soon as parliamentary time allows. Properties that already have a valid electrical installation condition report will not need to replace it until five years have passed since it was issued. | Proposals announced 29 January 2019. | Anyone commissioning a check must make sure that it is done by someone competent and with current qualifications. |
| FORESTRY | Forestry Strategy (Scotland) | The Strategy presents the Scottish Government’s 50-year vision for forests and woodlands, and provides a 10-year framework for action. The target for woodland planting has been increased to 15,000 hectares a year from 2024/5 onwards. The Scottish Government is also stream lining the process for forestry grant applications and to enable more small landowners to apply. | | Monitor as could create opportunities for new planting and carbon credits. For more details speak to Jon Lambert. |
Contact us

Banchory
Larry Irwin
larry.irwin@struttandparker.com | 01330 826828
St Nicholas House, 68 Station Road, Banchory AB31 5YJ

Cambridge
Lauren Gibson-Green
lauren.gibson.green@struttandparker.com | 01223 459492
66-68 Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 1LA

Canterbury
James Hole
james.hole@struttandparker.com | 01227 473729
2 St Margaret's Street, Canterbury CT1 2SL

Chelmsford
Michael Anderson
michael.anderson@struttandparker.com | 01245 254689
Coval Hall, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2QF

Chester
Frank Brereton
frank.brereton@struttandparker.com | 01244 354886
Park House, 37 Lower Bridge Street, Chester CH1 1RS

Cirencester
Charlotte Kershaw
charlotte.kershaw@struttandparker.com | 01285 627672
15 Dyer Street, Cirencester GL7 2PP

Exeter
Peter Thomas
peter.thomas@struttandparker.com | 01392 229419
24 Southernhay West, Exeter EX1 1PR

Guildford
Andrew Thomas
andrew.thomas@struttandparker.com | 01483 400770
Meridian House, 9-11 Chertsey Street, Guildford GU1 4HD

Harrogate
Nick Bramley
nick.bramley@struttandparker.com | 01423 706784
Princes House, 13 Princes Square, Harrogate HG1 1LW

Inverness
Ralph Smith
ralph.smith@struttandparker.com | 01463 723598
The Courier Building, 9-11 Bank Lane, Inverness IV1 1WA

Ipswich
Charles Loyd
charles.loyd@struttandparker.com | 01473 220435
11 Museum Street, Ipswich IP1 1HH

Lewes
Jamie Evans-Freke
jamie.evans-freke@struttandparker.com | 01273 407019
201 High Street, Lewes BN7 2NR

Morpeth
C4lae Whitfield
claire.whitfield@struttandparker.com | 01670 500870
1-3 Oldgate, Morpeth NE61 1PY

Newbury
George Chichester
george.chichester@struttandparker.com | 01609 788452
55 Northbrook Street, Newbury RG14 1AN

Northallerton
Rob Close
rob.close@struttandparker.com | 01609 788452
Thornfield Business Park, Northallerton DL6 2XQ

Norwich
Russell de Beer
russell.debeer@struttandparker.com | 01603 883620
Compass House, 4 Upper King Street, Norwich NR3 1HA

Oxford
Mark Juniper
mark.juniper@struttandparker.com | 01738 723598
201 High Street, Lewes BN7 2NR

Perth
Andrew Aitchison
andrew.aitchison@struttandparker.com | 01738 723598
5 St John Street, Perth PH1 1PP

Salisbury
David Pardoe
david.pardoe@struttandparker.com | 01722 344041
41 Millford Street, Salisbury SP1 2BP

Shrewsbury
Robert Paul
robert.paul@struttandparker.com | 01743 284205
14-16 Shoplatch, Shrewsbury SY1 1HR

St Albans
Darren Stanbridge
darren.stanbridge@struttandparker.com | 01727 790485
15 London Road, St Albans AL1 1LA

Stamford
Jeremy Dawson
jeremy.dawson@struttandparker.com | 01780 484044
5 South View, Tinwell Road, Stamford PE9 2JL