

Information

Are you buying a country property for the first time?

For many families it is the most important house move you will ever make and it often accompanies a major change in lifestyle. Before viewing a property or making an offer, you will already have considered the benefits of a greener, calmer environment to live in, and bring up your children; your commute to work, future education options and local transport, entertainment and sporting facilities.

Once you have found your property you will be thinking about where your furniture will go, what changes you want to make and imagining yourselves living there. Before this, there will be other matters to think about. This is where we, as your legal advisers can step in. What else should you be looking out for? What questions should you be asking the sellers? What should you be telling us?

Some considerations we come across regularly include:

Access

You may be buying a home down a country track or private driveway. We will need to establish;

- Do you own it or have a right of way?
- What contributions will you need to make?
- Who owns the road?
- Who will carry out the maintenance?
- Who else has a right of way?

Private drainage systems

- What sort of system is it?

- A cesspool or a more modern treatment system?
- Is it on your land or do you need access onto a neighbour's land?
- How many properties use it?
- Is it a system that has an overflow to a watercourse?
- If so does it comply with Environment Agency requirements? We would recommend having a separate drainage survey to make sure that the system is functioning correctly and does not require immediate upgrading or replacement.
- When was the system installed? The age will dictate what further Environment Agency requirements it will need to comply with.

Water supply

- If you are connected to the mains, how far away is the main connection?
- You may need to repair or renew your private pipe, which can be very expensive.
- Does your supply cross neighbouring land?
- Although it is rare, do you have a private water supply? What arrangements are there to make sure that the water is safe and what will happen if the source dries up?

Fuel

- Does the property have an oil supply or perhaps Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)?

Head Office
Heathervale House
2-4 Vale Avenue
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN1 1DJ
T 01892 510000
F 01892 540170

Thames Gateway
Corinthian House
Galleon Boulevard
Crossways Business Park
Dartford
Kent DA2 6QE
T 01322 623700
F 01322 623701

Are you buying a country property for the first time?

Continued

- If so, who is the supplier? Is there a contract? How often is the tank filled?
- Will they want to charge for the remaining fuel?
- Will they fill the tank before they leave?

Land ownership

- Do check the boundaries and find out what the land is used for.
- Are there any public footpaths?
- Has it been purchased separately?
- You do need to be careful about the planning use of the land. If some of the land has agricultural use, any plans you have to extend the garden, or build a swimming pool or a tennis court, may be thwarted or at the very least require planning consent.
- Are there any grazing agreements or informal arrangements with local farmers?

Listed properties

- What Grade of Listing does the property have? Does it also cover any outbuildings?
- Have the sellers (and their predecessors) obtained all necessary consents for work undertaken post-listing? There are no time limits for the Local Authority taking enforcement action for breaches or lack of consents.

- If you plan to undertake works, speak to the Local Authority and/or your surveyor to see how likely it is that consent will be granted.

Other

- What are the annual/monthly outgoings for the property?
- Can you obtain buildings insurance on standard terms?

By asking the right questions early, you can avoid problems.

Contact us today to find out how our many years of helping clients move swiftly and smoothly can help you to enjoy the wonderful landscape that Kent and East Sussex has to offer.

For more information please contact Rebecca Swain on 01892 701291 or email at:

rebecca.swain@ts-p.co.uk