

TELEGRAPH

Above and beyond

Anglian Country Inns Chairman Cliff Nye explains why friendly, expert advice is vital for his business

Also in this issue:
Exclusive interviews
Landlord advice
Post-Brexit Britain





Alan Boswell,
Group Chairman

It's been a busy year at Alan Boswell Group with lots to celebrate.

From winning awards to launching our new website, there's more than I can cover in a short welcome message.

While you'll read about our teams and their professional successes within these pages, I'm especially proud of their fundraising efforts for our Charity of the Year, Big C. This year we encouraged our employees to raise at least £100 each and they have risen to the challenge.

From beard-shaving, bike rides and marathons, to cake sales and more, we've raised nearly £20,000 so far. With just a couple of months left to go, we look set to beat our £25,000 target.

Before I go, I just have space to say I hope you enjoy the new-look Telegraph magazine. If you have any feedback, drop us a line feedback@alanboswell.com. We would love to know what you think.

Alan Boswell, Group Chairman



Independent Broker of the Year Award

We are delighted to have been named 'Independent Insurance Broker of the Year' at the annual Insurance Times Awards. The illustrious event, hosted by David Walliams is the leading national awards ceremony and honours excellence in the insurance sector.

Before presenting our award, Insurance Times Editor Saxon East said of us: "This broker has that great quality of being completely customer obsessed. It is clearly committed to its community and staff and the business is defined by its independence."

We were appraised by the judging panel for our achievements in making independent status work for us. Notable highlights were our award-winning landlord insurance offering, market-leading policy for Broads boat owners, our staff training and apprenticeship scheme.

Our performance has been reflected in our customer service score with clients awarding the company a 98% rating via third-party review site Feefo.

Group Managing Director Chris Gibbs commented: "We are delighted to be awarded the title of Independent Insurance Broker of the Year. The award is a testament to our staff who are dedicated and passionate about providing expert, friendly advice. Our Feefo reviews demonstrate that we are providing a level of service that clients need and appreciate."

"Building trust within our community, improving the knowledge of our staff, having the best products and providing exceptional customer service. These are the fundamentals of our business and we're thrilled that the combination of all these factors has been recognised by our peers."

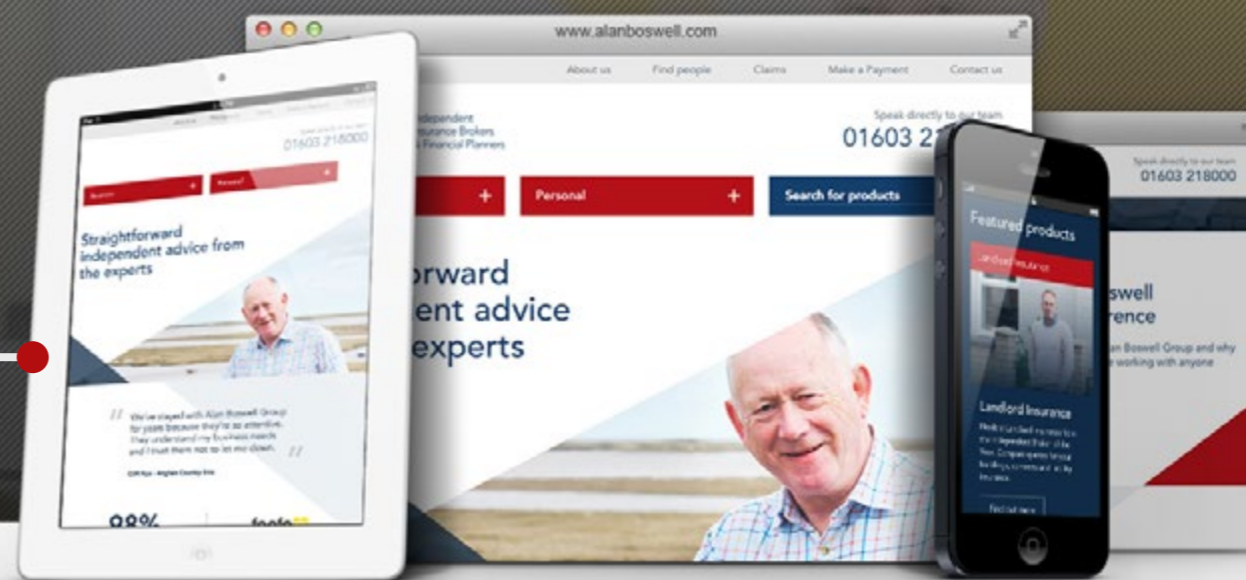
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Digital makeover

If you've been on our website recently you'll have noticed that we've got a brand new look.

Not only does the site have an updated look and feel, but it's simple to find the information you need about our products, services and how we do business. You can even search the site for staff, so you can find out more about the team member you're talking to.

It's fully mobile responsive too, so you can send enquiries or request a quote while you're on the move.

Marketing Manager Lee Boswell explained: "We know the way people search for insurance and financial advice has changed rapidly in recent years. More people are searching for insurance on their mobile phones and tablets than ever before."

"Our new site makes it easy to find what you're looking for – but you can still give us a call for products and advice!"

Take a look at the website today and let us know your feedback. Simply send an email to feedback@alanboswell.com to share your thoughts.

Going from strength to strength

We are pleased to report that Alan Boswell Group has seen another year of growth following the publication of our annual accounts.

Income increased by more than seven percent in the year to 31 March 2016, while the business continued to make large investments in capital expenditure and implementing a strong growth strategy.

Commenting on the accounts, Finance Director Alastair Drew said: "Our results demonstrate that our approach to business growth is sustainable. We intend to continue with this strategy, prudently investing

in our assets and our people so that we remain the natural choice for insurance and financial advice in East Anglia."

"Customer service is at the heart of what we do and the positive customer feedback we receive often singles out individual team members for the service they provide," Group Managing Director Chris Gibbs added.

Group Chairman Alan Boswell said: "We build strong relationships with our clients by offering friendly, expert advice and going the extra mile. Many customers have been with us for more than 20 years and we want to build lasting relationships with new clients too. By investing in people, we're sure customers will stay with us for many years to come."

Managing your risk

In a move to increase our range of services, the highly experienced Risk Management Adviser Gavin Dearsley has been appointed to support our clients with Health and Safety and Risk Management.

Gavin, who joined from NFU Mutual, will work alongside Risk Management Adviser John Neil, helping clients to reduce their potential exposure to claims.

Gavin commented: "Providing risk management advice makes good sense for our clients. By helping them to proactively manage risks we can help them reduce accidents, incidents, claims and their premiums."

Gavin's appointment follows that of five other NFU Mutual

employees: David Wheeler joined the underwriting team; Michael Henderson and Ruth Lee joined the account handlers; Anna Tydeman joined the commercial handling team; and Sinéad Brogan joined as a Business Insurance Adviser.

HR Director Gillian Anderson-Brown added: "We've seen substantial growth, having won new business. We're anticipating growth going forwards and we're actively looking to hire the best people we can find."



Gavin Dearsley
Risk Management Adviser

IPT INCREASE

Following former Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne's April Budget, the Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) increased to 10% in October. But what does that mean for you?

Ultimately, you can expect the price you pay for insurance to increase. While this latest rise from 9.5% to 10% tax might not seem like cause for concern, this follows 2015's hike from 6% to 9.5%, representing a 4% increase

overall. And this applies to all general insurance products – only travel insurance and a limited number of motor insurance policies will remain unchanged, as these are already subject to a tax rate of 20%.

Although official Government figures predict that the upcoming increase will only raise the price of the average car insurance policy by £2, this comes on top of the £10 increase in the previous year.

Regarded by many as a stealth tax, IPT isn't widely recognised as a cost imposed by the Government; most people tend to think price increases are solely down to the insurer. Although the tax is levied on the insurer, the cost is inevitably passed on to customers in order to recoup their losses.

The tax increase is part of an initiative to raise an additional £8.1bn for the Treasury in the years up to 2021.

George Osborne explained that the funds raised by IPT will be ring-fenced for improving flood defences in the north of England.

While we can't reverse the actions of the Government, we can help you to find the best value insurance in the face of price rises. We can look at all your insurance needs, whether they are personal or commercial, and the products available to find the best cover.



© lookata Fotolia

5.4m

The number of people living in privately rented accommodation in the UK in 2016.

Read the story on page 19

INTEREST RATES LOWERED

As you will have seen in this summer's headlines, the Bank of England has reduced interest rates to 0.25% in an attempt to stimulate the British economy.

While this is excellent news if you're looking to borrow, it is causing savers to question where best to place their savings – especially since several banks have cut their savings rates by more than the Bank of England.

To maximise the return on your investments, our independent financial planners know the markets inside out and can help find the right home for your savings. Simply call us on 01603 967967 to book an appointment.

WHAT DOES THE INSURANCE ACT MEAN TO YOU?

In August, the British Government introduced a new Insurance Act, which set out a clearer framework for the provision of commercial insurance on new, renewed and reviewed policies. Focused on fairness, transparency and certainty, it affects the rules governing contracts between commercial policyholders and insurers.

As with prior legislation, the onus is on you to tell the insurer the 'material facts or circumstances' about you and your business. While you still need to do this, your insurer must seek clarification on anything you've told them that may be important or unclear, because this can affect how your claims are handled.

Having an insurance broker you can rely upon to gather the necessary information will help you to simply navigate this process. At Alan Boswell Group, we'll work closely with you to identify what needs to be disclosed and how it should be retained for audit purposes. For example, we'll aim to speak to your fleet or transport manager when insuring company vehicles.

To read the full story and find out how the Insurance Act works, visit http://abg.bz/TM_IA

AUTO-ENROLMENT: ARE YOU READY?

Auto-enrolment pension deadlines are rapidly coming around, with all businesses due to be signed up by 1 February 2018.

Auto-enrolment means all organisations with more than one employee have to offer a pension to its staff, regardless of its size. Even small businesses that lack an accounts team are obliged to implement a workplace pension.

To find out how this affects your business, or to review your workplace pension scheme, contact our financial planning team on 01603 967967.

11.4%

Rent has risen fastest in Scotland over the past 12 months. The average cost of rent is now £704 a month.

Find out more on page 19

POST-BREXIT BRITAIN

What does Brexit mean for the nation's finances? It's too early to say, as John Whitehead, Managing Director of Alan Boswell & Company Ltd, explains.

The UK's decision to leave the European Union has led to a great deal of uncertainty about what will happen in the coming months and years. In the UK this uncertainty has reduced a little since Theresa May was appointed Prime Minister, but time will tell how the markets will react when she finally she triggers Article 50.

In the UK, the most obvious impact of the Brexit vote has been the fall in sterling, but ripple effects have been felt in Europe and across the globe.

In broad terms, the prices of bonds and gold have risen as investors have sought safe havens for their investments. This rise in bond prices means a fall in bond yields, which will further reduce

the prospect of any return on cash. The search for income from investors is likely to provide support for equities still offering dividends in excess of three per cent, such as healthcare companies, telecoms and utilities.

Certain sectors have experienced acute pressure, such as banks and commercial property. UK banks have been severely affected by Brexit, with RBS losing a third of its share price and Lloyds losing a quarter. Exposure to commercial and residential property loans, combined with a probable slowdown in new lending, will harm profitability at a time when the banks were poised to recover from the previous recession. The potential reduction in interest rates will also harm their ability to generate profit from the difference between borrowing and lending rates.

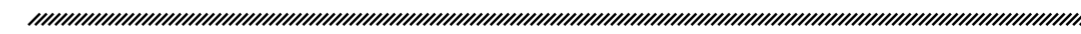
With a new Prime Minister in place there will be pressure on the Government to promote stability and reduce uncertainty. This primarily means securing an optimum trading position with Europe

and beyond, using fiscal policy (including tax cuts) to boost growth and promote the UK as a place to do business.

It is also in the EU's interests to seek a positive outcome with the UK. Despite the initial negative rhetoric from various high-profile individuals, we expect the key power brokers in Europe will ultimately work towards a sensible resolution.

And finally, central bankers around the world will want to promote stability in the global financial system via monetary policy. In July, Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England, said: "The Bank can be expected to take whatever action is needed to promote monetary and financial stability, and as a consequence, support the real economy."

In the US, the progression of interest rate rises is likely to be slower than expected prior to the referendum, and in Europe, the European Central Bank is likely to continue to accelerate its supportive asset purchase programme.





A matter of trust

Anglian Country Inns Chairman Cliff Nye talks to Telegraph about customer service, business growth and why insurance brokers are like plumbers

Cliff Nye is a busy man. Not only does he oversee a chain of pubs, restaurants and inns, but this summer was spent organising his daughter's wedding and competing in a sailing event in Portugal. Plus his hospitality business is growing at a steady rate across East Anglia. It's hardly surprising that it takes a few weeks to catch up with him.

"We now have seven establishments, three of which have rooms, and we employ about 250 people across the group. It certainly keeps me busy, but I'm fortunate to have my two sons [James and Howard] working with me. They take a major role in the business and its ongoing management.

if we're supplying quality, that's great. Actually, if the market's hard, people are pickier about where they eat and look harder for a restaurant, which suits us down to the ground. The public is more particular about where it spends money because it hasn't got so much spare, which means the decision is about quality and service.

Having set up the award-winning Anglian Country Inns group with just one pub 20 years ago, the business now has seven establishments to its name, with The Kings Head in Letheringsett joining the fold in 2016. With its cosy bar, casual dining areas and four guest bedrooms housed in a parkland setting, it was a natural addition to the group, which also includes The White Horse in Brancaster and The Cricketers in Weston.

"Recommending insurers is like recommending plumbers – you don't do it unless they're good"

"We've got more than 250 people working in the hospitality trade now and – because we're a family-run outfit – as far as I'm concerned, they are all part of the family. That's reflected in the service our customers receive; it's more than just a job, it's a whole culture. I get that when I'm talking to anyone at Alan Boswell Group too; they're all happy with their lot, which is important. Plus, whenever I make a phone call they always call me back – I never have to call twice."

"I bought the first pub for a bit of fun 20 years ago and I've tried to retain that sense of fun all the way through – it seems to have worked!" Cliff smiles.

"We currently have an organic expansion plan in place. We're in double-digit growth at the moment and there's no reason that should stop."

When we mention issues around the economy, alluding to the effect of Brexit, he doesn't miss a beat: "There's always a problem with the market, depending on how you look at it, but

Getting the job done

Alan Boswell Group supplies a range of commercial insurance to Anglian Country Inns, with a portfolio that has



Working relationships: Cliff Nye and Account Executive Justin Hiller

The White Horse, Brancaster

White Horse

grown and adapted to the business' changing needs.

"The relationship came about through Chris Gibbs [Alan Boswell Group Managing Director], who I know through sailing. When our insurance came up for renewal I suggested that our finance team should get a quote from them. They were very competitive financially and their approach was very professional.

"That was about 10 years ago now and we trust their judgement to ensure we are getting the best deal commercially. In fact, we have another business, N&P Windows [a large window and door company] and they insure that as well. Plus several of our directors have personal insurance with them too."

As previously mentioned, Cliff is highly attuned to customer service, which is part of his decision to continue working with Alan Boswell Group.

"Going the extra mile is fundamental for me. We've stayed with Alan Boswell Group for so long because they're very attentive. You can always speak to someone you recognise over the phone, which is really important because if we're trying to get hold of someone, it's usually because we're trying to sort something out. Plus, we trust that they're getting things sorted, so we can get on with running our business.

"Insurance is a bit like a bank; you've got to have it but you don't want any hassle, which we have experienced with previous insurers. You start working through a claim and end up in an argument with the insurer. We don't get that with Alan Boswell Group. We trust that they can handle it and they trust that we'll run our business in a way that avoids risks.

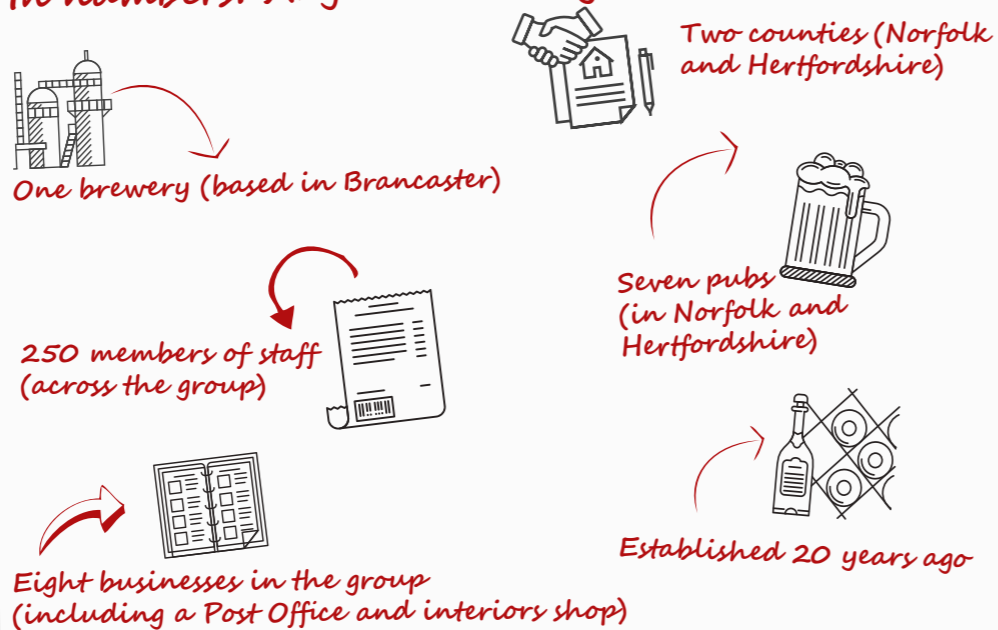
"We've had a couple of claims in the past and it's been a hassle-free process. We had someone dealing with it who knows us. I very seldom get involved, I leave it to accountants and individual managers to work with the claims team because I trust that it will be resolved.

"If someone I knew was looking for insurance, I would say to give Alan Boswell Group a try, not just because of costs but because of trust. Recommending insurers is like recommending plumbers – you don't do it unless they're good."



Family business: Howard, Cliff and James Nye

In numbers: Anglian Country Inns



Building solid relationships



Justin Hiller
Account Executive

With nearly 30 years' experience in the industry, Account Executive Justin Hiller knows a thing or two about insurance. He explains how the relationship with Anglian

Country Inns has grown in the last 10 years

"I went to see Cliff Nye on my first day at Alan Boswell Group and wrote my first piece of business for them there and then. That was 10 years ago. The contract with Anglian Country Inns has grown ever since.

"We cover pretty much everything for Anglian Country Inns within a combined commercial insurance package. They have a motor fleet policy with us too –

"I understand their business and the challenges they face and that knowledge has grown over time"

some of their chefs and members of staff have to drive for business, so we make sure that's covered.

"Our financial planning team also takes care of Anglian Country Inns' company pensions and private medical cover. Because we know their business so well, we can tailor solutions that really fit their needs.

"It's a really interesting account to work on and we have a solid relationship with the client: I understand their business and the challenges they face and that knowledge has grown over time. Anglian Country Inns doesn't hesitate to give me a call whenever it has a question about insurance and I'm always happy to help however I can. We're proud to be Anglian Country Inns' trusted supplier."

Going Green

Gavin Dearsley and Lesley McKee speak to Lucy Mowatt about the unique challenges facing renewable energy producers – and why Alan Boswell Group is the broker to speak to about protecting your plant



Lesley McKee and Gavin Dearsley have formed something of a dream team for the renewable energy sector. With years of experience in the industry between them, they can provide a service like no other.

Gavin joined Alan Boswell Group as Risk Management Adviser mid-2016, while Account Executive Lesley McKee has been with the business for 12 years. As a team, they can advise on both reducing risks and provide competitive insurance premiums for all types of plant.

“The insurance market for renewables is very small,” Lesley explains. “Very few companies handle it. Insurers trust us to get the right information about the plants and be honest about it.”

“Gavin going out to see clients’ plants gives me better terms with the insurer. They know we’ve completed the relevant surveys and risk assessments, so I can get my clients good rates. It’s perfect having Gavin here – it makes a real difference.”

“I have a close relationship with the account executives on the insurance side

of things,” Gavin picks up. “I know about claims being handled, or any incidents or problems, before meeting the client. That helps me to understand them and their needs, so I can advise accordingly.”

“My previous experience has primarily been with anaerobic digestion [AD] plants and biomass. We don’t get much call to insure solar panels, unless it’s against theft,” he adds. “I’ve worked with all sorts of organisations, from one-man bands and small farms, to some of the biggest plants in the country.”

“Health and safety provision is vital across plants of all sizes. I will carry out a risk assessment and audit safe working policies, including Control of Substances Hazardous to Health [COSHH] procedures, explosion risk assessments and so on to make sure that the plants meet UK legislation.”

“I can also provide ongoing health and safety training and refresher courses, so organisations can focus on producing power, knowing staff and visitors are safe at all times.”

Keeping business moving

It almost goes without saying that creating energy has inherent risks – not least with AD, because it involves the creation of gas. As a result, finding the right insurance policy is vital, because plants are often not covered by standard farm policies.

“A lot of the smaller plants – farmers running their own digesters, for instance – quite happily get cover with their farm insurance. However, that doesn’t cover plant breakdown,” Lesley explains. “But you can’t insure the whole plant for just breakdown cover either. You have to get specialist cover for the whole plant.”

“If the plant breaks down, the owner is going to have to buy electricity and won’t be selling any into the National Grid either, so they’ll be losing money. As such, business interruption is where the Alan Boswell Group sees the most claims. In fact, the biggest claim that I’ve had was for loss of earnings.”

Gavin nods in agreement: “I recently went out to a two megawatt plant and the engine that burns the biogas to

make electricity was down. Instead of creating electricity, they had to flare gas off into the atmosphere, instead of burning it. It costs £500 an hour to flare gas off and the plant had been down overnight. It can cost a lot of money.”

“And the plant won’t come back online at the same output as before,” Lesley continues. “They have to build up pressure to burn the gas to make the electricity – and that can take days.”

To help with the down time, Gavin explains that plants are taking out their own forms of insurance by employing specialist teams who will maintain the plant and deal with operations, reducing the risks of down time.

“I met a company that’s setting up its own spares depot, which will hold a multi-million pound engine in case the existing one is out of action,” he says. “While it’s an expensive piece of kit, they can’t afford to have a plant down for days on end.”

“Some of these engines are very specific,” Lesley adds. “They can take six months to build. Companies can’t

afford to be out of action for that long, so they’re taking steps to manage their risk. Plus, big organisations have backers, investors and stakeholders who insist on having as many forms of insurance as possible, because interruption to a business can run into millions.”

Speaking the language

While it may seem like a relatively new field, Alan Boswell Group has been involved with the renewables industry from the outset. Spring Farm in Norfolk was the first agricultural site in the UK to have its own AD plant, which went online in September 2010. They have had their insurance with Alan Boswell Group from day one and since then the industry has grown.

And if it wasn’t already obvious, Lesley and Gavin are passionate about renewable energy. From setting up plants to the intricacies of the equipment and the diverse risk, they’ve consulted at every stage.

“I have been involved with the design of plants and the layout of traffic,” Gavin explains. “For example, making sure that fire exits and fire doors are

away from explosion areas and gas release areas. Or making sure plants can receive emergency vehicles.”

“We’ve picked up the technology. We know where niggles are and can see problems before they happen, questioning the logic behind our clients’ decisions and making sure they’ve thought through every eventuality.”

Fit for the future

When asked about the biggest risks to the industry, both Gavin and Lesley look to the future.

“Ageing plants are likely to have increased health and safety risks as equipment wears out and needs replacing,” Gavin warns. “This is a particular risk with smaller plants – on farms, for instance. People might be tempted to do some tweaking and poking about where they shouldn’t – especially in explosion zones.”

“We can provide support in these areas, and it’s a real forte,” Lesley concludes. “We offer advice and health and safety support so they don’t end up making a claim.”

Managing your risk



Chris Gibbs – Managing Director, Alan Boswell Insurance Brokers

Alan Boswell Insurance Brokers Managing Director **Chris Gibbs** tells Telegraph why Directors' and Officers' Liability Insurance is a must-have for managers everywhere

Imagine you're the health and safety manager for a business. Then imagine that, despite following your exact recommendations, a member of staff has an accident that leaves them incapacitated and decides to sue the company.

You might assume that the business will be at risk and have the appropriate insurance cover to protect itself, but there is a chance that the injured party – or even the Health & Safety Executive in this instance – might pursue you for negligence or providing incorrect advice. You'll potentially be left open to being sued or even imprisoned.

While this hypothetical horror story is extreme, this could happen to anyone with a high level of responsibility within a business. Directors, partners and even managers (or officers, as the cover is known as) can personally be at risk for a range of reasons – not just health and safety.

"I recommend all senior managers consider taking out Directors' and Officers' [D&O] Liability Insurance to make sure they are covered," says Managing Director Chris Gibbs. "While it has an old-fashioned name, it's invaluable in the modern world. Essentially it covers individuals within a business, whether you're a director, partner or someone with authority to represent the company – as opposed to the business itself.

"D&O Insurance will typically cover you as an individual – including your defence if the case goes to court. It helps to protect both you and your assets."



Covering all angles

Chris goes on to explain that D&O covers liability for actions or omissions (in legal terms known as 'Wrongful Acts') made while acting on behalf of the company. Claims can be brought for a diverse range of reasons, including breach of trust, negligence, defamation, wrongful trading and pollution – even if they were made with the best of intentions. D&O insurance will also protect against some employment claims and if a company pension scheme goes into administration.

"You always assume that nothing's going to happen, and if it does, the company is accountable. That's not always the case"

Chris adds that an extension to the policy, known as entity cover, is available too. This add-on product will cover the organisation itself and can be useful if a claim is being made against both the company and an individual director.

"We'll usually go and talk to our clients on two fronts. It tends to be part of a wider conversation about business insurance. We'll ask if the individuals want to protect themselves. A company will take it out on your behalf – or the directors will buy it through the company – to protect the senior team.

"You always assume that nothing's going to happen, and if it does, the company is accountable. That's not always the case."

Expert advice

Chris adds that it's worth speaking to an expert, because there are lots of intricacies that you'll need to take into consideration. "I would always recommend speaking to an experienced insurance broker to get some advice on the right cover," he says. "Find out what they recommend, the cover you need and the cost. They should also be able to give you supporting information and literature, so you're sure you have the right cover.

"Of course, I'd always recommend you'd speak to Alan Boswell Group before any other broker though!" he laughs. "Not only are we an independent broker, but we have teams of experts dealing with business insurance all day, every day.

"Our aim is to help you understand, manage and control the risks in your business. Insurance is just a part of that process and is used to protect you against the risks that you're unable to eliminate."

5 reasons you should get D&O Insurance

1 Your personal assets may be at risk
If you're accused of an error or a breach at work, you are personally liable to defend yourself. If you don't have appropriate cover, your assets may be at risk.

2 Defence is expensive
If you don't have D&O cover you could end up funding your own defence if you find yourself in court. These bills quickly add up and could cost you thousands of pounds.

3 Compensation cover
If your defence is unsuccessful, D&O can help you cover the cost of any compensation due to the other party.

4 It's affordable
A policy can cost less than £500 a year, even though the claims it protects against can run into the hundreds of thousands. It's a low price for peace of mind.

5 It's unique
D&O cover isn't provided by any other type of liability insurance, such as Professional Indemnity Insurance.

Get covered

To find out more about D&O Insurance for you and your business, get in touch. Our expert team will discuss your business in detail and recommend the right policy at the right price.

Give us a call on 01603 218000 or visit www.alanboswell.com for details.

Changing times

The rental market has changed significantly over the past 50 years, and no one knows that better than Mike Stimpson, who has seen his property portfolio grow against a changing landscape

It's hard to believe that Mike Stimpson became a landlord by accident. Housing in the region of 400 residential tenants across the south of England and letting numerous commercial properties across the UK, he is well-versed in all things property. Over the decades he has watched Governments come and go, landlord regulations shift and the property market boom, all while gaining valuable experience along the way.

"I became a landlord in 1958," Mike begins. "I worked for the Post Office and in-between times I was doing up and selling cars with a partner. It was a part-time thing and we rented a double-length garage from a roofing company, which went bust. We stayed in the garage but didn't know who to pay rent to because the roofers were also tenants.

"One day we were working in the garage and an elderly lady came up and asked: 'Who do you think you are? What are you doing in there?' She said she was

the owner and that she had to sell the property to pay death duties.

"She had a mortgage on the property and owed £1,700. She said: 'I've got a year to pay my death duties, which are £300. If you can pay me £300 within a year, a pound a week for 10 years and take over the mortgage, it's yours.' So that's what we did; we took on a flat and two commercial garages.

"In those days I got about £5 a week wages, so £300 was a tremendous amount of money, but the beauty of it was, once I could establish that I had a permanent job I could get a mortgage, which was about £16 a month. It might not sound much, but it still had to be paid, so I rented out all the properties on the site except the garages we were using to cover my outgoings. I still own the property today.

"From there I purchased a 20-room property in Brighton for £3,750, with a £500 deposit. I still own that one as well and the value has increased considerably."

"I would buy the odd one and sell the odd one, because we had to get the deposits together. At one point I had 40 to 45 mortgages. There were no computers in those days, so building societies wouldn't know if I had others. Towards the end of paying off these mortgages, the building societies started amalgamating and the smaller ones merged with the bigger ones. Of course I worried that building societies that I had mortgages with would all amalgamate [and cause me problems]!"

Full-time commitment

Mike managed the properties part-time for the first 29 years, but it became his primary profession in 1987.

"Stimpson Properties has now got between 350 and 400 tenants in the south of England. All my residential properties are within 10 miles of the centre of Brighton. That means we can be at any property very quickly indeed and we even have a 24-hour call-out service. We have a lot of commercial property in the UK too, but they're a

"You change if you are dissatisfied with the service but not necessarily with cost. You pay for what you get"

different beast [and need a different level of service].

"We employ approximately 16 staff. You can't run a company like mine without staff. We do all our own development and maintenance in-house. We don't tend to use any contractors."

Tenant troubles

It's not just the value of property that's changed since Mike first became a landlord, but the very nature of the rental business.

"Tenants were regulated or controlled in those days," Mike explains. "They had a right to live there and so did the next three generations, so you couldn't give notice. Nowadays there's hardly any of those tenancies."

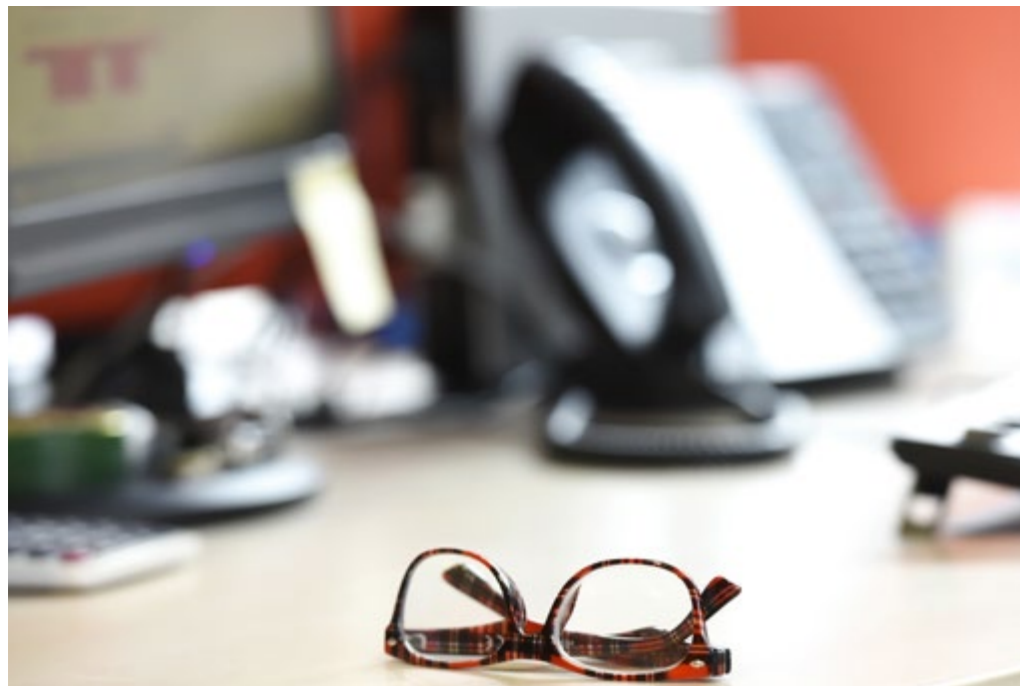
He goes on to explain that his set-up differs to that of smaller portfolio landlords. He caters for people looking for affordable accommodation, such as families on low incomes, as well as homeless people who struggle to get a roof over their heads.

When asked if there are any common problems with tenancies, he's keen to point out that most tenants act reasonably and stay for a long time, way beyond their initial tenancy.

"Our tenants stay for 20 years or more," he says. "We have them for quite long periods and most of them regard their tenancies as their homes, even though they've been on a rolling tenancy agreement for more than eight years. However, if there's a problem, you must have the ability to evict of them."

When it comes to tenancy issues, he explains that while he sees some anti-social behaviour and rent arrears, it is at a low level. But there are other new issues appearing on the horizon.

"The problem we're seeing more and more is subletting," he says. "The Government is proposing to ban clauses in tenancy agreements that do not allow subletting. Not only is it foolish, it's unreasonable. If you let to a tenant there should be no right for that tenant to sublet. And more often than not the



person your tenant gets in is not the sort of person you would want as a tenant either. That is becoming a big problem. Of course, some people are also letting rooms or spaces as B&Bs too.”

Representing landlords

Since he first became a landlord, regulations have changed many times and he explains that it doesn't always appear to be in the landlord's interests. He cites how the major political parties will have their own agendas and regulations change to meet the needs of the nation.

“For 40-odd years I've been representing landlords, both locally in the south of England and nationally through the National Federation of Residential Landlords [NFRL, now part of the National Landlords Association]. Not only was I able to deal with changes, but I was there to help negotiate for better regulations. It's very political.

“I first got involved with Alan Boswell Group when they linked with the NFRL, having already been the broker for the Eastern Landlords Association. They offered the NFRL their services at a time when no other broker would; landlords could not get cover for tenanted properties. There were few insurers that covered residential property at reasonable prices, but Alan Boswell

found one who offered a product that landlords needed. In fact, we worked with one of the Group's directors to design an appropriate policy, which met with landlords' requirements.

“Today it's all changed, because everybody is offering landlord insurance. Of course some of them aren't as good as the others – but that's how it is.

“I keep telling people: go to Alan Boswell. They've got [policies] that we know meet the requirements of the average landlord. Go somewhere else and you might get it cheaper, but you've got to look at what's covered.

“The reality is that Alan Boswell Group provide a great service, especially in difficult times, such as when a landlord needs to make a claim. Plus, they often have delegated claims authority; they deal with claims themselves up to a certain level, so you aren't always referred back to the insurer.

“I've had a direct contact with [Business Account Manager] Steve Cox for a long while now. Steve comes and sees me once a year and I speak to him pretty regularly. He tells me exactly what's happened with the market, although I've got an index-linked policy so I don't have to worry about getting valuations done every year. We know where we are and it's a service I can rely on.”



Landlords: protect your income

We take a look at how rent guarantee insurance can protect your income and provide peace of mind in uncertain times



It's hard to miss the financial news these days; outlets often report that the UK economy is increasingly troubled, with manufacturing output declining, the steel industry in crisis and poor import and export figures all contributing to a gloomy prognosis.

Inevitably these stories highlight how businesses across the board have curbed spending and hiring plans, with jobs being lost in all sectors as companies batten down the hatches.

Although this situation is worrying for everyone, landlords are especially vulnerable to economic downturns. Even if you're careful to weather the storm, by investing wisely and keeping something to fall back on, your tenants may not be as sensible or as lucky. If someone loses their job, they may get into arrears on their rent and despite best intentions may end up owing several months' back payment.

Running up costs

If a tenant defaults, you'll have no money going into your account while money continues to go out. You will need to find the money to pay the mortgage on the property, pay for maintenance and upkeep and cover all of the other regular costs of running a house.

You may also find that the tenant has gone into arrears with utility bills or council tax, which is yet another headache for

you to deal with. Then there's the cost and trouble of finding a new tenant, including agency fees and reference checks. It all adds up to a hefty bill.

Cover your back

It's not all bad news, though. Rent guarantee insurance has been created to protect landlords, which can prove invaluable in times of uncertainty.

In fact, rent guarantee insurance will actually cover the rent you are due while your solicitor pursues the tenants for the money they owe. It can be purchased as an extension to legal expenses cover and will pay out up to a maximum of £25,000 or 12 months' rent, whichever is reached sooner.

Legal expenses cover will also help you with the costs of pursuing a tenant who is in breach of the tenancy agreement. Both of these

policies are great value for money, and vital if you find yourself without a key source of income.

Like all forms of insurance, rent guarantee insurance also gives you peace of mind – even if you never have to claim on it. Don't let yourself be a hostage to fortune.

"If a tenant defaults, you'll have no money going into your account while money continues to go out"

Keen to protect your property?

Call us today on 01603 216399 to find the right landlord insurance product

The UK rental market in numbers

20-39

This age group has been dubbed 'Generation Rent' by PwC, as these people find it hard to take their first step on the property ladder.

102,900 VS 86,200

According to a report by estate agents Reed Rains, the number of tenants more than two months behind on their rent has fallen between 2008 and 2016. This is a 16% reduction of tenants in arrears.

2.3m VS 5.4m

The number of people living in privately rented accommodation in 2001 compared to the number in 2016, according to PwC. They predict this figure will grow to 7.2m by 2025.

2.5%

Private rental rates increased by 2.5% between May 2015 and May 2016, according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

11.4%

Based on ONS data, private rental rates are rising fastest in Scotland, where they are averaging £704 a month.

9 things to check when buying landlord insurance



Steve Cox
Business Account Manager,
Property Owners

Business Account Manager Steve Cox explains the key points you should focus on when searching for landlord insurance

Comparing landlord insurance products can be hard work. While it's easy to get quotes from multiple insurers, you may find there's lots to read through and that you struggle to spot the differences.

So how do you know which policy is right for you? Here are my top nine things to look out for when comparing insurance products.

1. Additional fees

Many insurance companies hook you with a cheap premium, but charge hefty admin fees for making changes or cancelling your policy. While checking for these fees, it's worth looking at the payment options to see whether there are any charges for paying monthly. These fees can quickly put the price up.

2. A UK-based claims team

Insurance is a funny purchase: it's one of those things you buy but never want to use.

However, if you do make a claim, you'll quickly discover that you get what you paid for. Ensuring you deal with a UK-based company with its own claims team should help you through a difficult time.

3. Loss of rent cover

If your property suffers a claim, most landlord insurance should include cover to provide an income while the property is uninhabitable. Not having this cover could leave you out of pocket should a claim occur.

4. Cover for malicious damage by a tenant

Malicious damage by a tenant is a common claim. When comparing the details of any policy, make sure it's included or can be added on.

5. Excess value

Some claims occur more often than others and may have higher excesses applied. Escape of water is the most common property claim and will often have a higher excess than others. There is generally a standard policy excess, with specific excesses (for instance, for escape of water) highlighted in your quotation documentation. Make sure you read them and are happy with what you're signing.

6. Terms and conditions

All insurance products have conditions that must be adhered to, for example, making sure there's a tenancy

agreement in place. While this may seem obvious, if you're renting to friends or family you may not have a formal agreement, which could cause problems if you make a claim. Read them carefully so you know exactly what you're agreeing to.

7. Cover for manufacture of drugs

This cover comes into action if a tenant damages your property through production of drugs. Cannabis farms, for example, can lead to the destruction of properties and failure to have this cover could ruin your investment.

8. Unoccupancy rules

We would all love our tenants to stay forever, but when the average length of a tenancy is less than a year, it's likely you'll have a period where the property is unoccupied. Insurers vary on how long they will cover unoccupied properties – some will give cover for up to 90 days, while others restrict cover immediately.

9. Independent reviews

Whether you look at product comparisons, service reviews or company awards, the internet is invaluable. Check out whether the company you're about to place your trust in has the trust of its customers.

If you'd like to know more about Landlord Insurance, give us a call on 01603 216399 or visit www.alanboswell.com

Planning for the future

Join us as we delve into the world of Business Property Relief and discover how it can help your loved ones reduce the amount of Inheritance Tax they have to pay

Although it's not a subject anyone wants to dwell on for too long, we know that, like most people, you imagine that your family will be financially secure and well provided for once you've passed on.

According to the HMRC Inheritance Tax Statistics 2012-13 Report, between 2014 and 2015 the British Government received around £3.8 billion in Inheritance Tax (IHT) receipts, a figure that increased by 11.9% on the period before. The report goes on to state that properties, household savings and securities made up the bulk of this figure.

We understand that you've worked hard to accrue assets and want to hand them down to your loved ones. In order to support their futures, you want those assets to remain intact, with as little lost to Inheritance Tax as possible.

Of course we all know the famous Benjamin Franklin quote: "In this world nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes." And while we agree with him up to a point, there are ways to reduce your family's potential IHT bill.

For instance, you could give assets as gifts, but this has to happen at least



seven years before your death in order to be exempt from IHT. Obviously that requires a lot of planning and is less than practical if you need to access your assets in those seven years.

Introducing Business Property Relief

A viable solution is Business Property Relief (BPR). This allows either 50% or 100% tax relief on investments made in qualifying businesses more than two years before death.

Investments in a business, including shares in an unlisted company (which appears on the Alternative Investments Market), all qualify for 100% BPR. There are also a number of ways to qualify for 50% BPR. For instance, if the deceased was a partner or in control of a business and also owned land, buildings or machinery used by the company, their family could claim 50% BPR.

Business property and assets can also be given away as gifts to loved ones and still be eligible for BPR, providing that they have been held for more than two years before death, and are owned by the receiver until the death of the giver. That means that the receiver cannot claim BPR on assets they have sold prior to the death of the giver. However, these

gifts can be replaced by other assets of equal value if needed by the business.

Things to consider

As with all things in life, there are lots of factors to consider when looking into Inheritance Tax planning and BPR.

There are exceptions and certain types of organisation and property are not eligible for BPR – for instance, property lettings companies. Changes to business structure may also mean that they no longer qualify for relief.

You should also bear in mind that your loved ones may have to pay Capital Gains or Income Tax when they come to sell any asset or business interest if its value has increased since it was first bought too.

It is worth speaking to a professional financial planner to discuss the options available and any caveats and catches that might invalidate planning, so your family doesn't end up with a huge bill.

Alan Boswell Financial Planners can help you manage your assets and plan for the future. We'll take a look at your situation and your aims for the future to help you find the right plan for your loved ones. Call 01603 967967 to book an appointment.

5 Things you need to know about Inheritance Tax

There are often stories in the tabloids about Inheritance Tax, which can confuse matters. To help you get to grips with the facts, here are our top five things to know about IHT.

1 Inheritance tax is currently 40%. This is usually paid by the person dealing with the estate, who tends to be the executor of the will.

2 Estates worth less than £325,000 don't normally have to pay IHT.

3 If a bequeathed estate is worth less than £325,000, the spouse or civil partner can have the remainder. For instance, if John doesn't leave anything to his family, his wife Jane can technically pass on £650,000 tax free.

4 There are a number of exemptions to the seven-year rule when it comes to gifts. One of the main exemptions is you can give up to £3,000 away as gifts each year.

5 There is 100% IHT relief on legacies left to charities and amateur sports clubs in wills. If you donate more than 10% of your estate to charity, you may qualify to pay IHT at a reduced rate of 36%.

The value of tax relief depends on your individual circumstances. Tax laws can change.

Going the extra mile

Mark Linehan, Account Executive for Private Clients, reveals why client relationships are at the heart of providing outstanding personal insurance



Mark Linehan
Account Executive

"I've had some clients for 20 years – we don't lose many," Account Executive Mark Linehan laughs. "I'm still working with some of the same clients I had when I first joined the company in 1997. Some of my clients have become friends over the years."

Personal relationships are the focus in Mark's line of the business, working with private clients to arrange their personal insurance covers, from property to antiques and priceless items. He explains that relationships are not only vital to finding the right cover for his clients, but also to exceeding their expectations.

"A lot of my clients are busy and don't have the time to search the market to find the right insurance cover," he adds. "Trust is a big word for my team. Clients know they can trust me and my team to find the right product for them."

Industry expertise

Like every member of the insurance team at Alan Boswell Group, Mark's team knows the industry inside out.

"I love meeting new clients and building those relationships. It's the best part of my day, but building that initial trust with a new

client is one of our biggest challenges. That said, the way we do it never changes; be yourself and go the extra mile. I recently won some new business and went to meet the client and gave them advice in person – nothing was too much trouble. We now do lots of business with them because of that initial service.

"It's important that no one on the team would over-promise and under-deliver either. If we promise to do something, we'll make sure we achieve it. As a result, we get fantastic

"No one on the team would over-promise and under-deliver"

feedback from our clients. You can see the positive response we get in our Feefo scores and we're proud of that."

All about people

Not only do the Private Clients team know what they're doing when it comes to personal insurance, but they are also adept at building strong client relationships.

"It starts with Alan really," Mark explains. "If you look at the way he's built the business, he knows his clients personally and that has filtered down through the company and how we all work."

"To be on the Private Clients side of the business, you've

got to be good at talking to people. My philosophy is that people buy from people they like. The reason the team gets so many recommendations is the way we deal with our clients."

Mark emphasises that this is one of the key benefits of working with a broker, rather than sourcing insurance online: "People don't know the value of their insurance until they come to make a claim. If you go online and pick an insurer based on price, that's fine until you have a bad experience; it's no longer good value because you may get a poor claims service.

"We have an in-house claims team, who often have delegated claims authority. They

are focused on customer satisfaction and will work with you to help resolve a claim."

Always learning

Mark emphasises that the team is always learning from its clients, too. Over time they'll discover what works for them, continuously adapting to different client needs.

"Anyone who says they know everything is lying. You learn that as you go through life and through business. You're always adapting in order to provide the best service for your clients – putting what you've learned into practice. Plus things change in the insurance industry too, so you have to make sure your

knowledge is up to speed and you adjust to those changes."

Client expectations of the insurance brokers have certainly changed since Mark joined the business. In the 1990s there were few computers, no emails and most business was conducted over the phone and by post.

"Now our clients need answers in minutes or hours, not days and weeks," he explains. "While our expertise and service have remained unchanged, the time it takes to deliver solutions has been compressed. Everything we do is almost instantaneous."

And there's nothing that the Private Clients team wouldn't consider either; they will try to help with anything insurance related.

"No two days are ever the same in the Private Clients team. We've insured all sorts of things, from Aston Martins and Bentleys, to multimillion pound properties all over the country. We offer a bespoke, personal service that lots of other brokers struggle to provide.

"We will be honest if there's something we can't do, too. We will do some research for the clients to help them find a solution that works.

A prime example is car hire excess insurance; we can't provide this cover when you hire a car abroad, but we will provide a list of companies that we know will do it."

It's not all about insurance either. "The Alan Boswell Group has a financial planning arm, which can provide support for both you and your business," Mark explains. "As such, we can help you with investments and savings or even help you with auto-enrolment pensions."

"We never turn customers away and will always help them find a solution."

Find out more

As part of a leading insurance broker, our Private Clients team can help you to arrange a broad range of personal products, including high-value home and car insurance.

They'll even manage the claims process for you should the worst happen, wherever you are in the UK – from Norwich to Newquay.

To discover how they'll make your life easier, call us on 01603 218000.



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