

Land Registry

Landnet

45

December 2014

In this issue

Land
Registry's
customer
magazine



Welcome to *Landnet* 45.

Our Property Alert fraud prevention service has now won two national awards in a matter of months, with the recognition coming both from the public sector and the commercial world.

The free service is designed to be used directly by members of the public but we believe solicitors and conveyancers have a valuable role to play in informing their clients about it and our property fraud advice in general.

In this issue we also look at how best to complete the evidence of identity panels on our forms to help prevent fraud. If you'd like to suggest a similar practice topic for us to focus on, please get in touch.

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Landnet can be made available in other formats on request. If you require *Landnet* in another format, please contact Customer Support by email customersupport@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk or on 0844 892 1111.

To receive a bulletin every time *Landnet* is published, please send your name, job title and email address to gavin.curry@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk

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Counter-fraud service wins national award

Our free early warning property fraud service Property Alert has won a Civil Service Award in the Innovation category.

Alasdair Lewis, Director of Legal Services, said: “We were up against some stiff competition and there were almost 700 entries overall so we were absolutely thrilled to win.

“It’s great to have another accolade for our free Property Alert service after winning the [Real IT Award](#) earlier this year.

“We know that the majority of people using the service find it

simple and easy to sign up to but we’re always looking at how we can improve the service to make it as user-friendly as possible.”

How does Property Alert work?

- Customers set up a free online account at www.gov.uk/property-alert.
- They are able to monitor up to 10 properties. Email alerts are sent when we receive an application to change the register as well as for official searches. The customer can then judge whether or not the activity is suspicious and whether they should seek further advice.
- People who are not online can sign up by calling 0300 006 0478.
- For more property fraud advice please see www.gov.uk/propertyfraud



Minister for the Cabinet Office Francis Maude (far left) and Daniella Goldman, Director of Public Policy & Government Relations at category sponsor Huawei Technologies (far right), with the award-winning Land Registry team: Head of Data Strategy Lynne Nicholson, Director of Legal Services Alasdair Lewis, PR Manager Jessica Prasad and Deputy Product Manager Tracey Salvin

Photo by Paul Heartfield

Christmas and New Year opening hours

Our [Business e-services](#) will be available in line with our normal service hours throughout the Christmas period. Our [Find a property](#) service will continue to be available 24 hours a day. Unless otherwise stated below, we will be running normal service hours.

Our offices will close for the festive period at 1.30pm on Christmas Eve (Wednesday 24 December) but our customer information centres will close at 1pm. Customer Support will be available until 2pm.

Our offices and Customer Support will be closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. On Monday 29 December, Tuesday 30 December and Wednesday 31 December our offices will be open as usual, while Customer Support will be available until 5pm.

On New Year’s Day our offices and Customer Support will be closed. Normal service hours will resume on Friday 2 January.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our customers.

Our ‘0300’ phone numbers

You can now use our new ‘0300’ numbers for Customer Support and other services.

- Customer Support: 0300 006 0411
- Customer Support for Welsh speakers: 0300 006 0422
- Bankruptcy enquiries: 0300 006 6107
- Commercial Services team: 0300 006 0478

Our former ‘08’ numbers for these services will be withdrawn very shortly.

Which topics would you like to see covered in Landnet? Please let us know by emailing the Editor at gavin.curry@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk or calling 0300 006 7299

Local Land Charges: a senior solicitor's view

As the primary legislation for our Local Land Charges proposals continues its passage through Parliament, we're working hard to build relationships with all our stakeholders and drawing on professional expertise to help us

Chris Wilton remembers the day his whole view of Land Registry changed – after more than 35 years as a solicitor.

“We used to have a pile of forms from Land Registry of all different colours and if you sent the wrong form with the wrong sort of application it was

doomed,” he recalled. “You waited six months for it to be sent back to you.”

For Chris, Senior Partner at West Yorkshire solicitors Hartley & Worstenholme, the key moment was when he was invited to Land Registry's Nottingham Office to meet his newly formed customer team.

“We said to them: “It's really nice to meet you because we've always been terrified of getting phone calls from Land Registry” and they said the same thing about us!

“Land Registry's attitude had seemed to be: ‘We are very important people, don't disturb us’. Now it became: ‘We are here to help’, serving the public as we all are.”

As a result of the relationship built by Chris and his colleagues with Customer Team Leader Jamie Winch and his team, Hartley & Worstenholme became an enthusiastic participant in trials of the electronic Document Registration Service (e-DRS).

“Our firm is 130 years old this year and lots of our relationships with customers go back generations but we want to be at the forefront of what is going on so we can give a better service to our clients,” he said.

“We have always wanted to explore what technology can do for us so it was a real pleasure being given the e-DRS prototype. It completely turned round the way we do things.”

The firm now lodges 94 per cent of its dealings of whole by e-DRS, benefiting from a 50 per cent reduction in fee and contributing to the 80 per cent of dealings of whole received electronically by Land Registry.

“We are not a firm that has to consult with hundreds of people to make a decision,” said Chris. “I can say let's have a go and see how it goes. We were able to give Jamie and his colleagues the practical responses to questions they needed.

“The quicker the service the more satisfied the client is. It's the same with MapSearch. One of my younger

colleagues said to me: ‘I look at MapSearch for everything I do. It speeds up what we can do for the client’.”

For the same reasons Chris is a supporter of Land Registry's Local Land Charges proposals and acting as an adviser on them.

“Some local authorities provide an excellent service but the proposals are saying: ‘Ultimately everyone should benefit from the best’,” he said.

“Going to one place for the information has got to be good. Land Registry can provide a service that's like the best and that's got to be to the client's advantage.

“Our role as solicitors will be as an interpreter of the raw data that's there. My view has always been that we're here to interpret the law.

“I think most solicitors feel the way we do. If it speeds up the transactions and reduces fees in places it benefits the client and benefits us. The client gets less stressed and we get less stressed.

“It's a momentous step but in another way it's a small step,” said Chris. “It's the same data being provided in a different way.”



Chris Wilton (right) and Jamie Winch, now Stakeholder & Policy Manager in the Local Land Charges Team

Project promotes cross-border conveyancing

Land Registry has been involved in developing a system aimed at facilitating conveyancing across the European Union (EU).

The CROBECO (Cross Border e-Conveyancing) project was set up to:

- increase consumer confidence in European conveyancing
- aid economic recovery across the EU
- encourage foreign real estate investment, specifically in southern Europe.

Delegates at the CROBECO conference in London



The development of the second stage of CROBECO was concluded at its closing conference at The Law Society in London on 1 December.

CROBECO, supported by the European Land Registry Association (ELRA), promotes cross-border registration in foreign land registries by introducing an alternative conveyancing process for foreign buyers of real estate. It also allows for individual rights and obligations of both buyer and seller to be governed by the laws of the country of the foreign buyer.

Five countries have participated in the CROBECO project: the Netherlands, England, Wales,

Portugal and Spain. Although the focus is on English and Dutch buyers of property rights in Spain and Portugal, the systems used by NetPRO are generic and could readily be adopted by other EU countries.

Alasdair Lewis, Director of Legal Services at Land Registry and current President of ELRA, said: “Whilst the process of buying property in some European countries may appear to be similar to that in the UK, it can be very different in others.

“Many use the Notarial system (qualifying statement) to transfer property rather than the system that we are used to here. That is why this pioneering CROBECO project is instrumental in enhancing the capabilities of the lending and conveyancing market in Europe for the benefit of EU citizens.”

The majority of Land Registry’s work to change the register comes from solicitors and conveyancers rather than notaries. This is because there is no legal requirement for a notarial act to convey land as there is elsewhere in the EU. Land Registry supports the work of notaries in England and Wales by acting as an intermediary between the parties here and abroad.



Director of Legal Services and ELRA President Alasdair Lewis briefs the delegates on the pioneering CROBECO project

GOV.UK: three months on

It's been three months since we moved our website to GOV.UK. Our content went live at the end of August, but we have not stopped developing it.

We've been working with our colleagues at Government Digital Services (GDS) who are constantly developing GOV.UK as a whole, making every change based on user feedback and website analysis.

We have also been making changes to our pages to make them easier to use and understand, again based on customer feedback.

For example, customers have said that they wanted a list of our office addresses on a single page. We have listened and you can now find them on our [office addresses](#) page.

We've also made a number of changes to our home page. Customers told us they were finding it difficult to locate our Business e-services portal. We have listened and if you visit our home page (www.gov.uk/land-registry), we have a top link called 'Business e-services portal'.

We're now looking at improving our training materials, now located all together on our [How to use the Land Registry portal](#) page. We are also exploring new platforms to ensure our guidance is accessible to all of our customers.

We will continue to make improvements to the website. If you have any suggestions for how the site can be improved, please:

- leave a comment at the bottom of any of our pages on [GOV.UK](#)
- send us a question using our contact form
- post a question on our [customer support forum](#)
- contact your customer team (if you have one).

You can also find some top tips to help you find what you are looking for on GOV.UK more quickly on our [blog post](#).



Completing the evidence of identity panels on our forms – a guide for conveyancers

To help prevent the registration of fraudulent applications conveyancers must confirm the identity of parties involved in certain types of transactions.

Unfortunately, not all form AP1s lodged with Land Registry are completed correctly.

You must do this by completing panel 12 to confirm you are a conveyancer and then panel 13 which allows for the following alternatives.

- If a person is represented by a conveyancer you must give the name, address and reference of that conveyancer in panel 13(1) of your AP1.
- If a person is not represented by a conveyancer you must always insert 'none' against the party's name in panel 13(1).

And then, in panel 13(2), you can either:

- confirm that sufficient steps have been taken to verify that person's identity, or

- provide evidence of that person's identity in form ID1 or ID2, as appropriate.

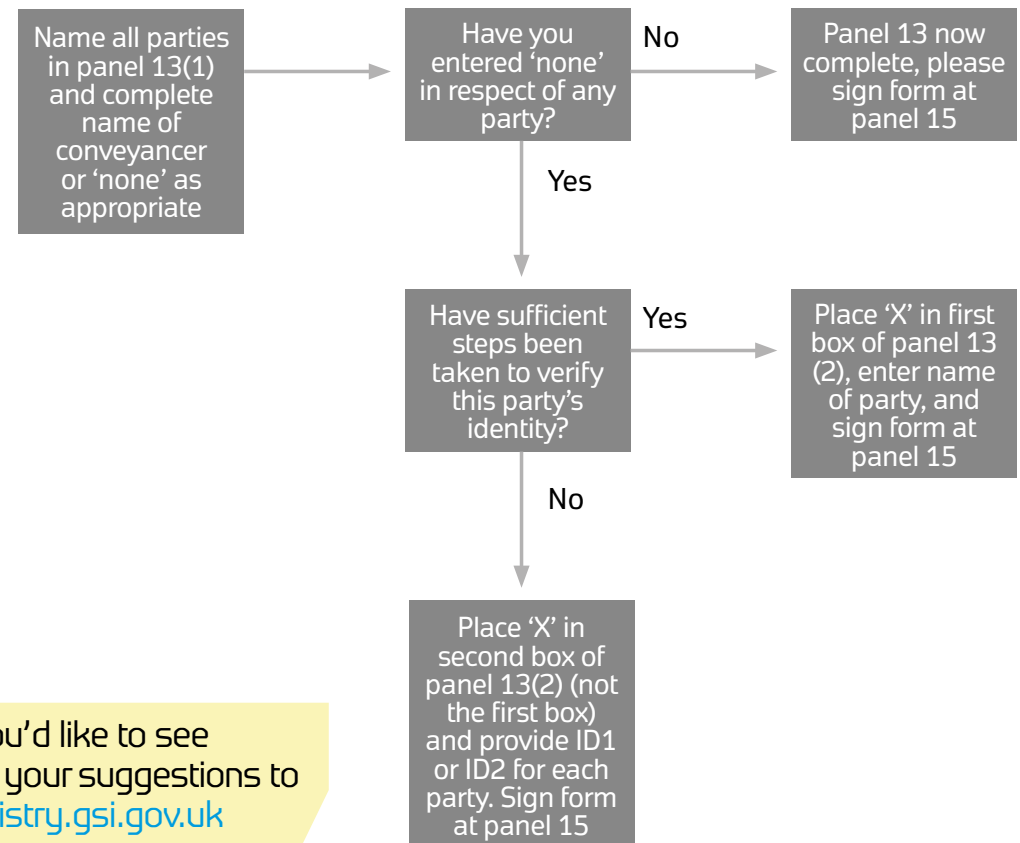
Please take care when completing panel 13(2) to indicate which option you have selected.

We may contact conveyancers to check that a form ID1 or ID2 completed in their name is genuine. We therefore recommend that, if you have completed such a form, you keep a record for the person(s) for whom you have verified identity and a duplicate of the photograph you have certified.

Forms FR1 and DS2 contain similar panels, to be completed in the same way. You can find further details of how to complete these forms in [Practice Guide 67 – Evidence of identity: conveyancers](#).

Is there a practice or legal topic you'd like to see covered in Landnet? Please send your suggestions to the Editor at gavin.curry@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk

This simple algorithm summarises how to complete form AP1.



Practice guides

You can find the latest versions of all our [practice guides](#) on our website.

Section 5.4.1 of [Practice Guide 27 – The leasehold reform legislation](#) has been amended due to the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 coming into force on 1 December 2014. This has amended section 99(5) of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993, removing the requirement for notices under the Act to be signed personally by the tenants or, as the case may be, by the tenant by whom it is given.

A new edition of [Practice Guide 40 – Land Registry plans – Supplement 4 – Boundary agreements and determined boundaries](#) considers boundary agreements in more detail, in sections 2 and 3.

Sections 3, 3.1 and 3.6 of [Practice Guide 57 – Exempting documents from the general right to inspect and copy](#) have been amended further to clarify the change in policy for applications which are not first registrations, under which we will need only certified copies of deeds or documents

you send to us with Land Registry applications. All documents submitted, including originals, will be scanned and destroyed.

Annual Report and Accounts

Read our [2013/14 Annual Report and Accounts](#).

Independent Complaints Reviewer's annual report for 2013/14

Our [Independent Complaints Reviewer's annual report for 2013/14](#) describes how we responded to the issues upheld by our complaints reviewer.

Landnet archive

Read [past issues of Landnet](#).