



NEWSLETTER #16 JANUARY 2020

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Welcome

What an end to 2019 – since our last newsletter we have had the first UK general election to occur in December since 1923, celebrated the magic of Christmas and welcomed in a new decade.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish clients past and present a happy and healthy 2020.

The saga at the end of 2019 continues with there still being seemingly endless delays at the Probate Registry and HMRC. Due to this we have not been able to progress matters for our probate clients as quickly as we would like which is extremely frustrating for us all.

Once again reassurances keep being made by official sources that they are working hard to improve turnaround. Hopefully by the time we write our next newsletter we will have some evidence that things are actually improving. Fingers crossed!

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Prison Officers or Carers? – an overlooked impact of our ageing society

Reading a fascinating article recently on the BBC website alerted me to something I hadn't even considered before.

Our ever-ageing population is having a substantial impact on all areas as we well know, but I had never even given a thought to how this would affect our prison system.

The oldest reported prisoner in England and Wales was 104 years old.

Fundamentally the existing prisons are not equipped to deal with older prisoners. A lot of us will remember the series 'Porridge' with wonderful Ronnie Barker; the slamming of the doors, cells with bunk beds and metal staircases.

The Prison Officers' Association has said that due to our ageing population inmates' needs are increasing. They are becoming frail, incontinent or have dementia. It is reported that in June 2019 there were 13,617 inmates aged above 50 out of a prison population of 82,710.

There is an urgent need for cells for those physically challenged which are on ground floor level. Currently an elderly inmate may be required to climb three or four ladder stairways; medication hatches are often on higher floors and the old buildings either have no lift or they need to be accompanied and no staff are available to take them. Wheelchairs need to be specifically designed for use in these buildings and often there is a delay as they are bespoke and need to be provided from the local authority from where the inmate lived before being imprisoned. Additionally, 24-hour healthcare is required and staff need to be properly trained.

The officers, often very young with little life experience, are training in their chosen profession but it is becoming increasingly apparent they are becoming carers to some of the older inmates.

Perhaps, it has been suggested, we need to consider secure care homes or consider alternatives to custodial sentences for older offenders.

The chief inspector of prisons is quoted as saying "when prisoners get older, less capable physically or infirm, they don't provide an escape risk, they still have to be held in custody".

But the question is do they need to be held still in levels of security which are not needed for their physical capabilities and which inevitably are very expensive as well?

Julie



A recent report has found that 73% of people would not trust a robot to draft a will and almost one-third said they wanted no 'artificial intelligence' involvement at all.

Premature ageing?

Some parts of UK ageing twice as fast as others, new research finds.

A study carried out by an independent thinktank the Resolution Foundation, has found that the populations of Maldon in Essex, Copeland in Cumbria and Richmondshire in Yorkshire are ageing twice as fast as the rest of the UK, while the populations of Nottingham and Oxford are in fact growing younger.

It all has to do with average age – aha! In North Norfolk, the average age is 54, whereas in Oxford, it is 29.

Read the full article at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/oct/28/some-parts-of-uk-ageing-twice-as-fast-as-others-new-research-finds>

Animal therapy

Joanne's recent article about considering animals when thinking about your will produced another comment from a neighbour; that animals can be a valuable help and comfort in dealing with bereavement.

When you've been used to sharing your home with someone, whether it be spouse, aged parent, or even children, and it is suddenly silent and empty when you return, it can double that feeling of loss. No-one to share your day with, mull over problems or even to share a meal. So, taking in a pet, whether it be dog or cat, or even a bird or tortoise, can give companionship in such circumstances.

A dog or a cat perhaps would not only give comfort but possibly develop a whole new lease of life for its owner, meeting new friends on the daily walks.

It is now well known that to stroke an animal is therapeutic and many care homes now allow new residents to bring their pets as well. I've known some care homes who invite a visiting dog to meet the residents once or twice a week, and I've certainly seen care home cats, making themselves at home.

We hear all the time about the amazing support dogs, such as hearing dogs, but everyday pets are equally amazing. Some acting as alerts when the phone rings

or someone is at the door, giving their owners a nudge if they feel they are nodding off and it has been known for dogs to keep their owners warm when they have fallen and been unable to get up and are waiting for help to arrive.

Obviously, this isn't for everybody but if you or someone you know gives this some serious consideration you need to ensure it is not going to be a burden and you/they would be able to cope. It is also a good idea to consider a rescue animal; the charity involved will always try to match the right person with the right pet.

Jennifer

Plastics – what a year 2019 was

After last year's outcry from the public generally who would have thought so much progress could be made in one year.

Christmas in particular highlighted the changes; crackers with no plastic toys, needless plastic wrapping reduced on greeting cards and food stuffs being repackaged to name but a few.

Burger King have announced they are no longer giving away plastic toys with children's meals. The ones they still have will be melted to make other items.

A cling film alternative has been produced using fish scales. Although still in development the advances are coming thick and fast.

I could go on but in one word it is just 'brilliant!'



The Herbert Protocol

Information from the Surrey Police website has provided details on a national scheme which is being introduced by the police nationwide in partnership with various other organisations. The aim is to compile a list of information which may prove vital in the event of a vulnerable person going missing.

The form can be found at:

<https://www.surrey.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/surrey/notices/herbert-protocol/herbert-protocol-form.doc>

Just by way of summary, it is a 5-page document which, other than the usual personal information, asks for habits, details of the vulnerability, whether they had money on them when they went missing and if they have gone missing before, where were they last found.

A current photograph is requested and it can then be passed to the Police if required.

In Surrey the Police are partnered with Search and Recue Surrey, Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS and Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board.

If you have a spare few minutes have a look at the website, a really great idea.

Food for thought...

When I wander
don't tell me to come and sit down.
Wander with me.

It may be because I am hungry, thirsty, need the toilet.
Or maybe I just need to stretch my legs.

When I call for my mother
(even though I'm ninety!)
don't tell me she has died.

Reassure me, cuddle me, ask me about her.
It may be that I am looking for the security
that my mother once gave me.

When I shout out
please don't ask me to be quiet...or walk by.
I am trying to tell you something,
but have difficulty in telling you what.
Be patient. Try to find out.

I may be in pain.
When I become agitated or appear angry,
please don't reach for the drugs first.
I am trying to tell you something.

It may be too hot, too bright, too noisy.
Or maybe it's because I miss my loved ones.

Try to find out first.

When I don't eat my dinner or drink my tea
it may be because I've forgotten how to.

Show me what to do, remind me.

It may be that I just need to hold my knife and fork
I may know what to do then.

When I push you away
while you're trying to help me wash or get dressed,
maybe it's because I have forgotten what you have
said.

Keep telling me what you are doing
over and over and over.

Maybe others will think
you're the one that needs the help!
With all my thoughts and maybes,

perhaps it will be you
who reaches my thoughts,
understands my fears,
and will make me feel safe.

Maybe it will be you
who I need to thank.
If only I knew how.

Source: Caregiver's Voice

Happy New Year!

The pitfalls of not writing the year as '2020'

We have been made aware of a message circulating warning people of the pitfalls of not writing the year 2020 in full. Particularly on important financial documents and cheques.

The point that is being made is that if you do not write the date in the format DD/MM/YYYY and instead use DD/MM/YY, unscrupulous people can take advantage of this.

For example, you must write 31/01/2020 and not as 31/01/20. This is because anyone can make changes in the date and can easily modify it to 31/01/2000 or 31/01/2019.

Unbelievable that someone is always there waiting to take advantage of a situation.