

PROPERTY NEWS



PLACES TO SPEND CHRISTMAS

FIND A PLACE TO VISIT OVER THE FESTIVE PERIOD

PROTECT YOUR PLANTS
AS WINTER APPROACHES GET
READY TO HELP YOUR PLANTS

NOVEMBER FITNESS
GET READY FOR THE LEAD
UP TO CHRISTMAS

WARMING MEALS
SEASONAL INGREDIENTS
IDEAL FOR HEARTY MEALS

SNOOKER UK CHAMPS
GET READY FOR THE START
OF THE SNOOKER UK CHAMPS

CONTENTS

COVER STORY

- 4 **Places To Visit**
Explore new places over the festive period

PROPERTY

- 2 **Property Industry**
Some positives for the property market
- 16 **Our Latest Instructions**
Take a look at a selection of our latest properties on the market
- 22 **About Us**
Get to know us a little better and see why we are your agent of choice
- 24 **Your Home Move**
Your guide to help you every step of the way on your home move

LIFESTYLE

- 6 **Winter Gardens**
Get your garden ready for the colder months
- 7 **Smart Thermostat**
Thinking about installing a smart thermostat?
- 8 **Health Discipline**
Our health is super important to us
- 11 **Movies On The Big Screen**
Take a trip to the cinema to watch new releases
- 12 **November Recipes**
Nothing beats a warming home cooked meal

SPORTS

- 14 **Rugby Internationals**
Autumn internationals are here for the rugby
- 15 **Snooker Championships**
One of the biggest snooker championships

WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION!

There are sparks in the air as things begin to warm up, and not just because of Bonfire Night in a few nights' time, but also Christmas is closer than you might think. Yes – I said the 'C' word! But the sooner you get prepared for the festive season the better and smoother everything runs come the big day. As such, on pages 4&5 we look at the most festive locations around the world you could think about spending the Christmas period with all the family, whilst on pages 8&9 we share some tips for maintaining good discipline with your fitness routines on the lead up to Christmas.

Anyway, let's take a step back. This month has plenty to offer, including great new shows and films, as we explore on pages 10&11, whilst on pages 2&3 we analyse all the positive developments the property industry has to boast about this month.

Some in-season recipes would complement said on-screen entertainment very nicely, as featured on pages 12&13, while there are also some gripping sporting events taking place soon, including the Snooker UK Championships, which we preview, along with the England Rugby Autumn Internationals, on pages 14&15. Finally, pages 6&7 help you with how best to protect your plants from frost, and look to convince you of the many benefits of installing a smart thermostat for the colder months ahead.

So, take a sip of your Bonfire Bonanza cocktail, take a spot next to the fireplace, and enjoy this month's magazine!

Daniel Evans
Editor

PROPERTY MARKET IN NOVEMBER

The UK property market in November is showing a mixture of challenges and opportunities, but there are several positive trends that indicate resilience and potential for growth

The UK housing sector continues to demonstrate its adaptability and evolution. Here we will look at key areas where the property market is seeing positive developments, such as house price stability, rising demand for rental properties, an increase in energy-efficient homes, and ongoing government initiatives to support housing supply and sustainability.

HOUSE PRICE STABILITY

Following a period of increased volatility during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting cost-of-living crisis, the UK property market appears to be stabilising. House prices have slowed from the rapid growth rates seen in the years preceding 2022, but this pause has provided much-needed balance. For buyers, particularly first-time buyers, price moderation is welcome news, as it allows for greater affordability. According to various industry reports, house prices in some regions have even begun to rise slightly, following a drop earlier this year. This suggests that confidence is returning to the market. Mortgage rates have also been reduced, which has contributed to the relative stability of house prices. The Bank of England's efforts to control inflation have resulted in lower borrowing costs, which, while still higher than pre-pandemic levels, are more manageable than in previous years. With inflation falling and wages rising, the affordability gap that many buyers faced in 2022 and 2023 is starting to close. As a result, buyer interest has increased, and transactions are picking up again.

STRONG RENTAL DEMAND

The demand for rental properties remains especially strong in urban areas such as London, Manchester, and Birmingham, where young professionals and families seek flexibility and job opportunities. This sustained rental demand bodes well for landlords and buy-to-let investors alike. Despite tighter landlord regulations and changes in tax relief, rental yields in many areas remain attractive, particularly in key city locations with limited rental supply. Investors are capitalising on this demand, with many focussing on higher-quality rental properties that appeal to tenants seeking energy-efficient homes, modern amenities, and easy access to transportation.

GROWTH IN ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOMES

Sustainability is becoming increasingly important in the property market, with energy efficiency becoming a key consideration for buyers, renters, and investors alike. The government's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 has resulted in a renewed focus on sustainable housing solutions. This shift is reflected in the growing demand for energy-efficient homes, such as those with high Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) ratings.

Developers and homebuilders are responding to this trend by prioritising the construction of energy-efficient homes that meet the most recent environmental regulations. These properties are frequently outfitted with solar panels, heat pumps, and high levels of insulation, lowering both the environmental impact and the cost of living for homeowners. Government grants and incentives are also encouraging homeowners to retrofit older homes with energy-efficient features, thereby increasing the demand for sustainable housing.

The rise in energy-efficient homes is opening up new opportunities for investors, particularly in the green mortgage market, where lenders provide preferential rates for environmentally friendly properties. As energy prices remain a source of concern for households, the long-term financial benefits of energy-efficient homes become more apparent, making them a highly desirable option in both the sale and rental markets.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR HOUSING SUPPLY

Despite challenges such as planning delays and material shortages, the government is determined to increase housing supply. The ongoing initiatives to increase housebuilding, particularly affordable housing, are critical in addressing the long-standing housing shortage. The government's Help to Buy scheme may have expired, but newer programs are emerging to assist first-time buyers and key workers in purchasing homes.

Furthermore, the recent relaxation of planning regulations in some areas has made it easier for developers to construct new homes. This is especially useful in areas where demand is high but housing supply has historically been limited

by planning bottlenecks. The levelling-up agenda, which seeks to distribute economic growth more evenly across the UK, is also expected to support the construction of new homes in areas other than London and the South East, providing opportunities for investors to enter growing markets in the Midlands and the North.

CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Another positive development in the UK property market is the ongoing investment in infrastructure projects. Major transport projects, such as the ongoing expansion of Crossrail, HS2, and road network upgrades, are improving connectivity across the country. These projects are expected to open up new areas for residential and commercial development, bringing a significant boost to local property markets.

Property values in regions that benefit from infrastructure upgrades are expected to rise as accessibility improves and new amenities are developed. For example, areas along the HS2 route are already seeing increased interest from buyers and investors who expect future growth as travel times to key cities are reduced. This trend is expected to continue as more infrastructure projects come online, increasing the attractiveness of regional markets.



MOST FESTIVE PLACES IN THE WORLD FOR THE FAMILY TO SPEND CHRISTMAS

Each country, region, and city has its own way of celebrating the holiday season, with traditions, lights, markets, and a welcoming atmosphere that entices visitors. Whether you are looking for a traditional snowy wonderland or a more unique and exotic take on Christmas, here are some of the most festive places in the world to spend the holidays.



LAPLAND, FINLAND

Many people associate Lapland, Finland, with Christmas. This magical location is not only the official residence of Santa Claus, but it also provides an authentic winter wonderland experience. Located deep in the Arctic Circle, Rovaniemi, the capital of Lapland, transforms into a spectacular Christmas retreat during the holiday season.

Santa Claus Village is the ultimate highlight, where you can see Santa in his grotto, meet his reindeer, and even cross the Arctic Circle. The town is adorned with holiday lights, and the snow-covered landscapes make you feel as if you have stepped into a Christmas card. For the more daring, you can take a sleigh ride through the snow pulled by reindeer or huskies, and if you are lucky, you might even see the Northern Lights dancing overhead.

NEW YORK CITY, USA

New York City is known for its extravagant

Christmas celebrations. The iconic Rockefeller Centre Christmas tree, which is adorned with thousands of lights and topped with a stunning Swarovski star, is a must-see for anyone visiting the city in December. Skating beneath the tree on the ice rink is a classic New York Christmas tradition.

The city's window displays are another festive draw. Major department stores, including Macy's, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Bloomingdale's, go all out with their Christmas displays. The Radio City Christmas Spectacular, with the famous Rockettes, has been a beloved New York tradition since 1933. Do not forget to visit Central Park, which is frequently covered in snow in December, making it ideal for a romantic horse-drawn carriage ride through the park's wintry paths.

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Vienna exudes a classic, old-world charm at Christmas, with its stunning architecture serving as the ideal backdrop for festive celebrations. The city's Christmas markets, known locally as "Christkindlmarkts", are among the best in Europe. The largest, held in front of the Rathaus (City Hall), has more than 150 stalls selling handmade crafts, mulled wine, and delectable Austrian treats such as sachertorte and stollen.

Vienna has a rich musical tradition during the holiday season. A concert at the Vienna State Opera or a performance by the world-renowned Vienna Boys' Choir is an excellent way to get into the holiday spirit. The elegant streets are illuminated by twinkling lights, and horse-drawn carriages clip-clop across the cobblestones, transporting you back in time.



Christmas is one of the most anticipated and celebrated holidays across the globe



COLOGNE, GERMANY

Germany is well-known for its Christmas markets, and Cologne's Weihnachtsmarkt is among the most famous. Held beneath the towering spires of Cologne Cathedral, the market draws millions of visitors each year. Wooden stalls sell everything from Christmas decorations to local specialties such as bratwurst and glühwein (mulled wine). The atmosphere is warm and festive, with choirs singing carols and the aroma of cinnamon and roasted chestnuts in the air. Cologne's Christmas celebrations go beyond the markets, with boat trips along the Rhine providing Christmas-themed experiences and the opportunity to see the city's impressive festive lights.

REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

For a truly unique Christmas experience, Reykjavik, Iceland, has an otherworldly festive atmosphere. Despite the long, dark winter days, the city is filled with Christmas cheer. Iceland's Yule traditions are especially fascinating, with the 13 Yule Lads, mischievous characters from Icelandic folklore, taking centre stage instead of the traditional Santa Claus. Reykjavik's Christmas markets offer local handicrafts, Icelandic woollen goods, and tasty treats like laufabrauð (Icelandic leaf bread). Iceland, with its volcanic landscapes and the opportunity to see the Northern Lights, is a stunning and one-of-a-kind destination for Christmas. Furthermore, the city's blue lagoon provides a surreal winter experience, allowing you to soak in geothermal waters while surrounded by snow.

STRASBOURG, FRANCE

Strasbourg, also known as the "Capital of Christmas," is home to one of Europe's oldest and most beautiful Christmas markets. The city's half-timbered houses are decked out in holiday decorations, and the towering Christmas tree in Place Kléber is a main attraction. Strasbourg's Christkindelsmärik dates back to 1570, and its charming wooden stalls sell everything from ornaments to French holiday treats like gingerbread and mulled wine. Wandering through the narrow streets of Strasbourg's UNESCO-listed old town during Christmas is a highlight of the visit, as the city glows with festive lights and decorations.

QUEBEC CITY, CANADA

If you are looking for a festive experience with European flair, look no further than Quebec City, Canada. During December, the historic old town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, transforms into a Christmas village, with snow-covered cobblestone streets and centuries-old architecture adorned with lights and decorations. The German Christmas market in Quebec City is a highlight, with stalls selling handcrafted gifts, food, and beverages. Traditional winter activities include tobogganing, ice skating, and dog sledding. The city's atmosphere is peaceful and romantic, providing a quieter but equally festive Christmas experience.



PROTECT YOUR PLANTS FROM THE COLD AND FROST

By taking these precautions, your plants will have a better chance of surviving the UK's winter frosts and cold. Here are some practical tips to help protect your garden from the cold.

MOVE TENDER PLANTS INDOORS

Bring frost-sensitive potted plants indoors or into a greenhouse before the first frost. This includes pelargoniums, fuchsias, and succulents. If indoor space is limited, simply moving them to a sheltered location, such as a porch or garage, can help.

USE FROST PROTECTION FLEECE OR CLOCHES

Cover outdoor plants with horticultural fleece, a lightweight material that protects from frost while allowing light and moisture to reach the plant. Cloches (transparent plant covers) can create a mini greenhouse effect by trapping heat and moisture around individual plants or rows of seedlings.

MULCH

Mulching is one of the most effective ways to protect your plants' roots from freezing. Apply a thick layer of organic mulch, such as bark, straw, or compost, to the base of your plants. This helps to insulate the soil, keeping it warmer and minimising temperature fluctuations.

WATERING

Water your plants during the day, particularly before a cold snap. Moist soil retains more heat than dry soil, which can protect the roots from freezing temperatures. However, avoid overwatering, as soggy soil can cause root rot.

SHELTER PLANTS FROM WIND

Cold winds can be more damaging to plants than frost itself. Windbreaks, such as fences, screens, or strategically placed larger plants, can help reduce exposure to damaging winds.

WRAP VULNERABLE TREES

Wrap the trunk of young trees or those that are especially prone to frost damage in a breathable material such as hessian or fleece. This will help prevent frost cracks and sunscald.

As the colder months approach in the UK, protecting your plants from frost and freezing temperatures becomes increasingly important to ensure they survive winter and thrive in spring



SMART THERMOSTAT FOR THE COLDER WEEKS AHEAD

As the colder months approach, effective home heating management becomes a top priority

Installing a smart thermostat has numerous advantages, not only for your comfort, but also for your energy consumption and costs. Installing a smart thermostat is a wise investment for the colder months ahead, providing increased comfort, energy efficiency, and cost savings. Here are the main advantages of upgrading to a smart thermostat as winter approaches:

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Smart thermostats help to optimise your heating system, reducing energy waste. They can learn your routine and automatically adjust heating patterns, ensuring that the heat is only turned on when necessary. Many models use sensors to detect whether you are at home or away, lowering the temperature when the house is empty and increasing it when you are present, thereby saving energy.

COST SAVINGS

You can significantly reduce your energy bills by gaining more control over your heating system. A smart thermostat can save up to 10-20% per year on heating costs by avoiding unnecessary heating and only warming rooms when needed. Furthermore, many models provide insights into your energy consumption, allowing you to identify ways to reduce it even further.

REMOTE ACCESS

Smart thermostats can be controlled with smartphone apps, allowing you to adjust the temperature in your home from anywhere. If your plans change and you will be home later than expected, you can delay turning on the heat, or if you are returning home early, you can warm up the house before you arrive.

ZONED HEATING

Some smart thermostats can control multiple zones or rooms independently. This allows you to heat the living room in the evening without wasting energy on the bedrooms. This level of control is especially useful in larger homes, as it allows you to tailor heating to your specific needs.

INTEGRATION WITH SMART HOME SYSTEMS

Many smart thermostats work seamlessly with other smart home devices such as Amazon Alexa or Google Home, giving you voice control over your heating. They can also be combined with other smart devices, such as smart radiators or lights, to create a fully connected home environment.





TIPS FOR MAINTAINING HEALTH DISCIPLINE

November can be a challenging month for maintaining fitness and eating discipline

ADAPT TO THE COLDER WEATHER

With November bringing colder temperatures and shorter days, outdoor workouts may become less appealing. However, do not let the weather stop you from being active. Here are a few tips for exercising in the colder months:

Dress in layers: Wear moisture-wicking clothes as your base layer, then add an insulating layer and a waterproof jacket if necessary. You can always remove layers as you warm up.

Plan for daylight: Try to fit in your outdoor exercise during the daylight hours. If you're working, consider exercising in the morning or during lunch breaks.

Embrace home workouts: If it's too cold or wet outside, embrace indoor exercises such as online workout videos, bodyweight exercises, or yoga.

Alternatively, if you have a local gym, now is a good time to join or use it more frequently, especially as the weather worsens.

CONTROL PORTIONS AND EAT MINDFULLY

As the holidays approach, it is easy to begin indulging prematurely. However, by practicing portion control and mindful eating, you can indulge in seasonal treats without going overboard. Some practical tips include:

Use smaller plates: This helps with portion control and prevents overloading your plate.
Eat slowly: Take time to chew and enjoy your food. Eating slowly allows your body to signal when it's full, helping to avoid overeating.
Plan your meals: Planning your meals ahead of time can help you stay on track and reduce the temptation to grab something unhealthy. Include plenty of seasonal vegetables like Brussels sprouts, kale, and squash, which are filling and nutritious.

MAINTAIN A BALANCED DIET

November is the month to supplement your diet with seasonal, nutrient-dense foods.



Incorporating a variety of vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains will help you feel fuller for longer, reduce sugar cravings, and provide the energy you need to stay active.

Foods to focus on:

Root vegetables: Carrots, parsnips, swedes, and potatoes are great sources of fibre and vitamins. They also add a natural sweetness to meals, reducing the temptation for sugary snacks.

Brassicas: Vegetables like broccoli, kale, and cabbage are in season and packed with antioxidants and fibre.

Lean proteins: Chicken, turkey, and fish are ideal for maintaining muscle mass while helping with weight control.

Nuts and seeds: These are excellent snacks packed with healthy fats and protein. Walnuts and sunflower seeds, for example, are perfect for topping salads or eating with yoghurt.

Limit indulgent foods:

While it is acceptable to indulge on occasion, limit your intake of calorie-dense treats such as mince pies, chocolates, and festive pastries. Instead, try healthier options like homemade oat cookies, roasted nuts, or

seasonal fruits like apples and pears.

DON'T FORGET REST AND RECOVERY

Rest is just as important as exercise, particularly when it comes to staying fit. Make sure you get enough sleep each night (7-9 hours is ideal) and allow time for recovery, especially after intense workouts. In November, the darker evenings can serve as a reminder to improve your sleep routine by going to bed earlier.

MANAGE STRESS AND STAY POSITIVE

Work, social events, and family commitments can all add to the stress of the Christmas season. High stress levels can cause emotional eating and missed workouts. Try incorporating stress management techniques such as:

Meditation: Even 10 minutes of mindfulness or meditation can reduce stress and help you stay focused.

Breathing exercises: Simple deep-breathing exercises can calm your mind and help you stay present.



THE BEST TV SHOWS TO STREAM THIS MONTH

November promises to be another thrilling month for home streaming, as the newest TV series are released for home streaming

YELLOWSTONE SEASON 5 PART 2

Season 5, Part 2 of Yellowstone sees tensions rise as the Dutton family faces unprecedented threats to their ranch and legacy. Political opponents challenge John Dutton's leadership in Montana, while personal betrayals and family conflicts escalate. As external pressures increase and the family's unity is tested, the stakes rise, resulting in intense confrontations and dramatic turns. The thrilling conclusion to this season promises high-stakes drama and unanswered questions about the Duttons' future.

Yellowstone Season 5 part 2 premieres 10th November on Paramount Network

COBRA KAI SEASON 6 PART 2

Season 6, Part 2 of Cobra Kai sees the rivalry between the Cobra Kai and Miyagi-Do dojos heat up, with both factions facing their most difficult challenges yet. As the All Valley Karate Tournament approaches, old rivalries are settled and new alliances formed. Johnny Lawrence and Daniel LaRusso confront their pasts while attempting to keep their students safe from escalating violence. The season leads up to a climactic showdown that will test loyalty and shape the future of karate in their town.

Cobra Kai Season 6 Part 2 premieres 15th November on Netflix

WONDEROOS SEASON 2

Wonderoos Season 2 will follow Kiki, Dewey, Hazy, Luly, and Teshi as they face daily challenges and new experiences in colourful Roo City. Just like in Season 1, the focus will remain on assisting children in understanding and managing typical life situations for the first time, such as making new friends, trying unfamiliar foods, and dealing with other personal "firsts." The show teaches young viewers problem-solving, patience, and social skills through engaging songs and activities.

Wonderoos premieres 18th November on Netflix

THE MADNESS

The Madness is an engrossing drama series that delves into the chaos and complexity of a high-profile political scandal. Set against a backdrop of intrigue and corruption, the show follows a determined investigative journalist as he uncovers dark secrets and navigates a maze of lies. As the scandal progresses, alliances shift and the distinction between truth and falsehood blurs, resulting in explosive revelations. The Madness' tense narrative and sharp characterisation keep viewers on the edge of their seats.

The Madness premieres 28th November on Netflix

THE BEST MOVIES TO CATCH AT THE CINEMA THIS MONTH

Several incredible films will be released in November that are ideal for all audiences

PADDINGTON IN PERU (comedy, family)

In *Paddington in Peru* (2024), Paddington Bear embarks on a heartwarming journey back to his native Peru. Paddington, accompanied by the Brown family, embarks on an exciting, humorous, and unexpected journey to reconnect with his roots. Along the way, they meet new people and face challenges that test their bond and bravery. This third instalment, directed by Dougal Wilson, promises to deliver the same charm and joy that series fans enjoy.

In UK cinemas from 8th November

GLADIATOR 2 (action, adventure, epic)

Gladiator 2 (2024) is the sequel to the epic saga that began nearly 25 years ago. The sequel follows Lucius, Lucilla's son and Commodus' nephew, who has grown up and is deeply influenced by Maximus' legacy. As political tensions rise throughout the Roman Empire, Lucius is drawn into the world of gladiatorial combat and power struggles. Ridley Scott's film promises to explore themes of honour, revenge, and the consequences of legacy.

In UK cinemas from 15th November

WICKED (family, fantasy)

The 2024 film *Wicked* is a two-part adaptation of the popular Broadway musical that tells the untold story of the witches of Oz. The film centres on the unlikely friendship between Elphaba, the green-skinned witch who becomes the Wicked Witch of the West, and Glinda, the Good Witch. As they navigate personal struggles, love, and political intrigue, their fates are shaped by forces beyond them. The film, directed by Jon M. Chu, delves into themes of power, prejudice, and identity.

In UK cinemas from 22nd November

MOANA 2 (animation, family)

Moana 2 (2024) sees the daring Moana return to the seas for another thrilling adventure. After restoring balance to her island in the first film, Moana faces new challenges as she explores uncharted waters, meets new characters, and learns more about her ancestors. This sequel delves deeper into Polynesian mythology, with Moana continuing to develop as a leader and navigator. Along the way, she will face formidable forces that threaten the ocean and her people's way of life.

In UK cinemas from 29th November

NOVEMBER RECIPES

In November, the UK is blessed with an abundance of seasonal ingredients, ideal for hearty and warming meals

ROAST ROOT VEGETABLE SOUP

INGREDIENTS

2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
2 medium parsnips, peeled and chopped
1 medium swede, peeled and chopped
1 large onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, peeled
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 litre vegetable stock (homemade or from stock cubes)
1 tablespoon fresh thyme (or 1 teaspoon dried)
Salt and black pepper, to taste
100ml double cream (optional for creaminess)
Fresh parsley, chopped (to garnish)

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat your oven to 200°C (180°C fan/gas mark 6).
Toss the carrots, parsnips, swede, onion, and garlic with olive oil in a roasting tin. Roast in the oven for about 30-35 minutes, or until the vegetables are golden and tender.
Transfer the roasted vegetables to a large pot and add the vegetable stock and thyme. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 10-15 minutes. Use a hand blender to blend the soup until smooth. If you prefer a chunkier texture, blend only half the mixture.
Stir in the double cream if using, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with fresh parsley before serving. This soup pairs beautifully with crusty bread for dipping.

LEEK AND POTATO GRATIN

INGREDIENTS

4 large potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
2 large leeks, washed and sliced
300ml double cream
150ml whole milk
2 cloves garlic, minced
100g grated mature Cheddar cheese
50g grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper, to taste
Fresh thyme or rosemary for garnish (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat your oven to 180°C (160°C fan/gas mark 4).
In a large saucepan, heat the cream, milk, garlic, and a pinch of salt and pepper over low heat. Stir occasionally, allowing the flavours to meld together. Meanwhile, boil the potato slices for about 5 minutes to slightly soften them. Drain and set aside.
In a frying pan, cook the leeks gently over low heat until they soften and turn slightly golden.
In a greased baking dish, layer half the potato slices, followed by the leeks. Pour half of the cream mixture over the leeks. Repeat with the remaining potatoes and leeks.
Top with the grated cheeses and bake for 40-45 minutes until golden and bubbly.
Allow to rest for 5-10 minutes before serving. Garnish with fresh thyme or rosemary if desired.



SLOW-COOKED BEEF STEW WITH PARSNIPS AND KALE

INGREDIENTS

800g stewing beef, diced
2 tablespoons plain flour
2 medium parsnips, peeled and chopped
1 large onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 large carrots, peeled and chopped

2 bay leaves
1 tablespoon tomato puree
500ml beef stock
150ml red wine (optional)
100g kale, chopped (stems removed)
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
Salt and pepper, to taste
Fresh parsley, chopped (to garnish)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Heat the vegetable oil in a large pot or casserole dish over medium heat. Toss the diced beef in flour, shaking off the excess, and brown the beef in batches. Remove the beef and set aside.

In the same pot, add the onion, garlic, parsnips, and carrots. Cook until softened, about 5 minutes.

Stir in the tomato puree, then add the beef back to the pot. Pour in the beef stock and red wine if using, and add the bay leaves. Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat, cover, and simmer on low for 2-3 hours, stirring occasionally.

About 20 minutes before serving, stir in the chopped kale and cook until wilted. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and garnish with fresh parsley. Serve with mashed potatoes or crusty bread to soak up the rich gravy.

ENGLAND RUGBY AUTUMN INTERNATIONALS

England's 2024 Autumn Internationals rugby series is set to provide some thrilling contests as they face top-tier Southern Hemisphere teams at Twickenham Stadium, now renamed Allianz Stadium

This four-match series, a key fixture in the rugby calendar, will mark Steve Borthwick's first full Autumn Internationals campaign as head coach, and the competition will be fierce.

The series begins on Saturday, November 2, 2024, against New Zealand. This will be one of England's toughest matches yet, as the All Blacks are always a formidable opponent. England will look to improve on their performance at the 2023 Rugby World Cup, with players such as Marcus Smith and Owen Farrell expected to play important roles. A win here could set the tone for the rest of the series.

On Saturday, November 9, Australia visits Twickenham. The Wallabies, under new coach Joe Schmidt, will be eager to recover from a disappointing World Cup campaign. England last played Australia in 2022, winning the series down under. England's adaptability and depth will be put to the test against a revamped Australian side.

The third match, on Saturday, November 16, pits England against South Africa. In a closely contested semi-final, the Springboks eliminated England from the 2023 Rugby World Cup competition. The South African pack's physicality and Rassie Erasmus' tactical expertise make this a crucial match for England, who aim to avenge their World Cup heartbreak.

Finally, on Sunday, November 24, Japan wraps up the series. Eddie Jones, the former England coach, will return to Twickenham for the first time since his departure. England hopes to replicate their 52-17 victory over Japan in the 2023 summer series.

These Autumn Internationals are a significant test for England as they prepare for the 2025 Six Nations and seek to rebuild after the 2023 World Cup.

SNOOKER UK CHAMPIONSHIP 2024 PREVIEW

This tournament, which has been held in York since 2001, is widely anticipated due to its long history and high level of competition. It will be the ninth ranking event of the 2024–2025 snooker season.

Ronnie O'Sullivan, who won the 2023 edition by defeating Ding Junhui 10-7 in the final, will attempt to defend his title. O'Sullivan, with his exceptional skill and six previous UK Championship titles, is expected to be the favourite once more. However, competition will be fierce, with top players like Neil Robertson, Mark Selby, and Judd Trump also in the running. These players have all won the UK Championship before and are well-known for their outstanding performances on the international stage.

Fans attending the event can expect an exciting week of snooker action, with matches scheduled at both 1 PM and 7 PM

throughout the tournament's duration. The York Barbican venue will also include interactive zones for fans, such as CueZone, where they can try their hand at snooker and watch professionals practice.

The tournament's allure stems not only from its status, but also from its ability to produce exciting, high-quality matches. As seen in previous years, matches frequently come down to the final frame, adding to the event's excitement and unpredictability.

For snooker fans, the UK Championship is an unmissable opportunity to see the sport's biggest names compete for one of the most coveted titles in the game.





LONGSONS

Glebe House, Hillside, North Pickenham

Offers Over £750,000



Absolutely fantastic, three story detached five bedroom period property situated in the Norfolk village of North Pickenham. This superb property boasts three reception rooms, log burner, garage, gardens, parking and much more.

Viewing highly recommended to fully appreciate.

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Cromwell Close, Swaffham

£325,000



CHAIN FREE! Well presented, detached four bedroom house situated on the popular Heathlands development. The property offers two reception rooms, utility room, en-suite shower room, cloakroom with WC, garage, gardens, parking, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

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Chantry Lane, Necton

Guide Price £550,000 - £600,000



WOW! Stunning, detached four/three bedroom character cottage, situated in the sought after village of Necton. This superb property has undergone a recent extensive refurbishment. The property boasts a triple garage and a double garage, kitchen/family room, two reception rooms, and so much more....

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Swaffham | Watton

New Sporle Road, Swaffham

£290,000



Extremely well presented, spacious detached two bedroom bungalow situated within easy reach of local amenities. This superb property boasts garden/utility room, kitchen/dining room, modern shower room, garage/garden studio, parking, gardens, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

SWAFFHAM - 01760 721389 - info@longsons.co.uk

Furlong Road, Stoke Ferry

£595,000



House & Annexe!

Four/five bedroom house with two/three reception rooms and garage AND a separate spacious two bedroom annexe. With lots on offer, this sale offers flexible accommodation, a multitude of options, and is ideal for multi-generational living. Viewing highly recommended!

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Swaffham - 01760 721389
Watton - 01953 883474

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Heron Way, Watton

OIRO £400,000



Very well presented spacious, detached three bedroom bungalow situated on a sought after development in Watton. This fantastic property offers double garage, en-suite shower room, utility room, ample parking with secure parking for caravan/motorhome, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - info@longsons.co.uk

Meadow Grove, Watton

£550,000



Superb, spacious, detached executive style four bedroom house situated on an exclusive development on the outskirts of Watton. This fantastic property has much to offer and includes three reception rooms, utility room, conservatory, double garage and much more. Viewing highly recommended!

WATTON - 01953 883474 - info@longsons.co.uk

Swaffham | Watton

Nelson Court, Watton

£325,000



Very well presented, detached, three bedroom bungalow conveniently situated on a popular development within easy reach of Watton town centre. This fantastic property offers conservatory, cloakroom with WC, shower/wet room, gardens, garage, parking, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - info@longsons.co.uk

Priory Road, Watton

£350,000



CHAIN FREE! Superb, extremely well presented, detached four bedroom chalet style house situated on a popular development in Watton. This fantastic property has been fully updated throughout and offers kitchen/dining room, double tandem style garage, ample off road parking, utility area and gardens.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - info@longsons.co.uk

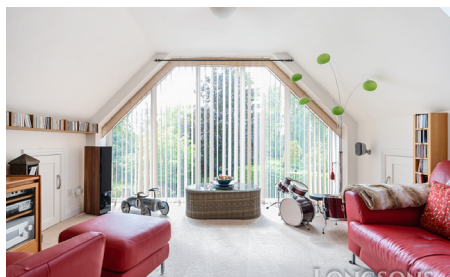
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CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE NO OBLIGATION VALUATION

Dereham Road, Watton

Guide Price £700,000-£735,000



Longsons are delighted to present this beautifully presented 3/4 bedroom detached house located in the popular town of watton. The property boasts approx 2500 sq ft living accommodation, lounge with multi fuel burner, kitchen, dining room/family room, ground floor shower room and much more.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - info@longsons.co.uk

Swaffham | Watton

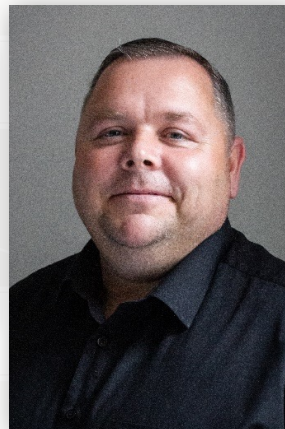


MEET OUR TEAM...



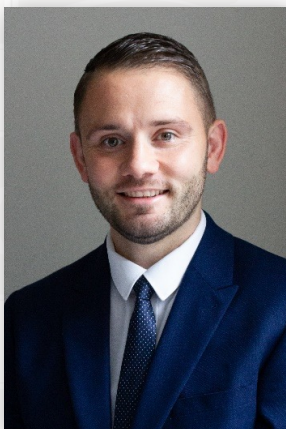
Gary Long
Director

01760 721389
gary@longsons.co.uk



Kevin Wilson
Director

01760 721389
kevin@longsons.co.uk



Kyle Clarke
Manager

01760 721389
kyle@longsons.co.uk



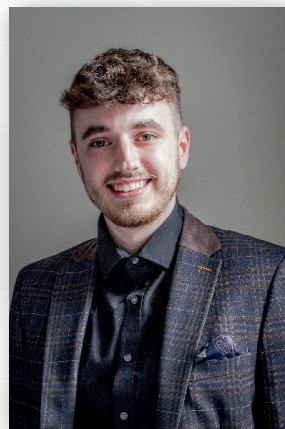
Imogen Walker
Senior Negotiator

01760 721389
imogen@longsons.co.uk



Chloe Hardy
Junior Negotiator

01760 721389
chloe@longsons.co.uk



Larry Faircloth
Senior Lettings Advisor

01760 721389
larry@longsons.co.uk

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Watton - 01953 883474

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Kerrie Blowers
Administrator
01760 721389
kerrie@longsons.co.uk



Sharon Pascoe
Lettings Administrator
01760 721389
sharon@longsons.co.uk



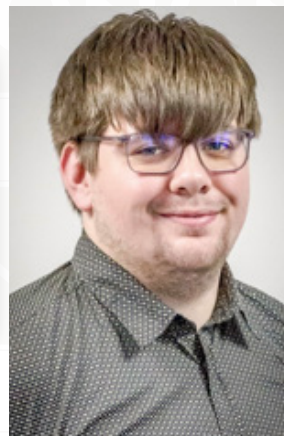
Amber Wilson
Digital Marketing
01760 721389
amber@longsons.co.uk



Luisa McGowan
Office Administration
01953 883474
luisa@longsons.co.uk



Andrew Wilton
Valuer
01953 883474
01760 721389
andrew@longsons.co.uk



Ryan Herring
Sales Negotiator
01953 883474
ryan@longsons.co.uk

HOW MUCH
IS MY
PROPERTY
WORTH?



Present your house for sale by de-cluttering...

Maximise your home's potential and create spacious rooms enticing potential buyers – simply by de-cluttering!

“ De-cluttering allows you to... maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important ”

If you are looking to sell your house, or have had your home on the market for a while now, then you probably want to get the maximum sale price in the quickest time. There are a few things you can't control – but the one thing that is in your control, is the look and feel of the interior and exterior.

While it's worth spending time fixing and cleaning your house before potential buyers come and view, it's also important to de-clutter. This creates spacious rooms and also allows you to decrease and organise your personal items before you move yourself. Of course it's understandable that you don't want to spend money, time and energy on a home you are about to leave, however, a lot of people are looking for a house in which they can move straight into. Maintaining your

property might even save you thousands of pounds; it could even reduce added expenses of living in your home whilst waiting for a sale. And it might even help avoid possible reductions in the asking price.

The main reason in which people move house tends to be because they lack space in their current home. They want a home that is spacious and in which they can grow into. If a potential viewer comes to your home and sees that there is lack of space, then this will turn them away.

De-cluttering allows you to remove any unnecessary items in an untidy or overcrowded place. It will help maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important.



SO WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

You need to create a great first impression and focus on the rooms themselves. You will notice that the first things you see in each room are personal items. Where possible you want to create the look of a

them into things you want to keep and things you want to get rid of. You may even find that you have collected a cupboard full of paper work. Get yourself organised! Don't just throw it all away, but file it and go through it thoroughly. This will also make it easier when you move.

De-personalising can also be a great way to de-clutter. Too many personal effects can be distracting to buyers. They want to see a house in which they can make their own memories rather than seeing yours. Again, personal items can be stored away. Remember

“ Where possible you want to create the look of a lifestyle that the potential buyers want ”

lifestyle that the potential buyer want. This usually has a 'show home' feel, rather than a 'lived in' feel. Minimising your things is the quickest way to do this: you want to ensure that potential buyers can do simple things, like, open any doors easily, ensuring that there are no obstacles.

So, what do we mean by clutter? There are two types: genuine clutter, and items that you want to keep but don't work for the sale of your property.

GENUINE CLUTTER:

You need to go through the space and sort out each item, categorising

You also want to focus on little things like DVDs, books and trinkets. These items may have some small value so sell them or donate them to charity. Get rid of any old shoes and coats that are lying about in your porch or hallway. You might want to hide away the coats and shoes you do currently wear. Store them in your wardrobe while you have viewings.

ITEMS THAT YOU WANT TO KEEP BUT DON'T WORK FOR THE SALE OF YOUR PROPERTY:

You may want to consider putting some items in storage while you sell your home. Sometimes items are too large or even too small for some spaces and can make the room look odd. If you want to keep these particular items, then store them until you move into your new home.

that this is only a temporary way of living and hopefully it won't be for long! If you find you are keeping more things than you are throwing out, then think about whether or not it's in the right room or do you even need it now?

As previously mentioned, you can attempt to sell some of the things you have acquired over the years. Use sites like eBay, Gumtree and social networking sites to try and sell items. You may want to even hold a house sale for the remaining items that you can't sell. Failing that, why not donate to charity.

The end goal is still the same and it's important to help potential buyers envision your house as theirs. So remember, de-cluttering will make your home more spacious and entice potential buyers!

Top Tips!



If you are throwing away paperwork, shred anything that is confidential



De-clutter before agents come and take photos of your property. This will help attract more potential viewers online and get that first good impression



Don't spend too long on certain items and don't get distracted. Keep yourself motivated and race against the clock!



Make it fun! Play some music or watch TV while you de-clutter





Your step-by-step guide to the conveyancing process

Once a sale has been agreed and is in the hands of your solicitor, it will go through the following stages. Sometimes additional work will be needed – for example, if the property is leasehold or is yet to be registered with the Land Registry. It is also important for buyers to discuss the availability of their deposit with their solicitor early in the transaction, and we strongly recommend that you contact your solicitor regularly so that they can keep you fully up-to-date with the progress and the latest timescales.

Seller's solicitor's steps

- Obtain a copy of the Title Deeds (or office copies if the title is registered)
- Obtain a copy of the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) (if applicable)
- The seller(s) will return a completed Property Information Form and a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form to the solicitors
- Copies of the above documents, plus a draft contract – this is known as an 'Information Pack' – will be sent to the buyer's solicitor
- Answer the buyer's solicitor's additional enquiries (for example, specific questions about fixtures and fittings) and obtain copies of any planning consent documents
- Agree the contract and arrange for the sellers to sign it in readiness of the exchange (below)
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

Between exchange and completion

- Obtain redemption figures from the mortgage lender and reply to requisitions on title
- Approve the transfer and arrange for the seller(s) and buyer(s) to sign
- Receive the agent's fee account and seek the seller's consent to settle this out of completion funds

Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

Upon completion

- Receive completion funds and (only when this has been completed) instruct your estate agent to release the keys to buyers. Redeem mortgage and forward the financial statement. Forward any surplus funds (unless these are being used to fund an onward purchase). Ensure all outstanding bills are paid
- Forward transfer documents and deeds to the buyer's solicitors
- Forward evidence of 'discharge of mortgage' to the buyer's solicitors

Buyer's solicitor's steps

- Obtain the Information Pack, including a copy of the EPC (if applicable) from the sellers' solicitor and raise any additional queries
- Initiate any specialist searches (for example: a coal search). Submit local, environmental and water searches and a chancel check. This takes about 10 working days in total, and enquiries are then usually raised from the results
- Approve the contract when all enquiries are satisfactory and complete. (At this stage, a mortgage transfer deed will need to be signed and witnessed)
- Receive a mortgage offer and instructions from the lender and deal with any conditions set out by them. Make sure that life cover and buildings insurance is being arranged
- Request the deposit, report back to the buyer, and arrange for the contract to be signed. Place buildings insurance and life cover in force
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

Between exchange and completion

- Raise 'requisitions on title' and prepare the draft transfer deed
- Report on title to mortgage lender and obtain funds for completion, including Stamp Duty (if appropriate)
- Prepare accounts, obtain signature to mortgage deed and undertake final Land Registry and Land Charges searches

Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

Upon completion

- Forward to the seller's solicitors the balance of funds – it is only then that they can authorise the release of the keys. Receive from the seller's solicitors, the transfer document deeds
- Stamp the Transfer Deed, register the buyer's ownership with the Land Registry and forward the deeds to the lender or client (where appropriate)

Contract - The agreement that sets out the main terms that have been agreed – for example: price, address, names, etc. Two copies are drawn up, and each party signs one in readiness for the exchange of contracts.

Deposit - The part of the purchase price (usually 10%) which the buyer pays on exchange of contracts.

Exchange of contracts - The swapping of signed contracts by the solicitors (together with the buyer's deposit). After this, the contract is binding.

Energy Performance Certificate - This contains information on energy use, energy performance, carbon dioxide emissions, and fuel bills.

Land Registry - The Government department that records who owns what land, and under what conditions.

Local Authority Search - A list of questions that are specific to the property and intended, for example, to discover if there have been any planning applications on the property, if the road to the house is maintained by the council, etc.

Mortgage Redemption Figure - The amount required to repay the outstanding capital/ interest of a mortgage.

Property information form/fixtures, fittings and contents form - Standard forms about the property that the seller answers for their solicitor (for example: what will be left behind, details of guarantees, etc.)

Title Deeds - Legal documents that prove ownership of land/buildings, and the terms on which they are owned.

Transfer of Title - The document that passes the ownership from the seller to the buyer.

Stamp Duty for buy to let investors and second home owners - An additional tax, paid by the buyer purchasing an additional property that is not their main residence. It includes buy to let landlords and those buying second homes and holiday homes. The higher rates will be 3 percentage points above the current rates of duty shown below.

Requisition on title - An enquiry relating to the completion arrangements.

Seller's Pack - This comprises a Property Information Form, a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form, a copy of the title deeds and the draft contract.

Stamp Duty – Currently, the Stamp Duty threshold for residential properties is £250,000. For first-time buyers you can claim a discount and won't pay Stamp Duty up to £425,000 on the purchase price and after that you will pay only 5% between £425,001 to £625,000.

However, how much you pay is also dependent on whether you already own another property or if you're a non-UK resident.



Moving house?

From meter readings to removal companies, there's so much to remember when moving house. Here's our checklist of what to do and when

First of all, congratulations on your new home! The excitement has probably now kicked in but moving home can also be one of the most stressful and emotionally draining things you can do. However, careful organisation and planning can help decrease the stress and anxiety of moving. This comprehensive and essential checklist will help you do just that.

Eight weeks - Research

Ideally, you want to start packing away any non-essential items as early as possible. This includes any items stored away in the loft, garage and shed. If you are not using it, pack it. Looking into your new area is also important, try to do this around eight weeks before you move. You might need to think about transferring your children to different schools and ordering new uniforms too. At this point, ensure you are also documenting all your important information away: that includes contact details, dates, contracts and information regarding your solicitor.

Six weeks - Removal companies or do it yourself?

Now would be the perfect time to decide on a local removal company. Or if you don't have too much to move, you may want to do it yourself. You could even look into different van hire companies. At this point you've probably started packing away some bits, but if there is anything you decide not to take, then look into selling these items or donating them to charity. This will also give you an idea on the volume of items you have to move.

Four weeks - Notify utility companies

This would be a good time for you to notify utility companies and inform them about your move to switch over. This includes gas and electricity, council tax, internet, phone rental and TV. You should also consider changing any car insurance, tax, memberships, phone contracts and inform your bank about the move. Now's the time to also arrange a date to have your new house cleaned before you move



“ It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush! ”

in, and start ordering any new furnishings for your new property. Start packing away more items, that being, out of season clothes, books, DVDs and even bulky items, like TVs that aren't used often.

Two weeks - Confirm all details

Confirm your move with your removal company or van hire, estate agents and schools. If possible, try to organise someone to look after your pets and children for the day of your move, as this can also be a stressful time for them too. If your removal company doesn't disassemble any furniture or sort out the un-plumbing for the washing machine, then now would be the ideal time to organise these. Remember to also cancel any local services you receive: this could be window cleaners, gardeners and newspaper deliveries. You should now also think about re-registering to vote and getting your post re-directed after your moving date. Continue packing away more furnishings, kitchen appliances and crockery that you won't be using for the next couple of weeks.

24 hours - Final check and walk round

You now have only 24 hours before you move, so double check that everything is packed away and ready for transit. It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush! You may want to create an inventory of your boxes and

furniture to help you keep track of what you have and to help you ensure it doesn't go missing.

Moving day

Today is the day! You need to be ready for when your removal company comes. Ensure that you let them know if there are any fragile boxes that need extra care when handling. If you're moving yourself, then pack up your car or van and work out how many trips it may take. Before you leave, also take note of your final meter readings and send these off to your provider. Don't forget to leave your keys for the new owners!

You have arrived at your new home!

Give your removal company instructions of which boxes go in which rooms and make sure you are happy with everything that has arrived. Ensure you check for any damage before the movers leave. Read your new utility meters and send your readings off to your supplier. Taking photos of them will also ensure you have the correct reading if you need them again in the future. Unpack your essentials such as bed linen and clean towels. Don't worry about the rest, it isn't going anywhere! Order a takeaway, have a cup of tea and enjoy your first night with your family.

Right, so now you're all moved in, it's time to settle down, unpack and enjoy your new place. Remember, planning is essential to ensure your move runs stress free.

Checklist

Eight weeks

- Pack non-essential items
- Research your new area (transfer schools and order new uniform)
- Keep all important documents

Six weeks

- Decide on a local removal company
- Clear out any unwanted items
- Keep packing

Four weeks

- Notify utility companies
- Start preparation for your new house
- Keep packing

Two weeks

- Finalise all details
- Organise pet and child care
- Cancel local services
- Keep packing

24 hours

- Check every room and ensure everything is packed
- Pack a night bag so everything is to hand
- Collect your new keys
- Make sure your phone is fully charged so you can get in touch with the estate agents or removal company

Moving in

- Prepare for the arrival of the removal company and give them directions/ your contact details
- Ensure everything is ready to move
- Record meter readings

On arrival

- Give removal company instructions of what goes where
- Check for any damage before they leave
- Read your new utility meters and send them off to your supplier
- Check if the previous owners have left anything behind
- Unpack essentials
- Order a takeaway and sit back and relax!



Want to treat yourself to a proper removal company for your next move or are you prepared to do it yourself?

Removal company or brave it yourself?

You're excited about your new home and location but the process of packing, organising and actually moving all of your items is something no one really ever looks forward to. Not only that but you also have to contact utility companies, maintain a job, keep your children happy and clean your entire house. You do have super powers, right?

Removal companies

Unless you live in a small property or flat, it could be worth hiring a professional removal company to help relieve some of the stress on the day. They have many skills and experience and some of the services they can provide include packing and

unpacking, dismantling and assembling furniture, loading your belongings quickly and securely, including those fragile and specialist items. They can even supply you with packing materials.

Hiring a removal company will also allow you the time to collect the keys to your new home. You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth. Some services are great if you don't have much time to plan and get these done yourself; however these do often come at a premium and may not be suitable for those on a budget. When choosing a removal company

You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth



it's key to look at those which have good recommendations and reviews, as you need a company you can rely on. You can use comparison sites, such as comparemymove.com and reallymoving.com, to help find you the best deals.

Getting quotes

You should aim to get at least three quotes from removal companies, preferably from firms which will come out to your property rather than those who just estimate the cost over the phone, as you don't want any nasty charges later on. Plus it will give the company an accurate idea of any restricted areas in your home, if they can park a van or lorry, and how many

items you have. You should also ask for the price to be broken down so you can see just how much you are paying for when it comes to certain aspects like insurance, packing, an hourly rate, mileage and any storage costs.

Once you have found a removal company, it can be useful to send them a briefing sheet that includes information about any items which need to be specially packed, any difficult or large items, plus any carpets and curtains which need moving. Finally, it can also be helpful to send them a floor plan of the new property so they can unload efficiently.

Top tips for packing

When packing, ensure you don't overload your boxes with heavy items, as these will be difficult to lift and could cause a back injury.

Fill any empty gaps using old newspaper, clothing, socks or even tea towels. This will help secure any items when they are being moved.

Create an inventory and label all your boxes and write the contents on each box with a marker. That way you will know which room each box is to go in. And if you are super organised, you could even colour code each room!

Pack heavier boxes on the bottom. This might seem like common sense but it will ensure that any of your fragile items won't break.

Pack a survival box. These are the things that you will need first and should include paper towels, bin bags, cutlery, the kettle, some mugs, tea, coffee, milk, sugar and finally, some toilet paper!



**COSY UP TO YOUR
PERFECT HOME**
this winter



Let us help you find your new home this winter.
Get in touch today to begin your journey.

Swaffham 01760 721389 - Watton 01953 883474

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