

FISHER GERMAN  
PRIESTNER LIMITED  
CHARTERED SURVEYORS



# FGPnews

LATEST NEWS FROM FISHER GERMAN PRIESTNER

## FGP PLANNING YOUR SUCCESS

This month marks a relaunch of Fisher German Priestner and the FGP brand. After eight years developing a client base within the utilities and infrastructure consultancy market, we will be looking forward to increasing our already fast-developing profile.

Our clients will see a fully refreshed brand, including new website and literature. As the year closes, we will be opening a new office in Knutsford to house the expanding FGP team and provide a facility for clients.

During our years of development, FGP has operated with the background assistance of the well-established firm of Chartered Surveyors, Fisher German, benefitting not only from Fisher German's management experience, but also from shared administrative services.

Fisher German Priestner Limited (FGP) will now operate as a standalone company, clearly acting only for utility and infrastructure providers.

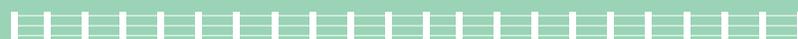
We are a firm of Chartered Surveyors providing services, principally in the rural sector, to secure projects across private land to enable construction.

Our expanding team provides bespoke, highly specialised and educated professionals for the utility and infrastructure industries. We appreciate the loyalty of our clients in getting us this far, as FGP prepares for a new look and an exciting future.

**Find out more on our new website:**  
[www.fgplimited.co.uk](http://www.fgplimited.co.uk)



# FGP





# NEW FARM SUPPORT SCHEME - A POTENTIAL BANANA SKIN?

The systems of support for farmers often produce collective groans of derision, but they cannot be ignored by construction projects, because where farm land is occupied, compensation may be payable.

The successor schemes to much-derided “farm subsidies” are based on annual payments per hectare – take that land out of agricultural production and the payment is foregone, with compensation expected by the farmer.

In 2015 the former system of agricultural support morphs from the Single Payment Scheme into the Basic Payment Scheme. The area-based payments are cross-linked to a number of compliance requirements, including environmental pollution and animal welfare. A breach of these rules can impact on the annual payment for the rest of the farm.

For example, diffuse pollution through soil run off down drains following construction activity might be traced back to the farmer and leave him out of pocket until compensated. Understandably, farmers will seek some sort of protection against this possibility from construction projects entering onto their land.

A new requirement aimed at arable and intensive grassland farms is to establish Ecological Focus Areas (EFA) on 5% of the total cropped area of the farm. If construction impacts on that EFA area, an equivalent area has to be re-established elsewhere

on the farm, possibly on more productive land. In this way construction activities may be affecting more of the farm than simply the land taken. FGP staff are up to date on the key requirements of the Basic Payment Scheme to ensure construction activities do not result in disproportionate claims.

By helping farmers adjust their activities to mitigate losses and identify problems in advance, the potential for increased claims can be headed off.



## DART ENERGY HIRE FGP

FGP’s latest project comes from Dart Energy in the unconventional gas industry - natural gas extracted from coal beds and shale.

The “fracking industry”, as it has become known, has attracted negative publicity and we will draw on our experience to allow Dart to utilise their licences without costly hold ups. We are pleased that our specialist reputation for resolving difficult situations has been identified as a key addition to the Dart Energy exploration and production

drive. A bespoke package of services will be available to the Dart Project management teams. We will be concentrating on getting the right message out to key stakeholders and their professionals. This will be followed by negotiations with landowners, allowing the full suite of FGP services to pave the way for the Dart exploration teams.

# FARMLAND BOOM HITS PROJECT COSTS



It is no secret that the value of farmland has rocketed over the last 5 years and barely faltered in 15 years. So what happens to construction costs when prime farmland increases in price by 50% in a year?

Well, apart from seeing an increased number of Tattersall check shirts on the yachts of Monaco, it means that rates offered for land acquisition may be completely outflanked within months of a decision on what to offer. Acquisition budgets are left short and Project Managers have an extra headache.

There are areas of the country where the range of prices paid for farmland is currently too wide to pick an open market value per acre at a given moment in time. There is an argument to say that the picture is skewed based on lack of supply onto the market, but the overall steeply upward trend is global. The rises can be traced back to the 1960s with only minor dips on the way. The increase since 2002 is over 250% with year-on-year increases continuing at over 10%.

It is no blip; while the prices cannot be justified in terms of return from agricultural production alone, the diverse drivers of investors, tax friendly status and talk of food shortages will ensure stability.

With a brisk North Sea wind behind them, Easement Negotiators heading out on Teesside in the spring of 2014 might have thought that an offer based on a percentage of £8000 per acre was well over prevailing land prices in the area at the time. By the summer local farm sales were topping that figure and by the end of the summer, reasonably sized acreages in the area have received offers approaching £12,000 an acre. The range of local prices for arable land of no particular merit is showing a variance of £6000 per acre. Suddenly a market change

could - within months - result in a 50% increase in the cost of freely negotiated easements. This means that the percentage of open market value needs to be handled carefully and a full understanding of local land sales is essential.

At FGP, we are giving these land sales closer scrutiny than ever and believe our comparable data for land prices is second to none. We “deconstruct” base price offers to allow flexibility during negotiations and smooth out the effect of volatile market rises. Our experience in rural acquisition gives the best chance for the construction budget team to assess risk and build in an allowance for farmland price escalation.

## FARM BARNS MAY HAVE STING IN THE TAIL FOR ACQUIRERS



The current Government has attempted to ease the route to acquiring rights in land through the Development Consent Order Process.

At the same time, planning policies have been introduced to ease delays on construction in other sectors.

On 6th April 2014, one of these changes brought new permitted development rights into play for farm buildings. There are qualifying criteria, but in essence, Class MB of the Town and Country Permitted Development Order 1995 now permits the change of use of an agricultural building into a dwelling house. Many assume this means

traditional brick or stone built buildings but it includes modern portal framed buildings.

This means that an isolated farm steading close to a utility corridor in open farmland may give rise to a claim for loss of development value. Previously it was a reasonable assumption that farm buildings were restricted in their development potential. Many utility acquirers include a ‘development clause’ in their easement conditions. This offers to compensate for

loss of value in the event that development is prohibited solely because of the presence of the pipe, cable or other structure. The new rules mean that these clauses could well be triggered more often and should certainly be taken into account on future projects.

Not all barns will qualify. Within the criteria are restrictions on the amount of development by area and within National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. At FGP, we are aware of the full criteria and have added this aspect to the guidance given on routing and legal documentation.

# A FULL SUITE OF CHARTERED SURVEYING SERVICES

## CHARTERED SURVEYING

We provide specialist knowledge and skills on a wide range of land and construction projects, offering advice and comparable information throughout the UK for the rural and commercial world. We have a 90% success rate in securing voluntary agreements within a short time period and prior to planning application submissions.

## GIS MAPPING

We offer detailed cartographic design to create a rich, interactive mapping experience for the planning of high-level schemes. Full tailored client management facilities, plans for planning applications, utility searches, conveyances and option agreements are all produced to meet project timescales.

## COMPLETE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

We consider that project management forms an essential part of any project and with this input, projects run on time with a high and efficient production level. We provide project managers as an extension to existing teams, who have a broader knowledge of utility and infrastructure projects.

## DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER APPLICATIONS

A team of specialists including valuation surveyors, GIS, project managers and compulsory purchase specialists work on DCO applications. This includes completing voluntary options with owners and occupiers, preparing and producing land plans, works plans and crown and special category plans, preparing books of reference and advising and assisting through the compulsory purchase hearing.

## COMPULSORY PURCHASE

Our team has an unrivalled database of comparables to ensure fast resolution in landowner negotiations. We offer comprehensive advice on compulsory purchase including valuation, consultation and planning legislation. We also advise on mitigation measures to reduce project costs during a compulsory purchase process.

## FGP DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES

Fisher German Priestner Limited divides services on a departmental basis available to all clients.

### CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Team leader - Claire Priestner

### COMPULSORY PURCHASE

Team leader - Claire Priestner

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Team leader - Kieron Harvard

### MAPPING AND GIS SYSTEMS

Team leader - Robert Knight

### ADMINISTRATION AND ACCOUNTS

Team leader - Neil Priestner

## SECTORS CURRENTLY PROVIDED FOR INCLUDE

**Pipelines** - oil gas and water

**Cables** - electricity and telecoms

**Wind farms** - offshore and onshore

**Gas extraction and storage**

**Road and rail schemes**

**Canals and waterways**

# STAFF NEWS

## NEW APPOINTMENT

Robert Knight will be joining us shortly to head up the Mapping and GIS department. Robert has 30 years' experience in Geo-Information. Trained as a Land Surveyor, his expertise has developed into various data capture techniques such as Surveying, Photogrammetry and Map Digitisation. As a GIS Consultant, Robert is well-equipped to help clients with all mapping problems, including legal documents, boundary issues and as built detail.

These are exciting times at FGP and our aim is to expand the range of services available to clients, including web-based mapping processes.

If client demands allow, Rob helps run a local junior football club and is a keen squash player on the North West circuit.

## TRAINING

For a budding Chartered Surveyor, working within the non-stop intensity of FGP is a tough apprenticeship. Charles Davenport has become a valued member of the FGP team and at the same time has been sitting for a post graduate diploma in Rural Estate and Land Management at Harper Adams University. This he adds to a BSc Hons. in Property Management and Investment. Having achieved this "rural conversion" in his qualifications he now faces the final hurdle to Chartered Surveyor status in the spring,

when all being well, he will complete the RICS Assessment of Professional Competence. Undaunted by all that, Charles intends to apply to Harper Adams for a research project to complete a second BSc. Congratulations on a heroic effort.

## FISHER GERMAN PRIESTNER LIMITED

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