



An ideal place for potential first-time buyers

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Comprehensive list of planning applications

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Newbury Property News

Thursday 14 April, 2005

www.newburynews.co.uk



From left, Whitelands Park Primary School learning support assistant Monica Jenkins, pupil Sean Sollis, KingsOak south-west sales director Richard Houchin and the school's headteacher, Jan Smart

Housebuilder's donation to special needs department

A LOCAL primary school has received £300 from housebuilder KingsOak South West towards the purchase of new equipment for its Special Education Needs (SEN) department.

Whitelands Park Primary School in Sagercroft Road, Thatcham, appealed to local businesses for donations at the end of last year and Bristol-based KingsOak, which is currently building 175 new homes in Newbury, responded to the call owing to a personal connection to the cause held by one of its staff.

Sales director for the firm, Richard Houchin knows only too well how urgently schools with SEN units require funding. Mr Houchin said: "My 12-year-old son Christopher is autistic and attends a SEN school in Reading. Consequently, when I learnt that the Whitelands Park Primary School was looking for support I felt it was important that KingsOak South West, as a major housebuilder in the town, should do something proactive to help."

"I value greatly the work undertaken by schools like Whitelands Park and the commitment staff have to children with special needs. Similarly, it is important that KingsOak, as a provider of housing across all markets, both private and social, take an interest in local causes. "We have been building in Thatcham for a number of years at the Kennet Heath site on Station Road. Already approximately 68 new homes have been erected and a new phase of 58 properties has recently commenced. The development of this brownfield site, formerly an MoD storage depot, is a combined effort with two other housebuilders to rejuvenate this area of the town to provide a brand-new community of which local people can be proud."

Whitelands Park Primary School's Faye Webb, who oversees the school's team of learning support assistants, said: "We are very grateful to have the opportunity to add a new programme to our variety of resources. The programmes are expensive and the cost of site licenses often puts them out of reach. In this age of technology, children learn in different ways and the use of computer programmes not only makes it education, it is also fun."

Headteacher Jan Smart said: "Support from the community like this helps us to stimulate the children's interest and helps them achieve. The money will be spent on a computer programme called Maths Base Levels 1,2,3 which will be added to our ICT suite so each child can work individually and gain confidence in areas which they find difficult."

"By early intervention the children will be able to fill in any gaps in their learning and be able to reach their full potential. We also hope that through achievement, children's self-esteem will be raised."

Whitelands Park Primary School has 349 pupils on the roll from foundation, age four, through to Year 6. To make a donation to the school's SEN unit, telephone Faye Webb on (01635) 862517. For more information about the new homes at Kennet Heath, telephone the sales office on (01635) 869670.



The Old School House in Ramsdell which is for sale for £565,000

Your chance to go back to school

MOST children don't need a dictionary to know the meaning of the word 'Tardis' - after all, *Dr Who* is back! In property terms, 'a bit of a tardis' applies to a house much larger than it looks from the outside - The Old School House in Ramsdell, Hampshire.

The property is a delightful former Victorian schoolmaster's house that has benefited from recent renovations, making it a huge improvement on Victorian living without losing any of its charm.

The village of Ramsdell is north-west of Basingstoke, just 14 miles from Newbury.

The bright and spacious house has two good-sized reception rooms.



Property of the week
The Old School House, Ramsdell, Hampshire

The sitting room has an open fireplace with wood burner and doors to a conservatory. The dining hall connects to the modern kitchen and there is a utility room.

On the first floor, the master bedroom has an adjoining bathroom with three further good sized bedrooms and a

family bathroom. The pretty rear garden has a full-width terrace leading to the lawn surrounded by attractive flower beds and a further area of garden has a shed and a small vegetable patch. There is a detached garage.

The Old School House is situated within a conservation area surrounded by unspoilt countryside and is an excellent village for communications.

Priory Primary School is within two miles of the house.

The Old School House is available through the Basingstoke office of Knight Frank with a guide price of £565,000.

For more information, telephone Mark Potter of Knight Frank on (01256) 350600.



The attractive gardens, above, and the interior, below



For sale: £420,000



Mulberry Lodge, Conifer Crest, Wash Common

Plenty of room for extensions

A DETACHED family house in Conifer Crest, Wash Common, has come on the market through Atkinson Keene estate agents in Newbury.

Mulberry Lodge stands on a large corner plot extending to about a quarter of an acre, situated in a popular residential road and ideally placed for the St Bartholomew's and Park House schools catchment area.

The house has an enclosed porch, entrance hall, sitting room, dining room, cloakroom, kitchen, large rear lobby, conservatory, family room, four bedrooms, bathroom, secured parking for a boat or caravan with additional parking for three to four cars.

There is also ample room for extension, subject to planning consent. The property is priced at £420,000. For more information, telephone Atkinson Keene on (01635) 45688.

For sale: under £500,000

Home ready to move in to

A NEW detached family home in a quiet spot and surrounded by open countryside has come on the market through



Field View, Ashmore Green

Downer & Co's Newbury office.

Field View, Ashmore Green, comprises of an entry hall, cloakroom, study/family room, large, fitted kitchen/breakfast room opening onto a conservatory, and a lounge with limestone fireplace. There are two spacious double bedroom suites, each with dressing area and ensuite shower rooms, and two further double bedrooms and a family bathroom. There is a double garage with utility area within the garden, which is fenced and landscaped.

The property, priced at £499,950, is ready to move in to straight away and also comes with a NHBC 10-year guarantee.

For more information, telephone Downer & Co on (01635) 523777.

Removing kinks from the chain

A web-based program being piloted locally aims to reduce the time, stress and costs involved in property chains

A TRIAL of an Internet-based service aimed at simplifying property chains and giving buyers and sellers visibility of key milestones and the progress of their chain has started in Newbury and Thatcham.

So far, three local estate agents have agreed to participate in a pilot of ChainManager, a new web-based business application that hopes to deliver significant time and cost savings to estate agents and reduce the stress suffered by buyers and sellers alike that have no idea what is happening in their property chain and feel powerless to influence it.

ChainManager allows estate agents, conveyancers, buyers and sellers involved in a property chain to securely view the chain from top to bottom, see the current status of each property in the chain and communicate easily with each other to make sure problems or hold-ups in the process are resolved quickly.

Steve Rowson, a director of Linkage Systems, the creator of ChainManager, said: "The service has been developed over the past 12 months in consultation with estate agents across the country and has been demonstrated to the National Association of Estate Agents and the Land Registry. We have received very positive responses to the benefits ChainManager offers to everyone involved in property chains."

"Now we are ready to begin a pilot of the system. Newbury and Thatcham were chosen

because the towns are served by more than 30 estate agents and are geographically close to our technical support team.

"We hope as many agents as possible will take up our invitation to participate in the pilot. There is no cost to take part in the pilot and when the service is launched nationally later this year, ChainManager will operate on the same 'no sale, no fee' basis as estate agents."

The total cost of managing a chain matrix through ChainManager has yet to be finalised, as one of the purposes of the pilot scheme is to evaluate how much training and support will be necessary for participating estate agents.

However, Mr Rowson said that the cost to agents would be nominal and believed that they would more than recover the cost in time savings by eliminating many of today's manual progress-chasing processes and through improved cashflow as chains are completed more efficiently.

Three local estate agencies that have seen a demonstration of the system have signed up for the ChainManager pilot.

Gary Deverall, of Chequers Estate Agents, Thatcham, said: "We see ChainManager as having the potential to massively reduce the stress involved in moving home for property buyers and sellers."

"For estate agents it is a win-win proposition. It only takes a couple of minutes to add

Using the web to build secure property chains that can only be viewed by the people involved is a logical next development that will be welcomed by agents and buyers and sellers alike

a property to a chain, but the benefits it brings in terms of ensuring that each buyer and seller is progressively moving through the conveyancing milestones are enormous."

Jeff Brown, of estate agents Atkinson Keene in Newbury, said: "It is about time buyers and sellers had visibility of the whole property chain to assist in ensuring chains move forward smoothly and quickly."

"As part of our all-encompassing service, we are keen to participate in the ChainManager pilot as we see it bringing benefits both to estate agents and the buyers and sellers involved in each chain."

It is a view shared by Kris Livemore of Haarts estate agents in Thatcham.

He said: "Haarts have invested heavily in technology in recent years, so we can easily see the potential of ChainManager. Using the web to build secure property chains that can only be viewed by the people involved is a logical next development that will be welcomed by agents and buyers and sellers alike."

So, how does the system work? When any property is sold, the estate agent adds the property to ChainManager and links it to the property below in the chain. Chains build until an agent adds a property whose vendor is not buying another property. The chain then becomes complete.

Agents, buyers and sellers can then view their chains in a secure web environment and the milestones in each property sale can be updated. At a glance, all parties can see exactly how far each sale has progressed, supported by sophisticated, built-in messaging and progress-chasing tools to assist the agent.

Mr Rowson said: "Once ChainManager is fully 'live' we expect its success to be driven by buyers and sellers. We will have a big marketing programme to officially launch the service and to promote the advantages to buyers and sellers of choosing an estate agent that uses ChainManager."

"By having access to ChainManager, buyers and sellers will no longer suffer the frustration of not knowing what is going on in the rest of their property chain, so it is much less likely that someone in the chain will withdraw and cause the chain to collapse."

For more information about ChainManager, telephone Mr Rowson on (01344) 778407 or visit the website www.chainmanager.com

France is leading the way as one of the top places for investment opportunities in Europe

Trading in French property can be very profitable, especially if buying off-plan and reselling some years later on when prices have risen

WITH capital gains of up to 15 per cent a year, high demand for rental accommodation and relatively cheap property compared with the UK, France is being tipped as the next big thing for canny property investors.

Assetz, a leading UK property investment specialist, recommends investing in France with a long-term view to maximise yields.

To cope with the 78 per cent increase in demand for French property over the past year, Assetz International plans to double its French department within the next six months.

One of the top-two most-popular holiday destinations in the world, 60 million tourists visited France last year.

As there is a lack of accommodation available in the tourist hotspots, investing in property is an ideal way to secure guaranteed high-rental yields.

Trading in French property can be very profitable, especially if buying off-plan and reselling some years later on when prices have risen.

In fact, more than 60 per cent of Assetz' enquiries relate to new-build, suggesting that investors are already taking

advantage of off-plan developments and the profits that can be made.

Current hotspots include the South of France (Cote d'Azur and Languedoc), the Alps and Paris, where prices have been rising about 10 to 15 per cent per annum for several years.

A one-bedroom apartment in the Parisian suburbs costs between £70,000 and £80,000, with prices in the centre being significantly more expensive but still 30 per cent cheaper than London.

The Cote d'Azur is proving to be a very buoyant market, with rental yields of up to nine per cent per annum. This is in part owing to the excellent food, scenery and culture in the area, but also because of its reputation as a favourite destination for celebrities, with the Cannes Film Festival, St Tropez and Monte Carlo attracting the rich and famous.

Cannes is probably the most attractive town on the Cote d'Azur to invest in. With the annual two-week film festival drawing in huge numbers of celebrities and tourists, as well as numerous industry conventions held there every year, the rental market in Cannes is stronger than anywhere else in the south of France.

So, why is France proving to be such a popular second home

and investment destination?

The managing director of Assetz, Stuart Law, said: "Investing off-plan in France in small developments that have a management company assigned is ideal for those who want a second home but don't want the hassle of looking after the garden, irrigation or swimming pool."

When they return after six months away or when guests arrive, they want to find their pool is blue not green.

"This 'lock-up and leave' culture with new build-on managed developments is a favourite among investors who don't have the time, or the desire, to spend their holiday carrying out general DIY and garden maintenance and want the security of knowing holiday lets will be trouble-free. We have seen a significant increase of 78 per cent in enquiries relating to investing in France over the last year."

"To cope with this increased demand our French department is set to increase twofold within the next six months, consolidating the Assetz France division of Assetz as the UK's leading French new-build property investment specialist."

For more information on Assetz France, or any other aspect of property investment, telephone (0161) 456 4000.

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Assetz, a leading UK property investment specialist, recommends investing in France with a long-term view to maximise yields. To cope with the 78 per cent increase in demand for French property over the past year, Assetz International plans to double its French department within the next six months. One of the top-two most-popular holiday destinations in the world, 60 million tourists visited France last year. As there is a lack of accommodation available in the tourist hotspots, investing in property is an ideal way to secure guaranteed high-rental yields. Trading in French property can be very profitable, especially if buying off-plan and reselling some years later on when prices have risen. In fact, more than 60 per cent of Assetz' enquiries relate to new-build, suggesting that investors are already taking advantage of off-plan developments and the profits that can be made. Current hotspots include the South of France (Cote d'Azur and Languedoc), the Alps and Paris, where prices have been rising about 10 to 15 per cent per annum for several years. A one-bedroom apartment in the Parisian suburbs costs between £70,000 and £80,000, with prices in the centre being significantly more expensive but still 30 per cent cheaper than London. The Cote d'Azur is proving to be a very buoyant market, with rental yields of up to nine per cent per annum. This is in part owing to the excellent food, scenery and culture in the area, but also because of its reputation as a favourite destination for celebrities, with the Cannes Film Festival, St Tropez and Monte Carlo attracting the rich and famous. Cannes is probably the most attractive town on the Cote d'Azur to invest in. With the annual two-week film festival drawing in huge numbers of celebrities and tourists, as well as numerous industry conventions held there every year, the rental market in Cannes is stronger than anywhere else in the south of France. So, why is France proving to be such a popular second home and investment destination? The managing director of Assetz, Stuart Law, said: "Investing off-plan in France in small developments that have a management company assigned is ideal for those who want a second home but don't want the hassle of looking after the garden, irrigation or swimming pool. When they return after six months away or when guests arrive, they want to find their pool is blue not green. "This 'lock-up and leave' culture with new build-on managed developments is a favourite among investors who don't have the time, or the desire, to spend their holiday carrying out general DIY and garden maintenance and want the security of knowing holiday lets will be trouble-free. We have seen a significant increase of 78 per cent in enquiries relating to investing in France over the last year. "To cope with this increased demand our French department is set to increase twofold within the next six months, consolidating the Assetz France division of Assetz as the UK's leading French new-build property investment specialist." For more information on Assetz France, or any other aspect of property investment, telephone (0161) 456 4000.

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A good look
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