

Press release – 25th June 2012

Conference better than ever before

Over 100 delegates packed the conference suite at St Mellion International Resort recently for the biggest event on the calendar for independent estate agents in the South West.



Everyone enjoyed a buffet lunch and unrivalled networking opportunities with information from a record number of trade stands followed by a host of top speakers that inspired, educated and entertained at the sixth annual Spring Conference of Property Sharing Experts: The Westcountry Team.

Sponsored by Zoopla, South West Communications Group, Gill Akaster Solicitors LLP and Ashfords Solicitors LLP, the conference was the best yet with compere and award-winning industry trainer Gayle Partridge of IRYS taking the podium to announce the proceedings and introduce the speakers, who covered topics including the condition of the property market, auctions, law, IT and the latest communication tools.



First up was Mark Hayward, chairman of NFoPP (the National Federation of Property Professionals) and President Elect of the NAEA (National Association of Estate Agents), who presented facts and figures on the property market from a nationwide perspective, drawn from the governing body's membership. Mark said that property prices had risen by 0.1%, that the amount of new buyer enquiries was up by 25% and that the actual prices achieved were on average 93% of asking prices in April, and he also pointed out that the 'boom and bust' cycles in the property market historically followed a 20 year cycle with the more recent peaks in 1988 and 2008. He

predicted that raising mortgage finance would remain difficult, but the latest announcement by the Chancellor and the Governor of the Bank of England to pump around £140bn into the banks to boost lending via cheap mortgages and business loans should have a positive effect for potential buyers.



Judith Park, specialist in residential property at Ashfords Solicitors LLP and David Wallis, head of residential conveyancing at Gill Akaster LLP, presented in unison the benefits of using the new legal panel made up of local, well-established and trusted solicitors including Coodes, Windeatts Solicitors as well as Ashfords and Gill Akaster; their accredited staff all dedicated to serving the independent agents and their buying and selling clients, working together with the highest levels of professionalism and skill to see transactions through quickly and efficiently. Via the new panel of local solicitors, the property sharing estate agents offer competitive fees and a No Sale No Fee service with the ability for the agents and their clients to track cases online so they know the stage their transaction is at every step of the way.

Adam Williams of South West Communications explained how the company could help estate agents provide a better level of service to their customers with a tailored and fully integrated telecoms, data management and network structure, supported by its relationships with the top manufacturers and suppliers and its accountable, customer-focussed approach.

Richard Worrall, one of the finest practising auctioneers in the UK, used his podium expertise to deliver a punchy presentation on selling by auction and the support the property sharing estate agents and their clients receive from The Auction Agents in order to sell to more buyers, achieve reasonable prices and be certain of a completion date. Richard auctioned off some 'Tigger' toys to demonstrate the effectiveness of having various potential buyers in the same room.



Jamie Jaggard, head of consumer marketing at Zoopla, which is listed in the Top 10 UK technology companies and has won various website awards, expressed the importance of social, local and mobile marketing including mobile web sites, optimised for smart phones. 75% of the population is online and there has been a 23% growth in online property enquiries comparing quarter one in 2012 with the same period in 2011. Smart phone penetration is also on the up - property enquiries via Google on mobile devices grew by 232% during the same period.



The pinnacle of the afternoon, the presentation by keynote speaker, Matthew Fleming was both hysterical and highly informative with a collection of anecdotes and wit that inspired and amused along with a more serious insight and analysis of the property market including a look at historical data, which shows that house prices double roughly every seven years and that the average value of property in the UK is about five times what it was in 1984.

Matt also supported Jamie's messaging by pointing out that there are over 20 million smart phones currently in use, 15.4 million mobile internet users and around 940,000 mobile property browsers in the UK - staggering figures given that the population is around 60 million and about 15 million of those are children - and further proof that it is imperative for estate agents to consider the wider media landscape. Matt has been chief executive of Aylesworth Fleming Ltd – one of the UK's leading property marketing and advertising agencies – since 1985 and in 2007 became a founding director and shareholder of the £30m Emerge Group. Aylesworth Fleming works with 14 of the top 22 property developers in the UK.

A record number of businesses, including Signboard, Danwood Copiers, Besley & Copp, Lyreco, I-Survey, Property Videos.org, Ravensworth, Rentshield Direct, Scarlet Orange, The Auction Agents, Expert Agent, VTUK, Zoopla, South West Communications, Gill Akaster and Ashfords exhibited at the conference with trade stands.



And a number of prizes were awarded for skill and luck on the day - Deborah Hopkinson of Newquay Property Centre was presented a magnum of Champagne by VTUK for guessing the correct rental value of six properties in its competition; Graham Back from Metcalfes in Torquay won a bottle of champagne in the Lyreco competition; various agents left with chocolates and Clare Smith from Hennings Moir was presented with other goodies from South West Communications. And Mervyn Thomas of NCT in Penzance won an iPad in the Property Sharing Experts: The Westcountry Team Prize Draw.



For further information on the Property Sharing Experts: The Westcountry Team, contact Joanna Marshall on 01392 463800 or email jo@westcountryteam.com.

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In the photographs: Delegates at the conference; Compere Gayle Partridge; Judith Park at Ashfords Solicitors LLP and David Wallis at Gill Akaster LLP; Richard Worrall of The Auction Agents; Matthew Fleming of Aylesworth Fleming; the Zoopla trade stand; Deborah Hopkinson with her Champagne at the VTUK trade stand; and Jo Marshall presenting an iPad to Mervyn Thomas of NCT in Penzance

Photographs are available from bubblepr@mac.com

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