

MERRETT & Co

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SOLICITORS

Specialist:

“ one who devotes himself to a particular branch of a profession

speciality: something to which a person devotes special attention

specialize: be differentiated ”



COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Experience

Merrett & Co acts for a range of corporate and private clients, from house builders and developers, chemical and oil companies, to private land and property owners. Whatever the client, our philosophy is the same; we pride ourselves on providing cost-effective and practical solutions to complex problems.

We generally act on one-off assignments but, depending on a client's needs, we can offer longer term secondments, acting as locums covering in times of absence or overload. Our overheads are low; we deliberately strive to keep our charging rates competitive and they compare very favourably with larger firms. Our results and our long-term clients (many of whom have been with us from inception in 1995) speak for themselves.



Services in brief

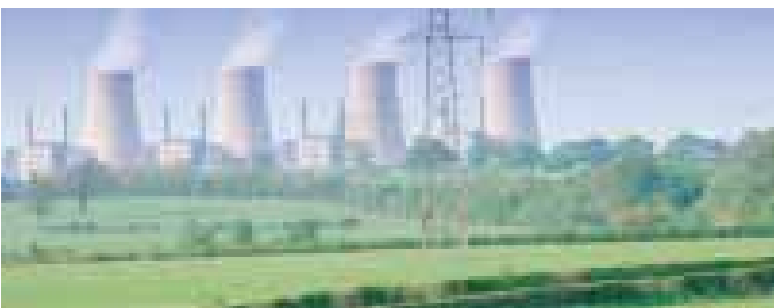
- **Planning/Compulsory Purchase:** Planning appeals, Local Plan inquiries, advocacy, judicial reviews and other High Court challenges, injunctions and call-ins, section 106 planning agreements, section 38 and 278 highway agreements. Wildlife and Countryside Act applications, promoting or appealing stopping up and diversion orders as well as footpath modifications and diversions, negotiating compensation in Compulsory Purchase Order cases, appealing enforcement notices, defending prosecutions, minerals and waste issues
- **Property:** site acquisitions and disposals, joint ventures, brown-field development, promotion of housing sites, land assembly and regeneration, leases, lease renewals, rent reviews, tenancy arrangements, neighbour and boundary disputes
- **Environmental/licensing:** advising on the redevelopment of contaminated land, Environmental Impact Assessments, nuisance actions, defending pollution prosecutions, regulatory issues concerning waste and IPPC, environmental health and local authority licensing, breach of licence conditions, noise abatement notices

Recent highlights

- Acting for Bellway Homes on the negotiation of a solution to a planning impasse which had held up the development of a residential site for 5 years
- Advising on Environmental Impact Assessments on an outline application for a business park
- Negotiations of planning permission for a utility company's headquarters
- Advice on restoration of a Georgian Grade II listed building into a country house hotel, spa and leisure facility
- 90+% success rate on all planning appeals
- Advising a garden centre on the expansion of its product range, contrary to a s106 agreement and construction of new buildings
- Achieving a Certificate of Lawful Use for coal storage and distribution in the greenbelt
- Nuisance action concerning air and dust pollution for a residential owner

"Merrett & Co's lawyers always take a proactive interest in our business plans and objectives and their advice ensures we see them through to fruition".

Euan Cresswell, Westmark Developments



LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES

Experience

Merrett & Co has extensive experience of local authority issues. Most of our lawyers have worked in the public sector for many years and continue to do so, as external advisers in long-term partnerships with many local authority clients.

The breadth of support given to in-house local authority teams varies from dealing with planning inquiries, to running the entire legal department. The type of support offered is entirely flexible, dependent on the council's needs - we can take on the on-going workload of the council's department, provide locum cover in times of absence or overload, or simply act on one-off assignments.

This flexibility extends to Merrett & Co providing 'in-house' support. We have several arrangements with local authority clients whereby our lawyers work at their premises on a regular, set-day basis and hold an open 'clinic' for the council's officers

and members. Our results and the loyalty of our long-term clients (many of whom have been with us from inception in 1995) speak for themselves.



"Merrett & Co has worked in partnership with us for many years and is the best legal planning team I've had the pleasure to work with".

Derek Hooper, Business Manager (Planning and Environment), Mendip District Council

Services in brief

- **Planning:** Public and Local Plan Inquiries, advocacy, judicial reviews, Section 106 planning agreements, enforcement notices, injunctions, breach of condition notices, prosecutions, CLEUD applications, advice on affordable housing
- **Highways:** Section 38 and 278 agreements, highway drainage and traffic management issues, stopping up and diversion orders, footpath modifications and diversions
- **CPO:** promotion of CPOs and the negotiation of compensation
- **Environmental:** contaminated land, minerals and waste issues, regulatory issues, prosecutions, noise abatement notices
- **Licensing:** all local authority licensing matters
- **Property:** site acquisitions and disposals, joint ventures, brown-field development, land assembly and regeneration, leases, lease renewals, rent reviews, tenancy arrangements
- **Procurement:** drafting and negotiating contracts, tender documentation and evaluation criteria
- **Corporate governance and probity:** including codes of conduct for members and officers, 'Best value' procurement, human rights and constitutional issues, advising the Monitoring Officer

Recent highlights

- 100% success rate on footpath diversion and modification Inquiries, and a 90% + success rate on planning appeals
- Handling Public Entertainment Licence issues relating to Glastonbury Festival including successful prosecutions for breach of licence conditions and a noise abatement notice
- Representing a council at a Public Inquiry and the Court of Appeal into a flood alleviation scheme for an out-of-town shopping development
- Advising Mendip District Council on the externalisation of their leisure services, including drafting contract and tender conditions
- Advising Bristol City Council on highway stopping up and diversion orders
- Assisting on the South Gloucestershire Local Plan, particularly on issues of residential land supply and affordable housing
- Assisting a Council on a joint venture with the private sector and SWRDA for the re-development of a contaminated site for mixed use development
- Legal representative on the Emerson's Green working group, handling section 106 agreements

OUR CLIENTS

Previous and current clients include:

Corporate/ private clients

BP Amoco
Bellway Homes
Fisher Scientific (UK)
George Wimpey UK
Hinton Garage
Laytons Solicitors
Midas Homes
Tewkesbury Marina
Total Oil
Westmark Developments
Withy King Solicitors

Local authority

Bristol City Council
Kennet District Council
Mendip District Council
North Somerset Council
Somerset County Council
South Gloucestershire Council
Spelthorne Borough Council
Stroud District Council
West Somerset District Council
West Wiltshire District Council

"The firm is flexible in its working methods, which suits our needs, and is always responsive and pragmatic. I cannot praise them enough!".

Ann Higgins, Team Leader - Legal Services, Kennet District Council

"Merrett & Co has the ability to see the big picture and understand the workings of the LPA, which helps us achieve a successful planning outcome".

Jeremy Sutcliffe, Strategic Land Manager, George Wimpey UK

"Merrett & Co act as our 'in-house' legal team and I greatly value the speedy response and sound advice they provide".

Tim Howes (Solicitor), Chief Executive, West Somerset District Council

Working methods

Formed in 1995, Merrett & Co's philosophy is to provide dedicated planning, environmental and local government legal advice at reasonable rates. We pride ourselves on providing practical solutions to complex problems.

Our working methods are flexible; with lawyers used to working at the client's premises on an open 'clinic' basis or on secondments. We work on one-off jobs, longer term assignments and for major projects - if required - we can call on freelance members of staff who work with the team as the need arises. Work is not passed to junior lawyers. We assign a dedicated senior lawyer to each instruction, who brings a high level of experience to bear on the task.

Our overheads are low; therefore our charging rates compare very favourably with larger firms. We charge one blended hourly rate covering all levels of lawyer and are willing to discuss retainer arrangements for larger projects. The firm is technology enabled; all lawyers have mobile telephones and laptops, can work remotely and network into the office system.

Client satisfaction is of paramount importance to Merrett & Co and we regularly ask our clients how we have performed. One of our long term clients, Mendip District Council, conducted its own customer satisfaction survey. Merrett & Co achieved an "excellent service" grading.

USING LEGAL SPECIALISTS

In any walk of life, when you need an expert, you use a specialist. By definition, a specialist is someone who is dedicated to one area of knowledge; someone with a depth of experience that gives them extra insight and understanding.

Planning, environmental and local government law issues are complex, often controversial and are particularly time and process critical. To get the right result, you need reassurance that your lawyers understand the issues, the processes and the people they are dealing with.

Instructing specialist lawyers greatly reduces the risks involved. Merrett & Co is a niche practice, dedicated solely to planning, environmental and local government legal issues. Our aim is to provide you with speedy and pragmatic advice, to save you time and money. But, in Merrett & Co's case, niche doesn't mean small. The firm has one of the largest specialist planning/local government teams in the South West; eclipsing many major name firms.



"After only six weeks of valuable advice and support from Merrett & Co, we managed to release a site held up in development for nearly five years".

Paul Evans, formerly of Bellway Homes Ltd
(now WDA)

Merrett & Co

Formed in 1995, Merrett & Co's lawyers have a wealth of relevant experience in private practice and local government.

The practice advises on a mixture of commercial (e.g. house builders), local authority and private client matters (typically large land-owners).

Benefits of using Merrett & Co:

- **Time:** our in-depth understanding saves you both time and money
- **Knowledge:** we are masters of the law in our niche area
- **The inside track:** all of our lawyers have worked in local government, know the processes involved and have strong working relationships with local government contacts
- **Experience:** our lawyers have extensive relevant experience
- **Track record:** our client base speaks for itself and endorses our success
- **Personal service:** your main contact will personally handle your work throughout the life of the case
- **Flexible working:** we provide the option of lawyers working at the client's premises on an 'in-house' basis or on secondments
- **Technology enabled:** all lawyers have laptops, can work remotely and network in to the office system
- **Low overheads:** based in offices in Chew Magna, we deliberately strive to keep our charging rates competitive and compare very favourably with larger firms

MERRETT

& CO

CONTACT US

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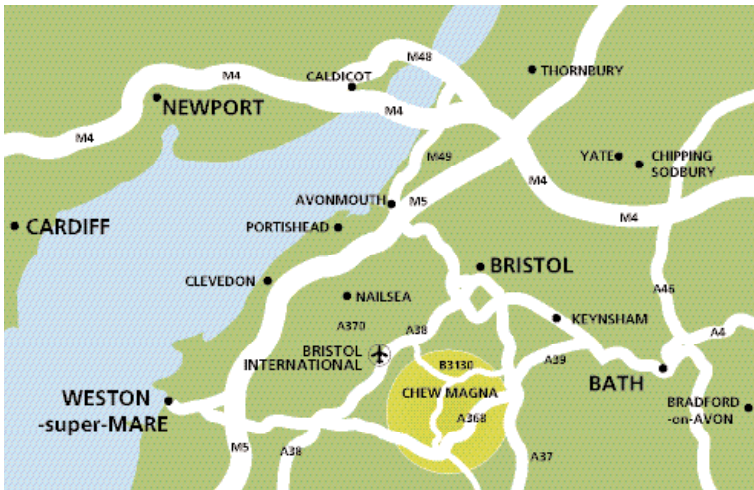
Email: info@merrettandco.com

Full CVs for all lawyers are available on request.

LOCATION

Merrett & Co is located in Chew Magna, 6 miles south of Bristol.

Area map



By car:

From Bristol - A38 (direction Bridgwater), turning onto the B3130 Bristol), exit at junction 22 onto A38 (direction Bristol), turning onto the B3130 to Chew Magna.

From Bath - A39, A368, A37 (direction Bristol), turning onto the B3130 to Chew Magna.

By train:

From Bristol Temple Meads station, a taxi to Chew Magna takes about 20 minutes.

Office location

