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PROPERTY OF THE WEEK

An award winning barn home with a view you'll never tire of

Properties change; this superb brick and flint conversion was created from the remnants of a single storey dwelling by the current owners. However, the view this property offers towards the ancient Binham Priory will not change; it's there to enjoy like a much loved painting every single day. **CAROLINE CULOT**, EDP property editor, enjoyed visiting Priory Barn, Binham, for sale for **£725,000** with **Strutt & Parker**. See pages 2 and 3 for the full story or visit **www.edp24.co.uk**

in all of north Norfolk



A harmless gift or a bribe?
PHILIPPA RUDD discusses



■ **I am an estate agent and every Christmas I have enjoyed the odd case of wine from local solicitors to whom I have passed clients over the year. This year one of them told me that I wouldn't be getting any wine this Christmas due to the new bribery Act. Please tell me that he was joking?**

The Bribery Act 2010 came into force on 1 July 2011. The Act has two main offences - that of bribing another person and that of being bribed. Consequences of breaching the Act are wide-ranging. They include a criminal conviction, fines and imprisonment for up to ten years. The Act could catch some forms of corporate hospitality or gifts where the intention is to induce the recipient of that hospitality to 'perform improperly' their role within their business.

■ **What sort of wining and dining is now prohibited?**

Genuine hospitality or similar business expenditure that is reasonable and proportionate will not be caught by the Act. So you can continue to provide and receive bona fide hospitality, promotional or other business expenditure. In any case where it was thought that the hospitality was really a cover for bribing someone, the courts would look at such things as the level of hospitality offered, the way in which it was provided and the level of influence the person receiving it had on the business decision in question. Hospitality or expenditure which is proportionate and reasonable is unlikely to fall foul of the Act. Accordingly, you can continue to provide tickets for sporting events, take clients to dinner, offer gifts to clients as an acknowledgement of your good relationship, and you can pay for reasonable travel expenses in order to demonstrate your goods or services, providing such behaviour is reasonable and proportionate for your business.

■ **Have there been any convictions under the Act as yet?**

A magistrate's court clerk has become the first person to be charged with an offence under the Act for allegedly accepting £500 in return for keeping a motoring offence penalty off a legal database. The Act makes it an offence for any individual to accept an advantage with the intention that they perform a 'relevant function or activity' improperly.

■ **Philippa Rudd is a principal at Cozens-Hardy solicitors on 01603 625231, www.cozens-hardy.com**

If you have a question, please email caroline.culot@archant.co.uk

These questions and answers are not intended as a complete statement of the law. Legal advice should always be taken.