

THE BURNSIDE PARTNERSHIP

Private Client Law done a little differently



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PENNY HEIGHWAY TALKS TO ANNA BURNSIDE AND FIONA WHEELER ABOUT WHAT SETS THEM APART, OPENING THE NEW MARLOW OFFICE AND THEIR PLANS FOR FURTHER EXPANSION.

Above: Trusts Director Martin Pollock and Partners Nadine Jayes, Fiona Wheeler and Anna Burnside.

Anna, The Burnside Partnership (TBP) was formed by two Partners less than four years ago. How has the business developed since that time?

When the firm was established, it comprised of Fiona, our PA and me. Now, we're 18 people strong and continuing to grow. We've recently doubled our office space in Combe (within the Blenheim Estate on the outskirts of Oxford), and we have just opened an office in Marlow. Our London work is growing too. We have ambitious plans for our business and a clear strategy for how to get there. We consider ourselves business-people as well as lawyers and we have a strong management team. We are flexible and agile and

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- NADINE JAYES, PARTNER

can make decisions quickly - we're not held back by bureaucracy nor by traditions as to how a law firm should be run and how staff progress within the law firm structure.

Fiona, was it a tough decision to move away from established law firms where you had done so well?

Not at all. Setting up our own firm was exciting and enabled us to start with a clean slate as to how we wanted to work and how and what we wanted to offer our clients and staff. We were grateful that we also had many loyal clients and referrers who chose to follow us.

Anna, what makes your approach to private client law unique and sets you apart from other firms?

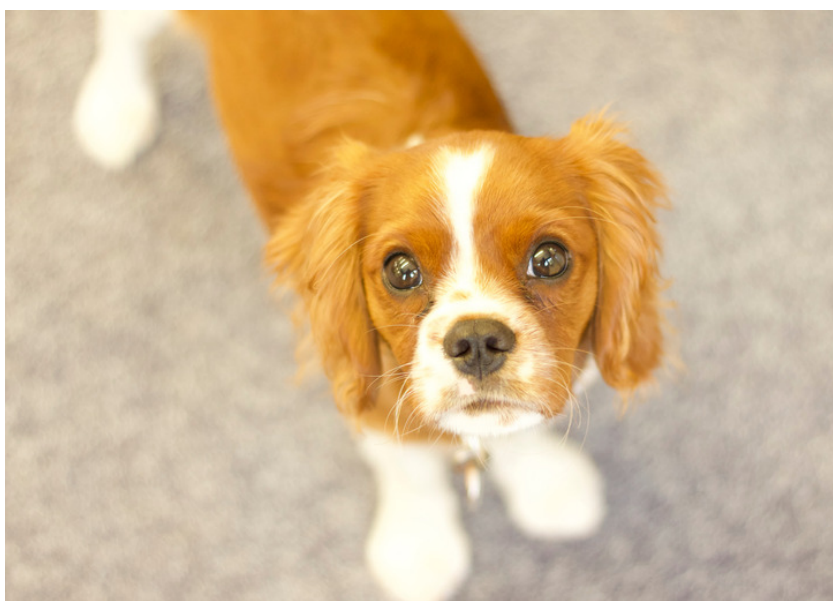
We advise exclusively on private client law and our ethos is to provide outstanding technical advice within a much more client-focused and personal, non-corporate, environment. This approach is often lacking in more commercially orientated law firms. We are dedicated to our clients. We pride ourselves on establishing a real understanding of our clients' needs and concerns and strive to achieve the most satisfactory outcomes.

The second aspect is our empathy and accessibility. We understand that making decisions about estate planning can be daunting and even distressing for some people. All our employees understand that a professional, friendly and empathetic experience is a top priority for clients and they work hard to achieve this. We go out of our way to make clients feel at ease whether in person, by email or by phone. One of our team members is even learning sign language. Furthermore, we welcome dogs into our office in Oxfordshire as this puts some clients in a more relaxed frame of mind.

Our clients tell us that they appreciate the accessibility of our offices, and the willingness of our lawyers to meet them in locations where they feel most comfortable. We regularly help vulnerable adults and their families including those in prison. We are proud to make private client law advice accessible to as many people as possible.

Fiona, what can you offer a private client lawyer that's different from your obvious top-quality competition in the region?

We can offer an entrepreneurial environment and an exciting opportunity for our lawyers – supporting their personal and professional development, allowing them to develop their own areas of expertise and encouraging them to contribute to the growth of our business more broadly.



RIGHT: OFFICE DOG, COOPER



ABOVE: THE OFFICE IN COMBE, WITHIN THE BLENHEIM PALACE ESTATE, IS SITUATED IN THE WONDERFULLY RESTORED SAWMILLS.

We take pride in seeing our lawyers progress in their careers and in the last year we have hired an in-house legal trainer. In addition to help training our staff, she assesses Trainee Legal Executives' work for the CILEX Law School.

We are also strongly supportive of young people achieving their potential. We have our own apprenticeship programme and in 2017 our Legal Apprentice won *Oxfordshire Apprentice of the Year*. She is now a Trainee Legal Executive in our firm. This year TBP is a finalist in the Apprenticeship Employer Award in the Oxfordshire Apprenticeships Awards.

Staff and clients alike love the rural setting of our Combe office, which is within easy reach of the city of Oxford and main routes. Our staff benefit from an easier commute than is the case into the centre of Oxford and we have lots of parking. Our office in Marlow is in an equally charming location. Marlow has a beautiful Thames side setting and is accessible to the M40 and M4. It also has some amazing restaurants!

Martin, what made you decide to move from London to TBP's new Marlow office?

It was the chance to further my career and hopefully make a difference in a firm which is made up of a friendly, hard-working and ambitious group of people. It was not a tough decision to move out of London. I enjoyed working there for over 17 years, and I have got to know a lot of great people, but leaving the hustle and bustle behind will not be difficult.

I'm really excited by the work too. The new office will be offering services which are complimentary to those already provided by TBP and will enhance and expand them in certain areas. The office will provide the mainstream private client services such as Wills, probate and powers of attorney. But we will also strengthen the estate planning advice and trust and charity administration work, offering a bespoke service in these areas.

Nadine, what motivated you to move?

I have known Anna and Fiona for years and have worked with them in a professional capacity since they set up TBP - referring various pieces of work to them when I moved to an accountancy firm.

I really enjoyed collaborating with them and was very impressed with the quality of their work. They are both such a pleasure to deal with and are also very professional and knowledgeable.

It has been a really good experience working in the City over the last few years. I have, however, not found it a difficult decision to make the move to TBP, as I feel that working for such a well-respected niche private client firm will offer some excellent opportunities. Additionally, as the firm has close ties with London I will be able to continue to deal with many of the contacts I have established and still enjoy high quality work.

Over the last few years, it has been really interesting to see TBP grow and develop and I was really keen to join when the opportunity arose. I am very much looking forward to developing the practice with Martin, with whom I have worked really well over the last few years. I am also excited at the prospect of working with all the existing staff within TBP, as it is such an ambitious and inclusive environment.

I have lived in Marlow since I was a child and I think it is the perfect place to expand TBP. It is a great place to live and work. It is a very picturesque, lively town with lots of bars and restaurants and lovely shops, but also very well placed geographically, within easy access to London, Oxford and Reading.

Anna, what are the plans for the firm in the next 12-18 months? And further into the future?

We will continue to develop our practices in Combe and Marlow, hiring the best lawyers at all levels to join us on our journey. We are particularly keen to grow and expand the Marlow office over the next few years, particularly the trust, charity and tax services offered, with the aim of becoming an established part of that community. We intend to further strengthen our tax practice generally and will be looking to recruit more tax specialists. We are also keen to expand geographically into the Cotswolds, as well as continue to build our London practice.

Fiona, what types of lawyers are you interested in hearing from as part of your growth strategy?

We are looking for lawyers who have high standards and strive for technical excellence and continual improvement. We like lawyers who have an energetic personality and are business-orientated, but who, above all else, really value and enjoy building relationships with clients and working as a team.



For more information and a confidential chat about The Burnside Partnership and any current opportunities for legal roles in the South East region please contact Penny Heighway.

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