

News

New secure Client Portal

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new Client Portal which will change the way we communicate with clients in regards to the exchange of confidential information.

The security of all client information has always been a top priority, especially with the introduction of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) which becomes law in May this year.

We have therefore developed a new Client Portal with docSafe, a secure website portal where we upload your information such as Accounts, Tax Returns, VAT Returns etc. for you to access anytime. There is no cost to use the Client Portal.

Main features

- Easy to use
- Electronic signatures
- Secure and GDPR compliant
- Safe way to share documents/information with 24/7 access
- Historical information (from the date you start using docSAFE) will also be stored and accessible on the Client Portal
- Access via your PC laptop, iPad, smart phone, Lentells website and App.

We will be contacting all our clients over the next month with details of how to set up their docSafe account.



Making Tax Digital-working with you

The original introduction date of April 2018, which was thought of by many as ambitious, has now been deferred to April 2019. At that point, only VAT registered businesses with a turnover above the VAT threshold (currently £85,000) will need to comply but only for the

reporting of VAT. As most VAT businesses report their VAT figures quarterly, the only real change will be that the reporting will need to be done using specific MTD software.

Self-employed individuals, landlords and partnerships with a turnover above the VAT threshold will be required to make quarterly submissions for Income Tax from April 2020 at the earliest.

The anticipated timescale for companies has not changed.

Business Type	Quarterly Tax Reporting	Quarterly Filing
VAT registered businesses	VAT	From April 2019
Self employed, partnerships and landlords with turnover above the VAT threshold	Income Tax & National Insurance	From April 2020 at the earliest *
Self employed, partnerships and landlords with turnover below the VAT threshold	Income Tax & National Insurance	Voluntarily from April 2020
Companies	Corporation Tax	From April 2020

*Or on a voluntary basis prior to April 2020

Smaller businesses

HMRC has also confirmed that quarterly reporting and digital record keeping will not be mandatory for the self-employed and landlords with a turnover below the VAT threshold. However, they will be able to make voluntary submissions if they wish.

Next steps

We will be discussing the implications individually with all our clients in order to

be well prepared for these changes. This will include ensuring that all software is compliant with MTD requirements.

We are already working with an increasing number of our clients to put in place digital record-keeping systems through moving to a Cloud based system in preparation for MTD. As QuickBooks Platinum ProAdvisors we can offer relevant advice, ensure a smooth transition and provide ongoing training and support.



Tax-free childcare fully rolled out

The Government has announced its tax-free childcare scheme is open to all eligible families, almost a year after it was initially launched following a series of technical problems.

Working parents who earn more than £120 a week and less than £100,000 a year are eligible for the scheme if they have children aged 12 and under or under 17 for disabled children.

Parents, including the self-employed, can apply online for tax-free childcare by visiting the Childcare Choices website, which also provides a calculator to help choose which Government childcare support is best for them.

For every £8 that families pay in to their online childcare account, the Government will make a top-up payment of an additional £2, up to a maximum of £2,000 per child per year (or £4,000 for disabled children).

Inheritance Tax why it pays to know the facts

As an increasing number of families face higher Inheritance Tax (IHT) bills, a recent survey has revealed a worrying lack of understanding and planning with regards to passing on wealth. Latest figures show receipts from IHT have hit a record high, payments totalling £4.84bn in the 2016/17 tax year, double what it was just seven years earlier (£2.4bn in 2009/10).

87% of those surveyed claimed to have no IHT strategy in place, despite planning on distributing their estate to family and loved ones. The research also revealed a number of misconceptions, for example just under 40% of respondents did not think that their main home was liable for IHT. The research also identified that only 40% of those surveyed

3 in 5 Adults do not have a Will

A recent YouGov research project found that 60% of adults admitted they have no Will, of which a third have never given any thought to writing one.

An especially alarming finding was that 77% of cohabiting couples have not written a Will, despite the surviving partner having no legal entitlement to inherit an estate if their partner were to die. If you die without having made a Will, that is 'intestate', your assets will be distributed in line with the law of the land. This may well not be in accordance with your own wishes, but dying intestate means there is no option.

Having a Will in place can also help reduce the amount of Inheritance Tax payable on the value of your estate. The earlier you make these arrangements, the greater your chance of taking full advantage of the tax opportunities available, thereby maximising the amount that goes to your beneficiaries.

Your Will is also an opportunity to specify any legacy that you wish to leave to particular organisations or charities. All charitable donations made in a Will are free from Inheritance Tax.

If you have made a Will it is important to ensure that it is up to date, reflecting changing

were aware that the following maybe liable for IHT as part of an estate on death: pension savings, vehicles, life insurance policies not held under Trust, agricultural land, business assets and non-exempt gifts made in the last seven years.

Lentells provide a discreet estate planning service. As well as drawing up or reviewing your Will, we can advise on making full use of exemptions and lower tax rates on lifetime transfers, utilising tax efficient investments and optimising lifetime transfers between spouses. Please contact us for a free informal meeting.



circumstances and status. Many people make their Will when they buy their first property, but situations can change over the years and many fail to make the necessary amendments to reflect this. You should take into account marital status, children and business commitments such as owning or selling a company.

At Lentells we are able to work with you offering advice and support on all the key areas you need to consider when making or updating your Will. For more information go to the Will Writing and Probate page of our website www.lentells.co.uk

For an informal discussion on making or updating your Will please contact:

Rob Wegner at our Chard office on 01460 64441 robert.wegner@lentells.co.uk

Mike Griffiths at our Seaton office on 01297 20584 michael.griffiths@lentells.co.uk

Philip Bedford at our Taunton office on 01823 286274 philip.bedford@lentells.co.uk

National Insurance changes

Employers and employees

From 6 April 2018, the National Insurance Contributions (NIC) thresholds for employers and employees rise from £157 to £162 per week (£8,424 per year). The Upper Earnings Limit will increase to £892 per week (£46,384 per year).

Self-employed

The proposed increases in the rates of Class 4 NIC for the self employed, which were due to be introduced in April 2018/19, are no longer going ahead following a Government re-think.

It was also previously announced that Class 2 NIC would be abolished in April 2018, and that entitlement to State Pension would have to be built up by paying Class 4 NIC. However, workers on a lower wage do not pay Class 4 NIC, so would have to pay Class 3 NIC to qualify for State Pension, which would leave them considerably worse off.

The Treasury has confirmed that it is committed to abolishing Class 2 NIC to simplify the system at some point, but that it wanted to take time to ensure there were no unintended consequences for the lowest paid.



Challenging times ahead for Landlords

The number of landlords planning to reduce their residential portfolio has hit a 10-year high, according to the National Landlords Association (NLA). Research by the NLA, which has more than 65,000 members, shows 20% of

landlords are considering selling up after the Government announced a series of tax changes.

These include the withdrawal of Mortgage Interest Relief for higher and additional rate taxpayers, a 3% surcharge on additional property purchases and a ban on upfront letting fees for tenants.

Changes to tax relief on finance costs on residential properties were introduced on 6 April 2017 and, when fully implemented, will restrict costs to the basic rate of Income Tax. Before April 2017, landlords could

deduct their mortgage interest costs from their income as part of their Tax Return.

In addition, under the new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards rules, from 1 April 2018 it will be illegal to let a property with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating lower than E to a new tenant and for all existing tenancies from April 2020. Although there are a few exemptions, a penalty of up to £4,000 will be imposed for breaches.

SMEs to get help with late payments

SMEs can get help resolving pay disputes following the recent appointment of a new Small Business Commissioner.

The complaints handling service of the Small Business Commissioner was launched at the end of last year. In addition, a new website has been launched to provide guidance on payment issues. <https://www.smallbusinesscommissioner.gov.uk/>

More than a quarter of all invoices are still being paid beyond the agreed terms, despite the introduction of new payment practices reporting regulations.

According to the research just over half of all invoices are paid within 30 days. A third were paid between 31 and 60 days with 15% paid later than 60 days.

From last year large businesses and Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) are obliged to publish details twice a year on the average time taken to pay supplier invoices as part of a package of measures to tackle late payment.



Platinum Certified ProAdvisor

QuickBooks Online training 2018

Lentells are running a series of QuickBooks Online training sessions throughout the year at both our Chard and Taunton offices.

Each session will run from 9.30am to 1.00pm and will cover:

- Navigation through QuickBooks Online
- Maintaining the Customers and Suppliers Ledgers
- Performing bank reconciliations
- Amending the QuickBooks Chart of Accounts
- Generating your VAT return
- Generating the QuickBooks Reports
- Preparing Budgets (Plus version only)

Thursday 3 May	Taunton
Thursday 28 June	Chard
Wednesday 26 September	Taunton
Thursday 29 November	Chard

There will be a maximum of 6 delegates on each session and the cost will be £100 + VAT. For more information, or to book a place, please go to the Events page of our website: <https://www.lentells.co.uk/quickbooks-online-training-2018>

Auto-enrolment to be extended to include 18 year olds

The starting age for automatic enrolment into workplace pensions will be lowered from 22 to 18, under new Government plans.

Auto-enrolment was introduced in 2012 and has seen participation in workplace pensions rise from 55% to 78% of all eligible employees in 2016 - an increase of around 6 million people. Extending the scheme to include younger people will add an estimated 900,000 workers saving into workplace pensions, adding £770 million to annual savings.

As a result of auto-enrolment, the Department for Work and Pensions expects an additional £19.7 billion to be contributed to pensions annually by 2019/20.

If you would like to discuss any aspects of Payroll or Auto enrolment in more detail please contact our Payroll team on 01460 68700 or email payroll@lentells.co.uk



Summer Shows 2018

Lentells will be at the following shows this summer and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. We will be offering refreshments throughout the day and the chance for a welcome sit down and chat.

Axe Vale Show

Saturday 23rd – Sunday 24th June

Honiton Show

Thursday 2nd August

As in previous years, we will be in the Blackdown Hills Business Association's marquee which is always a hive of activity showcasing a fantastic variety of local businesses.

Dunster Show

Friday 17th August

Soroptimist Swimathon 2018

Congratulations to our four teams who swam a hugely impressive 432 lengths at the Taunton Soroptimist Swimathon at the end of February.

Since its launch in 1988, the Swimathon has raised over £610,900, the vast majority of which has been given directly to a variety of locally-based charities. The charities who will benefit this year are St Margaret's Somerset



Hospice, Taunton Foodbank Development Project and Mind in Taunton & West Somerset.

Lentells were delighted to be one of the sponsors in this, the Swimathon's 30th Anniversary year.

Many thanks to everyone who sponsored us and to those who came along on the day to support us.



How to contact us

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