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# It's in your hands

## A fresh look at the year ahead.

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**Right now, the only certainty is uncertainty. Whatever your views, 2019 will be a watershed and with only days until the big change few, if any, can reliably predict the winners and losers.**

As frustrating as it is there is little point worrying about the economic landscape beyond 29 March. Some sectors will thrive in a way previously made impossible by EU membership, whilst others will be hamstrung, at least in the short term. But rest assured, the UK and future trading partners will adapt quickly to make the brave new world a success!

For vineyards and farmers alike, fundamentals will not change and land use at the end of 2019 will almost certainly be as it is now. Accepting that some matters are beyond our control, perhaps now is the time to have a fresh look at one or two opportunities for the year ahead.

- ◆ **New Buildings** – Whether establishing a new vineyard or improving the infrastructure of an established venture, a new building often signifies a significant step forward. In 2018 the maximum size of an agricultural building allowed under Permitted Development Rights increased from 465 sq m to 1,000 sq m. Buildings can create exciting opportunities for those able to meet the relatively basic conditions. These include: the holding being no less than 5 hectares, no part of the development being less than 25m from a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road and any part of the building, if intended for livestock use, to be no less than 400m from the curtilage of a dwelling.

Erecting a new building under current development rights is relatively straightforward. Added to the fact that the cost of borrowed money remains at almost an all-time low, it is difficult to argue against the construction of a new building for current or even future use.

- ◆ **Public Rights of Way** – Footpaths and bridleways are often unwelcome and

can, at the other end of the scale, cause significant difficulties. In some circumstances they can be redirected but often existing routes must be incorporated into the land use system. For vineyards this can be costly.

What can you do if a new vineyard is planned across land where there is evidence that an unofficial footpath is being created? Under Section 31(6) of the Highways Act 1980 a plan and statutory declaration can be registered with the local authority identifying only officially recognised rights of way. If submitted correctly these documents should prevent any new permanent rights of way being established for 20 years from the date they are submitted and additionally this action will also help to preserve all important capital land values.

- ◆ **Grants and Other Free Money** – Whilst there will be some changes to the way the rural sector is funded in future as matters stand now there is an opportunity to secure meaningful sums of free money. The Basic Payment Scheme and Countryside Stewardship Schemes are open to all land owners and farmers with at least 5 hectares. In 2018 the average combined income for those schemes was in the region of £250 per hectare and often it is possible to receive income for a land management regime already in place!

In recent years there have also been various Rural Development grants for business development purposes. Although these schemes are currently closed it is anticipated they will re-open before the end of 2019 and could be available to fund projects such as processing equipment and buildings, specialist machinery, cold air drains and so on. Grants are typically around 40% of the total capital cost. To check on the availability of grant schemes the best way is to monitor publications such as Farmers Weekly or the government website [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).



- Vineyard consultants
- Farm and Estate Management
- Rent Reviews
- Planning applications
- Basic Payment Scheme
- Countryside Stewardship
- Grant applications



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