BIGGINE Christmas 2020

Merry Christmas! Sporting chance Pleasing plaudits



Sporting chance

The Head of our Commercial Team, James Towler, and solicitors Emily Steed and Will Bates recently played a significant role in advising Leeds United on its sponsorship agreements, including SBOTOP, Clipper Logistics, JD Sports, Hisense, VitalityHealth, VitalityLife, VitaltityCar, VitalityInvest, Bet 365, Utilita, EA Sports, eBuyer and LNT Group.

Here James looks at some of the key questions for both sides.

A sponsorship deal, however exciting it may be for those involved on the ground, is at heart a commercial deal like any other business transaction. Each party has something that interests the other and the only issue standing in the way is making sure that both parties agree on how they will benefit.

But paying attention to the detail is just as important as it would be in any other commercial transaction and getting the contract right can be complex because of the breadth and depth of possible permutations.

It is a straightforward enough proposition: one party has a brand of value and the other wishes to associate its brand with that in order to increase its own brand recognition to help it achieve its targets.



The sponsor wants its link with the club or individual to generate a favourable response from its markets and the sponsored brand wants to benefit financially. However, there are a great many more issues to consider for both parties.

In the case of football, a club being in the Premier League generates a hugely increased level of contact with the sponsor's audience because the matches are broadcast, not only in the UK but across the world. This makes it the most valuable sporting league in the world.

But the value of the club also depends on its success so the way the cost of sponsorship is considered also needs to look at the variants of performance. Will the deal be different if the club is relegated in the next season or will it improve if it wins the league? Sponsors are savvy and will react to changing circumstances quickly so this needs to have some detailed consideration.

There are also external issues to consider, as

readily highlighted by the current COVID-19 pandemic. What will the sponsor want to see happen if there continues to be no spectators allowed at games or, even worse, if football has to be cancelled altogether again in a complete lockdown? There is also an impact on some of the benefits a sponsor might expect, in terms of them and their guests being able to mix with players at events or in holding their own events at the stadium. What happens if this is not allowed under pandemic restrictions?

The club or individual involved also needs to establish whether the sponsor is an appropriate "fit" with its own values, with some markets not being considered appropriate.

Payment terms are also important, with the club needing to ensure the sponsor can afford its financial commitment over the agreed period to safeguard income.

None of these issues are insurmountable but do depend on reliable and good quality advice. Our own recent experience of working with Leeds United was made more difficult because the normal timescale concertinaed due to the overrun of the Championship season in

the pandemic and the shorter than usual break before Leeds joined the Premier League but it certainly proved that if all parties have the will, there is certainly a way to achieve great deals!

Partner James Towler is Head of our Corporate and Commercial Department.

He routinely advises companies, LLPs and partnerships, on both corporate and commercial matters. Regular instructions include buying and selling businesses and companies, restructuring companies and groups, joint ventures, shareholder and partnership agreements. James drafts and advises on commercial agreements for his clients, such as terms and conditions, asset sale and lease agreements and private loans.

James has acted for a broad range of both domestic and international clients including football clubs, motor retailers, national estate agents, racecourse operators, manufacturers, publishers, online service providers, retailers and farmers.

James headed up the Corporate and Commercial departments at other well-known regional practices before joining McCormicks in September 2019.



We have appointed a new Executive to bring extra capacity to our busy Private Client department.

Welcoming



Victoria Sly is a highly-regarded Private Client Executive with more than 20 years' experience in the profession.

She will assist Head of Private Client, Partner Elaine Lightfoot, dealing with Wills, Trusts, Lasting Powers of Attorney and Court of Protection matters, along with the administration of Estates and Probate work.

Elaine said: "We have seen a huge increase in Wills and Trusts instructions as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt, with many elderly and vulnerable people and those on the front line working to organise their personal affairs. Social distancing and shielding have been an added complication



when Wills have had to be witnessed in person and some clients have enlisted the help of neighbours, with Wills being witnessed at a safe distance on garden paths, over fences and in one case, using the top of the client's wheelie bin (disinfected!) as a makeshift desk for testators and witnesses to lean on!

"Recent guidance has resulted in permission for Wills to be witnessed remotely, using platforms such as Zoom or FaceTime, but this, too, has challenges in ensuring that it happens in real time and that extreme care is taken in assessing capacity and undue influence for all testators.

"Given all these elements, Victoria's appointment is a very positive addition to the team which means that we can enhance and extend our service."

McCormicks' Private Client department has recently won praise in both of the leading guides to the legal profession, the UK Legal 500 and Chambers UK.

As we went to print with our Christmas newsletter this time last year, we were still awaiting the results of the December General Election and to find out if and when Brexit would go ahead.

Victoria Chinsunas and New Year Greetings

We were all still in blissful ignorance of the way that 2020 would shape up and how each and every one of us would be affected by the outbreak of a global pandemic which has had repercussions across the world.

We are now, however, seeing a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel with the news that successful vaccines have been developed, and our hopes are raised for the possibility of getting back to something nearer normal in 2021.

I know it is difficult at the moment for many of us to put the losses we have suffered, personally, socially and financially, behind us but in the festive season I want to focus on what we can celebrate!

On the McCormicks front, I will celebrate that, thanks to the strength and dedication of our team, we have been able to continue to provide a top class service to our friends and clients, as is reflected

by our rankings in the latest guides to the legal profession. We have been able to adapt to new ways of working and we have welcomed a new colleague, Victoria Sly, to boost our Private Client team.

As a firm, we have also been delighted by the promotion of Leeds United to the Premier League and by Harrogate Town attaining the Football League. Their progress has definitely been a bright spot in the year.

You may also know, and there are more details in these pages, that I have been elected as Interim Chairman of the FA. Those who know me well know that I am at my best when busy, so I am happy to assure you that my eye remains as firmly on the McCormicks ball as it does on any football

We need to look forward to what we hope might happen next year. We cannot wait to be able to meet in person, shake hands and share our thoughts face-to-face.

We would love to be able to attend our usual events, from raising the rafters at Elland Road to enjoying the sunshine at the Great Yorkshire Show and hearing about the brilliant authors at the Theakston Old Peculiar Crime Writing Festival. Most of all, we hope to be able to present the annual spectacle of the Yorkshire Young Achievers Awards at which we mark the remarkable progress of Yorkshire's young people.

Whatever 2021 brings, my colleagues and I wish you as merry a Christmas as you can achieve and a happy, healthy and successful New Year!





Senior Partner Peter McCormick has been unanimously elected interim Chairman of the Football Association (FA) following the resignation of Greg Clarke, becoming the first person to have been Chairman of both the Premier League and the FA.

Peter made interim Chairman of the FA

Peter was Vice Chairman of the FA and has been appointed as football faces one of its most difficult challenges in history in dealing with the ramifications of COVID-19 for the sport at all levels.

Greg Clarke resigned as FA Chairman following the language he used when talking to MPs about diversity. In a statement, the FA said: "Peter McCormick will step into the role as interim FA Chairman with immediate effect and the FA Board will begin the process of identifying and appointing a new chair in due course."

Peter has a long career as a leading Sports lawyer. He is also Chairman of the Football Board and Chairman of the Legal Advisory Group of the Premier League, both Executive positions, and a Director of the FA, representing the Premier League.

In 2014 he was appointed Chairman of the Premier League and served in that role for 15 months, prior to Richard Scudamore's combined appointment as Executive Chairman and CEO.

Peter said: "Despite the unfortunate circumstances which have led to my election, it is a great honour to have been chosen to lead the FA and an even greater privilege to become the first person to chair both the Premier League and the FA."





Double Congratulations

Congratulations to our friends, clients and sponsors of the Yorkshire Young Achievers Awards, Rudding Park, who have won two awards for the hotel spa in recent weeks.

They took the Hotel Spa of the Year: Western Europe and Scandinavia title in the 2020 World Spa and Wellness Awards. Organised by UK-base Professional Beauty Group, the World Spa & Wellness Awards incorporates a thorough and independent judging process in which all spas are assessed by experienced industry professionals.

They then went on to vin the Best Outdoor Facilities category in the Good Spa Guide awards against some stiff competition.





The practice has earned praise from clients and peers in both the UK Legal 500 and Chambers UK.

The UK Legal 500's quotes from clients described McCormicks as "ideal legal partners", "a safe pair of hands", and having an "excellent knowledge of our business and requirements". One client said: "The individuals who work for McCormicks are all highly competent and knowledgeable in their fields. They engage with clients, listening to our requirements and preferred approaches, responding with good advice to enable us to reach our objectives."

Senior Partner, Peter McCormick OBE, is once again listed in the elite "Leading Lawyers" section which highlights outstanding lawyers nationwide. Both Peter and consultant Neil Goodrum are also in the Hall of Fame, with Peter highlighted for Sport and Neil for Mediators. Partner Phil Edmondson wins a place in the Next Generation Partners list for Sport.

of the latest guides to the legal profession.

The firm is praised for its expertise and service in the editorial covering a number of different legal disciplines, including Dispute Resolution, Agriculture and Estates, IT and Telecoms and, new this year, Finance/Insolvency and Corporate Recovery.

Solicitors at the firm have won 41 individual recommendations, while the firm as a whole is recommended for 18 areas of law.

It has again led the way for Harrogate and North Yorkshire-based practices as the only Harrogate practice recommended in six areas of law, namely EU and Competition, Insolvency and Corporate Recovery. **Contentious Trusts** and Probate, Dispute

Resolution: Professional Discipline (London) and Sport (Yorkshire and the Humber and London).

with new accolades

Hard work and excellent customer service have again paid off for McCormicks with accolades in both

Chambers UK ranks the practice nationally for its Sport work, with Peter McCormick highlighted as an "Eminent Practitioner" and described as "remaining at the forefront of Sports law, with market-leading expertise in commercial and regulatory football work". McCormicks is the only firm in North Yorkshire to be ranked nationally.

McCormicks is ranked regionally for its work in Agriculture and Rural Affairs, with its work for a number of large landed estates on a wide range of matters.

McCormicks is the only Harrogate firm ranked for Crime in the region, while Consultant Neil Goodrum wins a ranking for Mediation, which describes him as a "sought-after mediator for commercial and contractual disputes".

The guide's sister publication, the High

Net Worth Guide, also offers praise for the Private Client department, with Partner Elaine Lightfoot described by one interviewee as "very helpful, knowledgeable and easy to work with".

Peter McCormick said: "We are delighted that these results prove that we are doing a good job. Our team has worked exceptionally hard during the current challenging times to provide an effective, valuable, service to clients."









What the guides say.

Agriculture and Estates and Rural Affairs

McCormicks has a strong presence in agriculture with a wide range of clients, and acts for a number of substantial estates including the estate of the late John Strutt (comprising of over 100 properties). The team handles commercial matters including advising landowning clients on the diversification of their estates. Practice head Peter McCormick is a longstanding member of the Country Landowners and Rural Business Association (CLA). UK Legal 500

Well-regarded agricultural practice based in Harrogate, providing clients with full rural property and tax planning services. Acts for a number of large landed estates on a wide range of matters including acquisition, disposal, voluntary registration and diversification. Also represents clients in

disputes. Key specialism in work involving shooting estates. A client says: "Although they're

a relatively small firm in Harrogate, they produce a premier league service," adding that "they have a lot of credibility and experience. They were quick to contact me and kept me up to date." Advised a client on Ripley Castle shoot and other shooting estates in their portfolio. Peter McCormick advises agricultural clients on a range of matters including diversification, shooting leases and promotion agreements. A client says: "What I like about Peter is that he is always there for you, he is always timely and he always provides quality advice." **Chambers UK**

Charities and Not-For-Profit

McCormicks has demonstrated notable growth in the charity sector and maintains a substantial regional and national client base, which includes Harrogate International Festivals and the Premier League Charitable Fund. The practice also continues to advise the trustees of the Yorkshire Young Achievers Foundation on tax advice and regulatory guidance. Practice head Peter McCormick is a trustee of the Football Foundation, as well as several other organisations. "McCormicks are a friendly and approachable firm. They offer a range of expertise and are always capable of responding on a range of issues. They respond quickly and are receptive to client needs." "The individuals who work for McCormicks are all highly competent and knowledgeable in their fields. They engage with clients, listening to our requirements and preferred approaches responding with good advice to enable us to reach our objectives." UK Legal 500

Commercial **Property**

McCormicks advises on commercial and





residential property matters, encompassing site acquisitions, developments and occupancy issues, including landlord and tenant mandates and commercial leasings. The team counts charities, sports clubs and private individuals as clients. Heather Roberts leads the practice, and has particular experience in handling commercial letting matters for retailers and urban regeneration schemes. UK Legal 500

Contentious **Trusts and Probate**

The contentious trusts and probate team at McCormicks is singled out for assisting the executors, trustees and potential beneficiaries of significant family estates and trusts. The practice acts in a variety of private wealth disputes, including those with an international element. Key names include Philip Edmondson, who frequently represents clients in TOLATA claims; and Elaine Lightfoot, who regularly acts in cases involving challenges to testamentary capacity. UK Legal 500

Corporate and Commercial

Harrogate-based firm McCormicks recently recruited James Towler from an in-house position to head up the corporate and commercial department. The firm is a notable player in the sports sector under name partner Peter McCormick, though domestic companies in the leisure, hotel and hospitality sectors also engage the team. The practice routinely handles share sales and acquisitions, joint venture negotiations and corporate restructurings. "McCormicks' knowledge

of professional sport in general and professional football in particular made them ideal legal partners. Their calm approach and attention to detail were perfect for what was a particularly complicated deal. James Towler and Emily Steed deserve special mention." UK Legal 500

Crime: Fraud

The "authoritative and capable" Peter Minnikin leads the team at McCormicks, which represents clients in fraud investigations on a local, national, and international basis. Typical cases include tax fraud investigations, power of attorney abuse, and proceedings related to misappropriation of corporate funds, The retiring Geoffrey Rogers has been replaced by corporate specialist James Towler. "McCormicks has a good reputation throughout Yorkshire and has had for many years. Amongst other firms working in the same area they are regarded as being 'a safe pair of hands' who can be trusted to deal with a case professionally and promptly." "My personal experience recently has involved me dealing with Peter Minnikin who I have found to be authoritative and capable. Having referred a client to him in a case where there was a clear conflict of interest, I have received excellent feedback both directly from the party introduced and from third parties that the standard of representation was excellent. The matter was dealt with speedily and efficiently and the client was happy with the outcome." UK Legal 500

Crime: General

McCormicks works across Yorkshire and the UK as a whole on high-cost cases ranging from motoring

offences to murder, with particular specialisms including historic sex abuse, regulatory offences, and corporate manslaughter. Practice head Peter Minnikin specialises in drug-related and violent crime cases. Geoffrey Rogers has retired from the firm, with corporate and fraudrelated work handled by new commercial head lames Towler. "Peter Minnikin is hard working and insightful with good client skills."

"McCormicks are a strong multi-disciplinary practice rather than a boutique or niche firm. They can offer a wide scope of services to clients." "We enjoy a referral relationship with the firm. Peter Minnikin is an experienced and astute advocate, a well known face in the region, who has stepped into the partnership role with apparent ease since the departure of Geoff Rogers. Geoff would be a hard act for anyone to follow but Peter has more than stood up to the plate in this respect. He has made the role his own and continues to attract high quality work." UK Legal 500

Dispute Resolution/ Commercial Litigation

Harrogate-based firm McCormicks' commercial litigation group "punches well above its weight". The "'impressive" Philip Edmondson leads the practice and handles a range of commercial disputes including claims in the sports sector and breach of contract, insolvency and professional negligence disputes. The practice has a particular niche in football, for which managing partner Peter McCormick has a strong reputation. "This law firm punches well above its weight." "Phil

Edmondson is a very user-friendly lawyer who is a pleasure to deal with. Peter McCormick has great experience in football-related disputes." "Peter McCormick is an extremely competent lawyer who has, as a result of his decades of work in the top echelons of English football, and almost unrivalled grasp of not just legal affairs, but human nature and strategy."

UK Legal 500

Dispute Resolution: Mediators

McCormicks Senior Partner Peter McCormick OBE is widely respected for his sport-related mediation work. Chairman of the Premier League's legal advisory group, he is also a member of a panel of legal specialists for Sport Resolutions (UK), an organisation that provides mediation and arbitration facilities for parties involved in sport-related disputes. Neil Goodrum at CEDR Chambers is a full-time mediator, who has extensive experience of mediating complex disputes across a range of industries, and which are frequently high in value. Goodrum is a former senior litigation partner at McCormicks, where he remains a consultant. UK Legal 500

EU and Competition

Harrogate-based firm McCormicks handles competition litigation for its sports clients, including instructions from The Premier League. Practice head Philip Edmondson and Peter McCormick are also retained by retail, leisure and entertainment clients for matters involving the relevant market regulators. UK Legal 500

Finance/ Insolvency and Corporate Recovery

McCormicks has increased its work with insolvency practitioners, advising on a number of business and personal insolvency proceedings alongside its ongoing expertise in sports club and legal insolvencies. Practice head Philip Edmondson maintains key relationships with insolvency practitioners, assisted by corporate head James Towler. Managing Partner Peter McCormick is an established name for sports-related insolvencies. "Strong regional practice." "This firm has shown excellence in its management of our debt recovery cases over a number of years which has added considerable value to our business. More recently the team has been expanded to include the handling of smaller claims as back-up to our in-house operation, this has proved to be highly successful."" "We work with a small team at McCormicks, headed by Philip Edmondson, supported by Will Bates. Both have an excellent knowledge of our business and requirements which assists us in reaching our goals." UK Legal 500

Family

McCormicks advises clients on a variety of family law issues, encompassing financial settlements, children issues, and domestic abuse allegations, with an emphasis on the early settlement of cases. The team acts for clients from a variety of income groups and is able to handle complex cases with cross-border elements. Stephen Hopwood leads the

team. "Despite a long and bitter battle to resolve finances following my divorce I have been supported all the way through. They have made sure my interests have been well supported legally and emotionally. Due to circumstances outside our control it has been a protracted process, but the actions taken have been well considered and targeted with the aim of reducing the cost impact. Their resolve and understand has kept me sane in difficult circumstances." "Stephen Hopwood has been a rock and gone the extra mile to keep me strong. He has had to decipher a complex situation created by the nature of the case and the individuals involved. Resilience of Stephen and his team alongside well considered focus have been something that have been something that has been important for me to rely on." UK Legal 500

IT and Telecoms

Alongside its core roster of sports, media and entertainment clients, Harrogate-based firm McCormicks acts for domestic clients in the IT sector on a range of instructions. Key mandates for practice head James Towler include handling the procurement of E-Tourism products. On the supplier side, Towler advises on licensing agreements for social media marketing platforms and WiFi services. UK Legal 500

Mediators

Neil Goodrum of CEDR Chambers is a soughtafter mediator for a wide range of commercial and contractual disputes. Areas of strength include professional negligence, contractual and sportrelated disputes. "He's a considered mediator and a very calming influence." "Neil is understated in an effective way, and is able to nudge parties together subtly by providing potential avenues to guide them towards settlement." Chambers UK

Private Client: Personal Tax, Trusts and Probate

"Peter McCormick is a key contact at McCormicks and jointly heads up the private client team with Elaine Lightfoot. The group provides a broad range of services to private clients and handles complex instructions. Particular areas of focus include estate planning and administration work, Court of Protection matters and lasting power of attorney issues." UK Legal 500

Private Wealth Law

Elaine Lightfoot of McCormicks advises affluent clients on Inheritance Tax planning and trust and estate administration, as well as Court of Protection matters. One interviewee notes: "She is very helpful, knowledgeable and easy to work with, and she explained everything thoroughly." **Chambers UK**

Professional Discipline

McCormicks stands out for its strong reputation in football-related disciplinary matters. In addition, the practice also acts in SRA investigations and SDT defence matters. Peter McCormick OBE is the head of the sports and media and entertainment practice. Peter Minnikin acts for medical practitioners, physiotherapists and the Yorkshire Agricultural Society. Another key

individual is Philip Edmondson, who leads the litigation services team. Senior associate Sara Morgan focuses on advising registered pharmacists. "Excellent technical knowledge and commercial experience." UK Legal 500

Property Litigation

McCormicks acts for its commercial property clients, including portfolio holders and commercial occupiers, in contentious matters including trespass and dilapidation claims, and rent disputes, as well as complex landlord and tenant litigation relating to break notices, forfeitures and covenants. Commercial litigator Philip Edmondson takes the lead, supported by real-estate specialist Heather Roberts. UK Legal 500

Sport (London)

McCormicks operates

under the leadership of name partner Peter McCormick, who is chairman of the Legal Advisory Group of the Premier League and advises on corporate, commercial, regulatory and contentious matters. He is supported by Philip Edmondson, who is particularly strong in commercial litigation, as well as James Towler, who focuses on corporate and commercial transactions. "Peter McCormick has unparalleled knowledge and experience in commercial and sporting matters related to football. He has both wisdom and judgement, which is of immense value to clients."

"I have recently worked with Philip Edmondson on a high profile football disciplinary dispute. He was very impressive, both in terms of complicated client management and in terms of his legal input. I would not hesitate

to recommend him to clients for sporting disputes in the future." UK Legal 500

Sport (UK-wide)

Yorkshire practice providing expertise in a range of matters including contentious and non-contentious football work, continuing to be a principal adviser to the Premier League as well as being involved in grassroots football development. Advises on a broad range of corporate and commercial issues, including sponsorship, governance issues and insolvency. Continued recent activity in shooting, advising shoot proprietors on regulatory and employment matters. Clients say the firm is "excellent - a regional practice that punches above its weight offering really commercial, practical, specialist sector advice." Represented the Premier League in two European cases surrounding third-party player ownership. Peter McCormick remains at the forefront of sports law, with market-leading expertise in commercial and regulatory football work.

Chambers UK

Sport (Yorkshire and the Humber)

As a market-leading firm in the sports sector, McCormicks is retained by prolific UK and global football bodies, sports clubs and high-profile individuals. Philip Edmondson heads up the contentious side of the practice, handling disputes and regulatory investigations for The Premier League and Leeds United FC. Name partner Peter McCormick and new recruit James Towler handle the full breadth of non-contentious issues, ranging from sponsorship

and broadcasting agreements, employment advice and corporate due diligence to charitable initiatives, sanctions and the purchase and development of sporting grounds. The team also provides unique advice to shoot proprietors including assisting with lease renewals, site operations and commercial terms and conditions. "Phil Edmondson is a very user-friendly lawyer who is a pleasure to deal with." "Peter McCormick has great experience in football-related disputes." "'In Phil Edmondson they have an excellent young partner: very easy to deal with, extremely smart and exceedingly hard working." UK Legal 500



OUR **EXPERTISE**

McCormicks offers the full portfolio of legal services to all forms of organisation including businesses, charities and sporting bodies, together with private individuals. The firm offers expertise in all areas of corporate and commercial work whilst maintaining a commitment to the personal client in areas such as rural property, tax, trusts, probate, family matters and crime.



Charities & Community

- Charities
- Not For Profit Corporate &

Commercial

- Acquisitions and Disposals
- Banking and Finance
- Commercial Agreements
- Competition and FULaw
- Corporate Crime, Fraud and Risk
- IT and Data Protection

- Insolvency and Bankruptcy
- Intellectual Property
- Partnership and Company Law
- Regulatory and Disciplinary
- Crime
- General Crime
- Corporate Crime, Fraud and Risk
- Dispute Resolution and Litigation
- Commercial Disputes
- Mediation and Arbitration
 - Partner/Shareholder Disputes
 - Property and Construction
 - Reputation • Management

- Employment Family &
- Matrimonial
- Children Matrimonial
- Insolvency &
- Bankruptcy
- Mediation &
- Arbitration
- Property
- Agriculture and Estates
- Commercial Property
- Development and
- Regeneration
- Residential Property
- Sport, Media & Entertainment
- IT and Data Protection

- Insolvency and Bankruptcy
- Intellectual Property
- Media and Entertainment
- Mediation and Arbitration
- Regulatory and Disciplinary
- Reputation Management
- Sponsorship
- Sport
- Tax, Trusts, Wills & Estates
- Agriculture & Estates

Trust and Tax Planning

- Care of the Elderly Tax and Trusts Disputes
- Employment
- Wills and Probate

McCORMICKS SOLICITORS

Wharfedale House, 35-37 East Parade, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG1 5LQ. T: 01423 530630 F: 01423 530709 enquiries@mccormicks-solicitors.com www.mccormicks-solicitors.com

PARTNERS: Peter McCormick OBE • Stephen Hopwood • Peter Minnikin Philip Edmondson • Elaine Lightfoot • Heather Roberts • James Towler

