

# BUSINESS MONDAY

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### UAE officials visit over meat exports

**OFFICIALS** from the United Arab Emirates have visited Leicester in a search of meat exporters.

The delegation was looking to award export licences to halal meat producers in Britain.

The group met with members of the Halal Monitoring Committee, in Rolleston Street, Spinney Hills, Leicester, to find accredited suppliers.

Shaykh Yunus Dudhwala, committee chairman, said: "This is a tremendous opportunity for the UK to have close ties with UAE member states and support the export of genuine halal products from the UK."

Halal meat comes from animals slaughtered in accordance with Islamic teaching.

### Firm lends a hand

**CHARITIES** are set to benefit from a tool hire firm's generosity.

Brandon Hire, in Braunstone Lane East, is planning to give community groups free hire to help complete projects.

Branch manager Jason Litwinko said: "We know that many projects get abandoned because there are simply not enough funds to buy or hire equipment."

For more details on the scheme, e-mail:

[jaz@thevitalagency.co.uk](mailto:jaz@thevitalagency.co.uk)

### Legal eagles rated

**A GROUP** of lawyers have been named among the UK's top 25 best performers in their field for the second year.

Harvey Ingram's trusts and probate team, based in Leicester, received the accolade from the Private Client Practitioner magazine.

Mark Dunkley, head of Harvey's private client group, said: "To get it again for a second year running is a superb achievement."

### Tell us your news

**ARE** you a business which has recently won a major contract, is creating jobs or has developed a new product?

If so, we will be interested to hear from you. Call 0116 222 4212 or e-mail:

[iangriffin@leicestermercury.co.uk](mailto:iangriffin@leicestermercury.co.uk)  
[tompegden@leicestermercury.co.uk](mailto:tompegden@leicestermercury.co.uk)

### LOCAL SHARES

AstraZeneca	2895	32
Banco Santander SA	743.5	29.5
Barratt Developments	112.7	2.6
Breedon Aggregates	18	0.25
Dunelm Group	392	8.1
Galliford Try	385	10
Image Scan Holdings	1.62	-0.12
Intercede Group	82.5	0
Lavendon Group	93	0
Mattioli Woods	249.5	0
Next	2000	20
RPC Group	292.7	11.7
Toppis Tiles	67.5	-3.5

## HOUSING: GROWTH IN LOANS AND SAVINGS

# Society reports rise in mortgage values

**Market Harborough Building Society** said the value of mortgages it lent last year rose by 12 per cent to £69.5 million after winning business from rivals.

by **IAN GRIFFIN**

BUSINESS EDITOR

This led to a 2.8 per cent rise in its mortgage book in 2010, despite the difficult housing market.

Chief executive Mark Robinson said: "Such growth represents a significant winning of market share from competitors."

Meanwhile, the society's savings arm grew by £20.7 million in the face of soaring inflation and low interest rates. Total assets grew by 3.7 per cent to £432.67 million.

The society saw pre-tax profit fall by 25 per cent to £750,000. However, this included a payment of £80,000

to the Government's Financial Services Compensation Scheme, which was set up in the wake of the banking crisis. The Market Harborough has 51,000 savings accounts and 4,365 mortgage accounts.

Mr Robinson said rising inflation and the impact of Government spending cuts was likely to put pressure on its savings arm this year, as well as an expected increase in competition from banks. However, it said personal service and effective marketing helped give it an edge over rivals.

"With the continued support of both existing and new members, 2010 proved to be another strong year for the society, enabling us to continue our investment for the future," said Mr Robinson.

"In an increasingly faceless world we are proud we continue as a strong, independent regional society with our roots firmly in the local community."

The society announced chairman David Baker will stand down after 13 years at its annual meeting on April 28. He will be replaced by Nick Johnston. The Market Harborough has six branches and one agency – an outlet within another business.

Leicestershire has six building societies – the highest number of any county in the UK – which have more than 250,000 members and assets of more than £1.6 billion.

Last month, Hinckley and Rugby Building Society, the county's largest mutual with assets of almost £600 million, reported pre-tax profit was £226,000 in 2010, down from £270,000 in 2009. It blamed a standstill in the housing market.



**DEAL:** Grahame Berkeley (left) is taking over Baker Richmond after the retirement of partner Clive Baker

## Financial advice company bought by rival

**A FINANCIAL** services firm has been bought by a larger rival after the retirement of two of its three partners.

Baker Richmond Financial Services, in London Road, Leicester, has announced it is being taken over by Berkeley Burke (Holdings), in Regent Street in the city.

The deal comes after co-founders and partners Clive and Rita Baker retired. The remaining partner,

Gary Major, will move to Berkeley's offices with four staff.

The sale, for an undisclosed sum, means that Baker's 3,500 clients and the £70 million of funds it looks after will be managed by Berkeley's wealth management division, which will now employ 22 staff.

Mr Baker said: "We elected to sell the business to Berkeley Burke because their ethos is entirely in line with our own. It was also abso-

lutely vital that all staff remain in their positions."

Grahame Berkeley, chairman of Berkeley Burke said: "This merger forms part of our strategic growth plan and is one of a number of successful acquisitions the company has made over the past 10 years."

Berkeley Burke has another eight wealth management staff in its London office and employs a total of 65 people.

## Economy fears as new jobs slip

**JOB** opportunities slipped back last month following a big increase earlier in the year, suggesting that the economic recovery remains fragile, according to a new report.

Recruitment firm Reed said employer demand was still up by 25 per cent over the past year despite the slight fall in March.

Firms in manufacturing, transport and logistics, engineering and construction showed strong demand for staff, while salaries for new jobs across the economy were slightly up last month, although they continued to lag behind the rate of inflation, said Reed.

Martin Warnes, managing director of reed.co.uk, said: "The sharp rise in job creation witnessed in January and February has slowed, indicating economic recovery should not be taken for granted."

"Indeed, rising inflation, rising unemployment figures and international turbulence have been reminders that the economy remains fragile."

"However, job creation is well ahead of last year. This growth has been spread across a wide range of private sector areas, from engineering and manufacturing through to service sector staff."

## Business

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