

Message from the Partners



Pictured above are the Partners: Dave Cornes, Paula Jacobs & Simon Jacobs outside The Head Office

2006 was another successful year for the Jacobs organisation as our client base increased to over 90 local authorities. Tender bids were won for 5 local taxation contracts (Ellesmere Port & Neston, Luton, Nottingham City, Stockton on Tees and LB of Croydon) and also 3 road traffic contracts (LB Croydon, LB Islington and LB Lambeth). We were also appointed to work for Copeland (Road Traffic) in Cumbria along with Denbighshire and the Isle of Anglesey (Local Taxation) in North Wales.

We are pleased that our client base has increased steadily over the last 5 years. We aim to service clients effectively so to achieve our "Vision Statement" - that we will maintain all current clients and increase our client base by being the **best** bailiff firm in England and Wales.

The list of new clients confirms that we cover a large geographical area and a further example of this fact is that we are also coming to the end of the first financial year of enforcing liability orders for the 3 Councils that form the East Cornwall Partnership.



We hope you enjoy our latest newsletter, which also includes an update on the Tribunal Courts & Enforcement Bill and a report on our Client Open Day held in November 2006.

Simon Jacobs, Paula Jacobs & Dave Cornes



*Jacobs Call Centre
now open Saturdays
9am - 2pm
for debtor queries & payments*



In our last issue we gave a summary of the draft bill but questioned whether it would make the statute books due to limited parliamentary time availability. Practitioners will be aware that the Bill was announced in the Queens Speech in November and it is currently moving through the stages in the House of Lords and House of Commons.

The Bill lays the framework for the future of Civil Enforcement but the finer details will be subject to secondary legislation in due course. Our understanding is that Bill could be introduced by Easter 2007 with regulations being developed throughout 2007/2008.



Schedule 12 of the Bill is the part most relevant to Bailiffs and covers how bailiffs will be able to enforce local authority debts. There has been some discussion amongst the Bailiff Professional Associations with regards interpretation of aspects of the Bill and clarification is currently being sought from Government Officials.

Jacobs will continue to lobby for sensible and reasonable regulations to be made that ensures that the legal position of the bailiff is not diminished and hence the collection of our client's debts is not made harder to achieve. Should anyone wish to discuss the finer details of the Bill then please contact Dave Cornes at head office.

Two of Jacobs Partners, Simon Jacobs and Dave Cornes, are elected members of the Executive National Council of the Enforcement Services Association (ESA) and they recently attended a meeting where progress on the Tribunal Courts & Enforcement Bill was discussed in detail.

Simon reports, "One part of the original White Paper that hasn't been included in the Bill is the requirement for Bailiffs to be licensed both on an individual and organisational basis."

He added "The ESA Council has for some time stated that we support licensing and to this end our Executive Director Vernon Phillips is working hard alongside his Association of Civil Enforcement Agencies (ACEA) counterpart Steve Everson to produce the professions preferred structure should it be introduced at a later date."

"ESA & ACEA are likely to propose that Bailiffs do not fall under the umbrella of the Security Industry Authority as suggested in many quarters

but a small scale independent body that would be more cost effective, sustainable and responsive to the needs and requirements of the profession."

"The likely remit of the regulatory body could include responsibility for establishing the criteria for licences for the enforcement sector, issuing a code of practice, to set the requirements for applications from individuals and organisations."

Simon concluded "We have to accept that licensing is seen to be transparent by both the advice sector and the public in general. Licensing is likely to be introduced at some stage in the future and it is sensible, therefore, that ESA and ACEA offer a joint solution for consideration by the Government. Bailiffs in general would be more satisfied if most of the regulatory requirements are overseen by the professional associations reporting to a body that recognises the interests of both creditor and debtor in the enforcement business."

Open Day - A Success!

Jacobs recently welcomed over 80 client delegates to its inaugural "Open Day" held over 2 days at their modern head offices premises on Merseyside.

Dave Cornes explained, "The main purpose of the sessions was to launch our "seamless" Bankruptcy Service which is available to our local authority clients. Working in Partnership with established firms **DWF Solicitors** and **Horsfields Insolvency Practitioners** we are able to coerce payment from the traditionally more difficult cases where distress has been ineffective."

"The response from clients has been very positive with several willing to progress this initiative during 2007. One main advantage is that costs to the client are kept to a minimal and only payable after the petition is actually issued. This gives the client financial certainty and also assurances in respect of budgetary purposes."

Clients were then split into groups of between 6 and 8 and given a tour of Jacobs Head Office and shown evidence of **less than 2% abandonment rate** during 2006 of its call centre operation. Each session was completed with an explanation of the bailiff methodology used in maximising payments along with a demonstration of the "**Digital Pens**" – the pens enable immediate update of visits / action taken and costs raised via the Client Web on line facility.

Dave concluded "Due to the huge success of the initiative – (client comments can be found under the testimonials section of our website) – we will be looking to do more Open Days for both Road Traffic and Local Taxation clients during 2007/2008."



Part of the Call Centre Operation



Julie Wray, call centre manager, explains how incoming & outgoing calls are managed



Paul Kelly showing a group around Head Office



Part of the Council Tax Administration Section



A group of delegates prior to one of the Bankruptcy Sessions



Dave Cornes with a group of delegates

Forthcoming Conferences:

Jacobs will be present at the following Conferences / Exhibitions and hope to meet with you if you are in attendance:

6th - 8th February 2007 – Stand 46 IRRV
Benefits Conference in Harrogate

17th - 19th April 2007 – Stand P81
Parkex/Traffex International NEC Birmingham

15th - 16th May 2007 – Stand 2 IRRV
Collection & Enforcement Conference in Kenilworth

9th - 12th October 2007 – Stand 16 IRRV
National Conference in Brighton

(Dave & Simon pictured left at the IRRV Conference 2005)



Local Taxation Bailiff Fees

The Council Tax and Non Domestic Rating (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 increased some statutory bailiff fees in line with inflation since the last rise in 2003. The fees relate to England only and are effective on all visits made from 1st April 2007.

The initial call fee will be £24.50 with £18 being raised for a second visit where a levy has not taken place. Walking possession charges will be £12. The levy scale fee has been amended to £24.50 for the first £100 but due to an oversight the % amounts have not been increased to 24.5% - this can be corrected by an Amendment to the Regulations but no assurances have been given in relation to when this may happen.

Fees in Wales remain the same but hopefully these will be increased within the next 12 months.



Business Development Manager's Update - Paul Kelly IRRV MESA

"I have now been with Jacobs 6 months and continue to find my role both demanding and rewarding. I have developed some interesting new contacts, as we look forward to continued expansion and pleased to be asked by the Partners for input into the firm's Business Development Strategy for 2007.

We are currently updating our website hopefully to reflect that we are a large organisation with family firm principles. Whilst the work is very much "in progress" and will take several weeks to complete there has already been a significant improvement in the style of the site. We then have a duty to make sure it is kept up to date with informative items for both current and prospective clients.

A further initiative we want to undertake in 2007 is a survey of Road Traffic practitioners as part of our commitment to continuous improvement. Through a short questionnaire we will identify what is really important to Councils in how Bailiff Services are provided. We will then examine our own methodology and approach to ensure that we are able to offer **exactly** what prospective clients require. The results of the survey will be made available to those invited to take part and posted on the Website."

Should any prospective client wish to contact Jacobs to discuss our services further please contact Paul Kelly on: Tel: **0151 650 4988** Email: **pk@jacobsbailiffs.co.uk**
Alternatively write to Paul at: **4 Europa Boulevard, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH41 4PE**