



Broker's hat-trick!

We wouldn't be here without our business partners.

To say thank you to the brokers who played such a big role in introducing SMEs to Cambridge & Counties, we suited up and headed off to celebrate at Kilworth House Hotel for our Broker Celebration Dinner – an awards ceremony to showcase the best of the broker world. Nearly 40 brokers from across England and Wales joined us to commemorate the occasion.

Yorkshire's Real Property Finance completed a well deserved hat trick by being named 'Broker of the Year' for the third year running. The Yorkshire based Real Property duo, Alan Laslett and Andy Churchill were up against some healthy competition but managed to retain their title.

We asked our Chief Executive Mike Kirsopp about the event: "We're in our third year of inviting key brokers to join us for an evening celebrating our brilliant partnerships.

All the brokers here deserve recognition, but with Alan and Andy we've again vastly increased our number of mutual clients who benefit from their wise words and from our commitment to lending." The Broker Event was a great reminder of the wonderful community we're a part of. Here's looking forwards to 2017 – we wonder if the Yorkshire boys can make it four in a row!



'Open for Business' in Birmingham!

We've opened a brand new office in Birmingham! We cut the ribbon at Cambridge & Counties new place in style.

Members of the West Midlands business community gathered at The Laurent Perrier Champagne Bar on the 25th floor of The Cube in Birmingham City Centre. Our guests were welcomed by Mike Kirsopp, Simon Lindley and Neil Reddington.

We had a quick word with Mike to get his thoughts on the soiree: "Our new office, the people we have on the ground, and this celebration are all about building relationships. We're open for business and we want to be part of the great story that is the West Midlands.

Considering it was a gathering of the West Midlands finest financial minds, we thought we'd take the opportunity to do a bit of research and assess the Buy to Let and Commercial Property Market.

We asked our esteemed guests about how they think Buy to Let residential property prices will fare (most think prices will stay flat for the next 12 months), alongside commercial property prices (which 80% were certain would rise in price) and how easy it will be to access finance for the businesses they work for (it'll be easier!).

Our Birmingham branch is our fifth office for Cambridge & Counties and it is based at Colmore Plaza on Colmore Circus.



Smart Saving with our Business Deposit Accounts

We're proud to offer straightforward and no-nonsense products to help businesses reach their full potential. In the current low interest rate environment, it is vital that businesses make the most of their cash.

Research¹ from Cambridge & Counties Bank reveals just under a third (31%) of business deposit accounts are paying 0.1% Gross/AER* or less on balances of £10,000.

Having a bigger deposit doesn't even guarantee you a competitive rate as we estimate that some 23% of business deposit accounts are paying this same low rate on balances of £1 million.

To add to our award-winning account range², we're now offering a 120 Day Notice Business Deposit Account paying 1.80% Gross/AER* variable on balances of between £10,000 and £3 million.

What's more, we also offer a 2 Year Fixed Rate Bond paying 2.00% Gross/AER*. Both offers are available to all types of businesses as well as other organisations such as charities, clubs, associations and trusts.

For full details of all of our Savings accounts, along with the terms & conditions and relevant application forms visit: www.ccbank.co.uk/savings

(1) Cambridge & Counties Bank analysis of Moneyfacts data, March 2015 (2) Moneyfacts Commended award for variable rate business account provider 2015

*Gross is the rate of interest payable before income tax is deducted. AER (Annual Equivalent Rate) illustrates what the interest rate would be if interest was paid and compounded once each year.

Welcome

It is again my pleasure to welcome you to our latest Property Finance newsletter, as ever it has been a very busy first half of the year both internally and externally.

As you will see later in the newsletter we announced record profits for our 2015 year end, had a successful launch of our new Birmingham office, held a highly enjoyable third annual Broker Celebration Dinner and launched a new Ex-Pat residential investment loan product – all of which has taken place whilst we continue to see record volumes of new business come through our doors.

However, it is the external issues that have caught the headlines of late in particular the continued focus of increased regulation and taxation around the residential BTL market –

plus regulation around the authorisation of brokers – and of course the Brexit vote. We now appear to have entered a period of uncertainty as the property market adjusts to the outcome of the vote and also the full impacts of the BTL taxation changes start to work their way through the system. From the Bank's perspective we continue to have every confidence in the future and robust nature of the UK property market. In addition, we believe that the more experienced BTL operators have long term sustainable businesses that can manage the additional costs that the changing taxation landscape

will throw at them and on this basis we remain very much open for business and continue to maintain a positive view of the market's direction.

It's always nice to finish on a positive note and within the bank the most pleasing figure remains our Customer Survey results with 99% of new clients stating that they would recommend the bank to their peers. It just goes to show that there remains an important place in the market for a funder with a strong relationship service based offering.



Simon Lindley
Commercial Director - Real Estate

Introduction to Ex-pat product

As a niche property lender we have always specialised in looking at the "wrinkle" in a deal that other funders have difficulty in getting their heads around.

For this reason, lending to Ex-pat's has always been an area that the bank has excelled at within its standard residential BTL product. However, following feedback it became clear that many of our Business Partners were not aware that we had an appetite in this area and therefore we have created a distinct Ex-pat Residential BTL product. In essence it remains the standard criteria that applies to all of our residential lending but we have added a couple of additional benefits to enhance our service. Namely, clients can elect to use a "legal 500" firm in the country where they reside to undertake both the legal paperwork and the KYC requirements, plus a client can use the Bank solicitor on a dual representation basis for both purchase and refinance requests. So, in short, there is no need for rushed trips back to the UK to handover passports or obtain ILA from a UK solicitor.



Ex-pat case study

We have approved funding for an Ex-pat customer working in Cambodia, who is seeking to release equity on existing unencumbered properties to purchase additional properties. Other funders had difficulty with the Cambodia link and concerns over AML, however, we were able to satisfy AML due diligence requirements as we released funds direct to their UK High Street bank account and received evidence of the new property purchases from their solicitors.

Cambridge & Counties Reports **record year** end growth

2015 saw all the markets and geographies in which Cambridge & Counties Bank operate continue to improve. Our balance sheet has grown to over £500m, underpinned by strong growth in our customer deposits.

The highlights include:

- Fourfold increase in PBT to £10.2m for the year ended 31 December 2015
- Total deposits grew to £472m; a 21% increase year-on-year
- Over 1,600 new deposit customers
- Loan book up 66% year-on-year to £416m
- Total assets grew to over £500m
- New Birmingham office opened to expand Midlands coverage
- New customer satisfaction maintained at 99%

Despite the entry of new competitors offering reduced pricing across their products, we've managed to maintain our position by rebalancing our portfolio. We've also been developing our refurbishment and bridging capabilities- the areas with the highest demand.

The secret to our success is our commitment to the highest levels of service and our speedy reactions to customer needs. During 2015 customer satisfaction scores have remained at market leading levels with 99% of customers willing to recommend us to others.



Meet the team

Sue Higginson, Director of Business Development – East Anglia

We caught up with Sue to find out a little bit more about what makes her tick. Check in on later newsletters to find out more about the people that make Cambridge & Counties the amazing place to work that it is!



When are you happiest?

Nearly all the time – I am rarely unhappy.

What's your biggest pet peeve?

Indecisive people. I'd much rather people make a decision, even if it turns out to be the wrong one, than ponder on which decision to make.

Where did you have the best meal of your life so far?

In a bay in Croatia at the end of October, when all the tourists had gone home and we sailed in expecting dinner. The choice was "Meat" or "Fish" and thankfully I chose "Fish" which consisted of hand caught scallops, lobster, mullet and shrimp – to this day I am convinced the "Meat" option was the dog that barked as we moored up!

What's your favourite outdoor activity?

Sailing.

Name three things that you couldn't live without?

Diet Coke, Diet Coke, Diet Coke – And trust me I have tried!

What's the best/worst gift you ever received?

Life! – cheesy I know but if you have ever been close to someone who has nearly lost their's you will understand.

What is number one on your bucket list?

A long and healthy retirement pottering around the Med on a sail boat – but not just yet I have money to earn!

First album you purchased?

That's a loaded question... If I claim to ever owning an album you will all know that I am over 21!

Best work-time lunch?

There is time for lunch at work?????

Ideal holiday?

You've probably guessed by now but this would certainly involve a yacht, my family, friends, sunshine and plenty of Gin & Tonic.

Favourite drink?

That's an interesting one – I have lots of favourites, generally depending on my mood and the weather!

What would you call your autobiography?

"Zannadid" (A play on the noun Zanadoo which means anything and everything and my 'pet' name at home) In fact now I have a good name for my autobiography perhaps I should get on and write it!

Guilty pleasure?

Adult colouring books – that's colouring books for adults not of the 'top shelf' variety in case you were wondering.

How did you get into Real Estate?

If the truth be known I actually wanted to be an archaeologist, but my Dad's business got hit by a recession just as I was about to head off to Uni and I became a reluctant banker instead. I've never looked back and he has great pleasure in reminding me that if that hadn't happened I would still be scrabbling around in muddy pits for a living!

Best piece of advice you've ever had?

"If in doubt let it out!"