



A Refreshing Choice...



A refreshing choice...

There are so many refreshing reasons to choose Bourne when selling or letting your home. Read on and you'll find out more about the area's freshest estate agent and what we feel sets us apart.

Stuart Mitchell – Group MD

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Why Choose Bourne?

The directors, managers and staff at Bourne have a wealth of experience within the property industry, dating back to the 1980s. Having worked through both challenging and buoyant market places, we have an excellent understanding of the property industry and more importantly, what it takes to succeed in today's ever-changing market.

Each of our branches are run by one of the Company Directors, all of whom are owners of Bourne and care passionately about their business. Their staff have been carefully hand-picked and are some of the most successful estate agents in the business; all of whom share a desire and passion to do the best job of selling or letting your property.

Our 'Six of the Best'

These are just a few of the reasons why using Bourne makes a refreshing change and why our ever-growing company has fast become **THE recommended estate agent**.

1 Our unique approach

At Bourne we're great at selling and letting property. We have a unique process which ensures good results. To give you a flavour of our fresh ideas, why not try our '21 day marketing plan' and once you've sold, follow our 'Buyers and Sellers Guide', both of which will help maximise results.

2 Our code of conduct

As an independent company we set ourselves extremely high standards, but it's also good for our clients to know that we operate to the 'code of conduct' of all the main trade bodies within our industry, including the Ombudsman for Estate Agent (OEA) and the Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA).

3 Our Local Knowledge

Bourne is run by local people. The vast majority of our team live in the immediate area and have children in local schools. This means we know our market, understand our clients and we're as passionate about the area and its community as you are.

4 Our network and connections

Our ever-growing network of branches across Surrey and Hampshire, together with an enviable number of contacts and associated estate agents which we have established across Greater London and the South of England, all go to ensure our clients receive maximum exposure when marketing their property. This also means we can help those intending to move out of our immediate catchment area.

5 Have your say

Whether you've bought, sold, let out or let through Bourne we welcome your feedback. We are a totally transparent estate agent and invite EVERY client to have their say. We'll send you a questionnaire with a link to our website or you can post a comment on one of our social media sites, all of which are directly linked to the Directors of Bourne.

6 Our aim is simple

At Bourne we strive to ensure that,

'Our clients should always know what to expect next,'

'Our clients should never have to ask twice,'

'Our clients know that for us nothing is too much trouble.'

By exceeding the expectations of you, the client, we hope you'll be only too happy to recommend us.



Selling with Bourne



At Bourne our aim is
to deliver a fresh
approach to selling
by keeping it simple
and working harder.
We do the job well:
read on to find
out more...



Trust us to deliver from the beginning

We understand that for many people their property is their biggest asset and you need to feel confident you are making the right choice when instructing an agent to sell your home.

At Bourne you will find our honesty shines through from the very beginning. We see the moving process as a partnership with our clients and we want to assure you that you'll receive clear and honest advice from us from start to finish.

We want to work with you and see the job through.

Preparation

Whilst most properties we see are ready to go onto the market, there may be an aspect of your home that you're not overly happy with. We can offer some helpful tips and advice to ensure your property gives the best possible first impression.

This brochure also contains our 'Presentation is Everything' guide which has some useful tips on how to most favourably present your property so it looks its best.



What's it really worth?

With so much speculation about the housing market hitting the press, on what seems to be a daily basis, the question on many people's minds is 'what's it really worth?'

With every valuation we carry out, we'll provide you with tangible evidence of comparable properties on the market, along with those that have recently sold. You'll then have a good idea of what's really going on out there. We can then agree together where to 'set the price' of your home. We always strive to achieve the best price possible for our clients and feel we can do this by working together.

Testimonials

You don't just have to take our word for it - why not contact some of our previous customers to find out how good we are? We'll provide you with a list of testimonials when we value your home. This includes names and contact details of previous customers who'll be only too happy to recommend Bourne.

Meet the team

Whenever we take on a new property to sell, we make sure that the staff in the office arrange to see it and meet you. It's nice to know who you're dealing with and it helps us offer a more personal service to both clients and applicants.

'We really do offer our clients a 'start to finish' service.'

We welcome your input

Once you have decided to instruct Bourne to sell your home, we will complete one of our "Viewing Crib Sheets". We'd like to know some of the individual details that are unique to your home. This gives you a great opportunity to wax lyrical about your property, tell us why YOU bought it, maybe the work you have carried out and other pointers, - such as which way the garden faces, how much sun it gets and when, how close the nearest shops are and where the nearest good school is. All points we feel potential buyers want to know.

We'll then ask you to check over the draft brochure and web details (including the digital colour photographs and floorplans) before they go to print, so that you're happy with how they look.

We don't wait for things to happen

Many agents seem to survive just by advertising properties on the internet and doing little else. When you instruct Bourne to sell or let your home, you'll begin to see the difference as we have a very dynamic and pro-active approach to marketing. As market leaders within many of the towns where we operate, we have built up an unrivalled database of potential buyers, all of whom will be contacted regarding your property, by telephone and then email, encouraging them to consider viewing. We definitely don't sit back and wait for things to happen and our team of highly skilled people will be actively promoting your property.

Since we first opened back in 2009 over 50% of all the properties sold and let via Bourne were previously marketed via our competitors without success, proving that not all estate agents are the same!



How about a 'Launch Day'

Many clients have opted to 'launch' their properties with a great deal of success. We start by agreeing a date that is convenient for viewings, usually a Saturday, as most buyers are available to view at this time and we set the date a few weeks in advance to allow us time to fully market the property and build up some momentum. We then start actively marketing the property, booking in individual viewings on the agreed date.

The Launch is not to be confused with an 'open house' where anyone can just turn up, ALL of the viewings are vetted and are strictly by appointment only. The 'Launch' is an excellent idea should you still have a few last minute jobs to finish on your home or if you are just too busy for sporadic viewings. The launch will minimise inconvenience, as you should only need to prepare your property for one day of viewings.

Communication is key

Communication is essential when marketing your property. That's why every week we'll provide you with a full and comprehensive market update, we'll collate all the feedback on your property, not only from those people that have viewed, but those that haven't, and their reasons why.

We'll also assess the traffic we've had from websites, the click through rates and responses to advert publications. You need to know what applicants are saying about your property, and don't worry - we'll tell you!

We'll talk through our '21 Day' marketing plan, during which time we can usually gauge an accurate response from potential buyers about your property. If we haven't successfully agreed a prospective sale.

We won't stop once we've found you a buyer!

When an offer is made on your property, a senior staff member will be on hand to ensure we can provide you with the right advice and agree the right strategy, particularly when there is a chain involved. As part of agreeing a sale we will also discuss timescales that suit all parties. We find that by spending more time initially 'setting up the sale' it really helps things run as smoothly as possible.

We'll provide a copy of our useful 'Buyers and Sellers Guide' to all parties to ensure everyone knows what they should be doing and when, as this can really help to keep things on track and progressing. We don't rest until you've moved and we will be there to offer any support we can.

Have your say

We are a totally transparent company and invite EVERY client to have their say. Whether you've bought, sold, let out or let through Bourne, we welcome your feedback. We'll send you a questionnaire with a link to our website or you can post a comment on one of our social media sites, all of which are directly linked to the Directors of Bourne.

Feedback from our clients is essential for us to constantly better ourselves. We love people recommending us and want to make sure we do the job right. We want our clients to recommend us and we're confident you'll be only too happy to do so.



Letting with Bourne

Our aim is to provide a service landlords will be happy to recommend by keeping things simple. We aim to keep our landlords happy by using our vast experience and knowledge to ensure we keep their property let and well maintained. We want our landlords to receive the best possible return for their investment.

At Bourne we have a VERY pro-active and refreshing approach to marketing and managing rental properties.



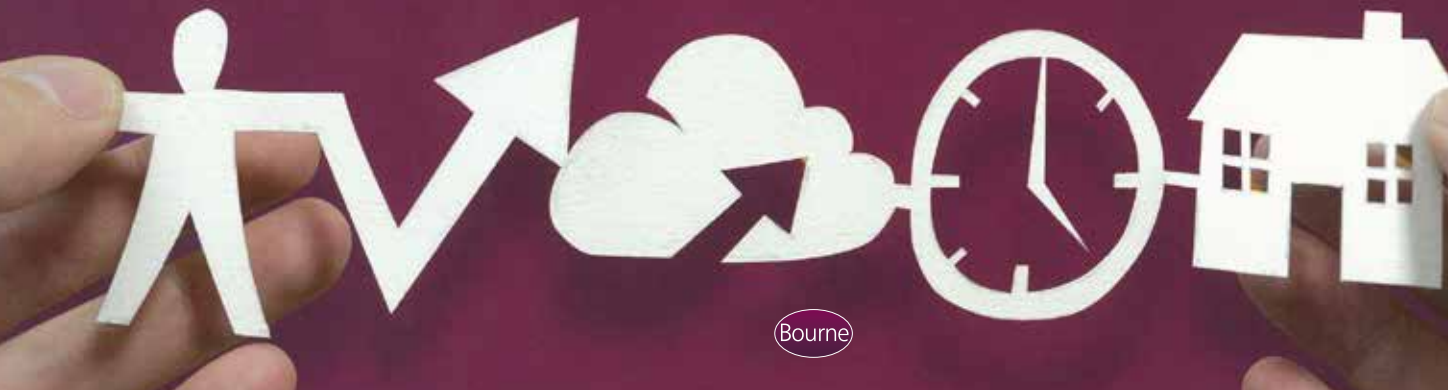
Our lettings team can provide all the expertise you need to ensure that you choose the right type of property to suit your budget and personal circumstances.

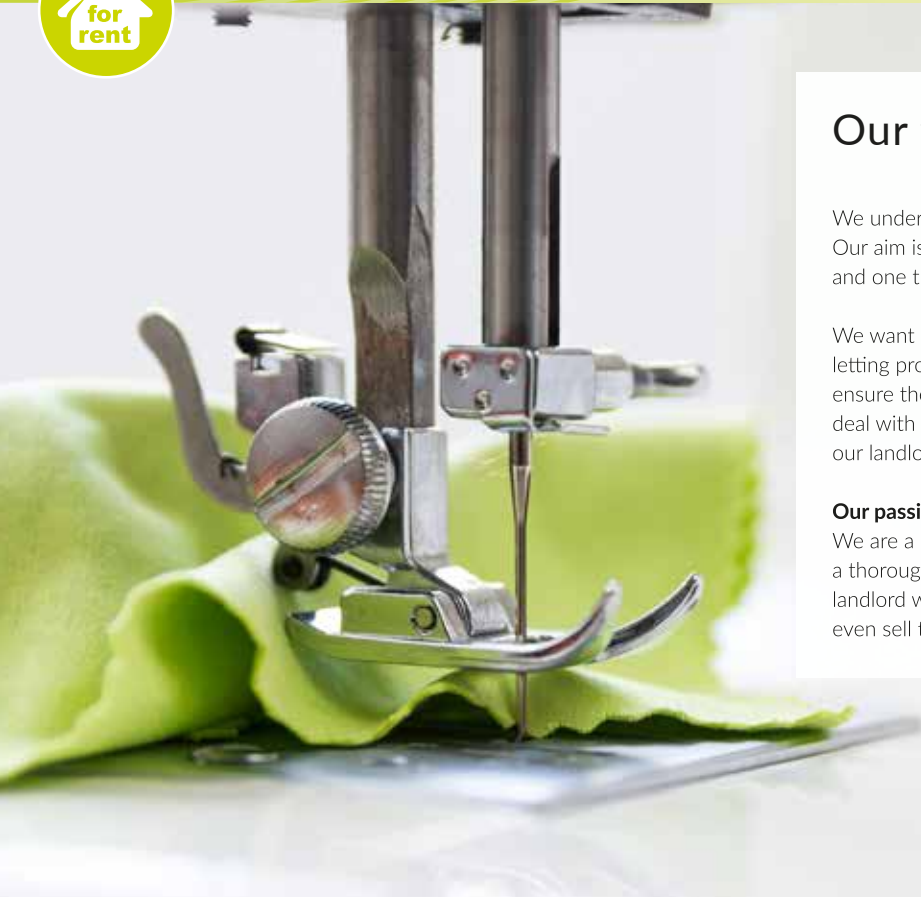
Buy-to-Let The complete service

Bourne are able to offer a complete service for our Buy-to-Let landlords from start to finish. The lettings team provide all the expertise you need to ensure that you choose the right type of property to suit your budget and personal circumstances. We will be able to advise you on the best location, local demand and rental values to enable you to achieve the most from your investment.

With an in-house sales team we can bring you the best properties as soon as they come on to the market and as a registered Bourne investor, we can offer you exclusive preliminary viewings before the property details hit the websites.

We also have Independent Financial Advisors within each office who can offer a range of mortgage schemes and visit you in the privacy of your own home or place of work if you prefer.





Our tailored service

We understand that different landlords have different needs. Our aim is to deliver a service that's right for each of our clients and one that meets those needs.

We want to take away all the stresses and strains associated with letting property. Our in-house property management team will ensure the financial elements remain up to date and they will deal with any problems that the tenants may have. This gives our landlords confidence that they are in good hands.

Our passion

We are a local business that's passionate about letting and doing a thorough job from start to finish. We understand that a happy landlord will continue to use us, recommend us and eventually even sell through us.



We want to take away all the stresses and strains

Corporate connections

The team's experience working in the local area has created many connections with the personnel departments in large local companies and national relocation agents.

Statistics show that one in every five house moves is a result of job relocation and nowhere is this more important than the South East, which is why it is essential that your letting agent has connections in the right places with the right people. Generally tenants on a company move are the best around and are usually highly motivated professional people with the resources and backing of their company at their disposal.

Marketing your property to find the right tenant

At Bourne we have a VERY pro-active and refreshing approach to marketing rental properties and our dedicated team work harder and longer to find the right tenant. Our aim is to let good quality properties to good quality tenants.

We will provide you with a list of testimonials so you can find out from some of our customers why they're only too happy to recommend us and what sets us apart.

Where to start

There are a number of key elements to consider when choosing to let your home or an investment property.

In the first instance we will attend the property for a valuation appointment where we will provide a rental valuation of the property, supported by comparable evidence of similar properties we have recently let. We will discuss the lettings market in general and current price trends as well as how to best present your property and achieve the highest possible rental yield.

Presentation is key to achieving the highest rent for the property and experience shows us that presenting the property to the highest standard from the start is more likely to secure an early tenancy.

The team at Bourne can advise on all aspects of furnishings, fittings and decoration and if required can provide contact details for local recommended contractors should you need it.



Marketing

When you instruct Bourne to let your home we invest heavily in the marketing of your property to reach as many potential tenants and relocation agents as possible.

We will take high quality photographs to showcase the property, provide detailed floorplans with room measurements and produce bespoke property details.

An eye-catching Bourne 'To Let' board will be erected at the front of the property and details will be added to the office window display for potential tenants passing by. The details will also be regularly advertised in the local paper.

Bourne have embraced the latest database technology for keeping their tenants informed of new properties to the market, therefore letting your property quickly.

As market leaders within many of the towns where we operate, we have built an unrivalled database of potential tenants, all of whom will be contacted by telephone and email, encouraging them to consider viewing. Your property will automatically be uploaded to our website as well as all the main property portals.

Our own website, www.bourneestateagents.com contains an abundance of information, including local schools, local headlines and statistics, with links to twitter and a regular blog updated by all the team in the office. It is also the first place to find all our properties, before they hit the main property portals.



Relocation agents

The team at Bourne have extensive experience in the local area, and this over time, has helped establish longstanding relationships with relocation agents and blue chip company HR teams. What this means for you as a landlord is a connection to professional tenants who generally rent for longer periods of time and have the disposal of company financial backing.

Getting the best out of your property

Try not to overlook the basic rules when presenting such a valuable asset. First impressions count and the front of the property should be tidy and well cared for. Bins should be hidden, paths should be swept and beds weeded. Also make sure there is adequate lighting at the property if viewings are likely to take place after dark.

Inside the property should be clean, clear and free from clutter as far as possible. You want to show the rooms looking as large as possible which means light, neutral coloured walls and light carpets or wooden flooring. The property should appear to be easy to maintain and the accommodation should be presented at the start of the tenancy to the same standard as you wish to find it when the tenants eventually move out. Setting a high standard will let a tenant know what you expect from them should they choose to live in the property.

The kitchen and bathroom are often the most important rooms in a house for potential tenants and showing these in good clean order will help to achieve the market rent. If there are gardens with the property they should be low maintenance and ideally gardening equipment should be provided for tenants. See our 'Presentation is Everything' guide for more presentation tips.





Which service is right for you?

Bourne offer three management levels of service depending on how involved you would like to be with the lettings process. The majority of our landlords tend to opt for our fully managed service which we hope to be hassle free and where Bourne act on your behalf as liaison with the tenants. We have put together a summary chart which we hope you find useful. However if you would like to discuss the service options in more detail, please contact us to arrange a valuation.

	Let Only	Rent Collection	Full Management
Property Valuation	●	●	●
Safety Regulation Advice	●	●	●
Marketing Property	●	●	●
Supervising Viewings	●	●	●
Zero Deposits	●	●	●
Referencing Tenants	●	●	●
Tenancy Agreement*	●	●	●
Deposit to TDS*	●	●	●
Gas/Elec Safety Certificate Arrangement		●	●
Energy Performance Certificate Arrangement		●	●
Rent Collection		●	●
Monthly Statements		●	●
Dealing with Repairs			●
Inspections			●
Automatic Inventory Arrangement*			●
Deposit Negotiation			●

*Extra charges apply outside of the management % or let only fee **Through 3rd party insurer

GDPR

The new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) were introduced on 25th May 2018. The law applies to anyone who controls or processes data and applies to all letting agents and landlords. GDPR is intended to strengthen data protection rights, allowing people more control over their data in terms of how companies or individuals store, use, share and delete personal data.

Landlords who have access to tenant personal data must have a defined 'lawful basis' to process, store or delete that information (eg name, phone numbers, emails etc) in any format. Tenants (both prospective and existing) need to be informed of that lawful basis and how you will use the information. This can be provided in the form of a Privacy Policy. Landlords not going through a letting agent also need to check that any 3rd parties, such as contractors, referencing companies, engineers, etc, have GDPR compliance in place before sharing any tenant information.

Landlords, or their agents, need to pay a registration fee to the Information Commissioners Office; details can be found at www.ico.org.uk. Any breach under the GDPR must be notified to the ICO within 72 hours of discovery, along with notifying any data subjects who may be affected. The consequences of non-compliance could be fines, compensation claims and reputational damage.



The technical aspects of lettings explained

By law a landlord is required to ensure a property is safe and fit for human habitation.

Energy Assessments - EPC

From 1st October 2008 all landlords in England and Wales are required by law to provide their new tenants with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). A landlord is responsible for providing a valid EPC whether they are managing the property themselves or using an agent.

EPCs have a 10 year lifespan and then need to be renewed. From April 2018 a minimum rating of E has been imposed on residential rental properties. Any property which does not meet this criteria cannot be marketed or let out until they have a valid EPC in place, following remedial works, or an exemption cert is provided.

Gas Regulations

Landlords must comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and carry out all work and maintenance via a Gas Safe registered engineer. They are also legally responsible for arranging an annual gas safety check. Certificates must be provided to the tenant and agent and retained for at least 2 years.

Electrical Safety

Government guidelines state that electrical installation condition reports (EICR) should be carried out every 5 years or between tenancies, dependent on which comes first.

Fire Regulations

Any furniture left in the property must comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended in 1993). These relate to the provision of upholstered furniture. If any furniture does not comply with the regulations and carry an appropriate label, it should be removed and/or replaced.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations

Private sector landlords are required as a minimum to have at least one smoke alarm installed on every storey of their properties and a carbon monoxide alarm in any room containing a solid fuel burning appliance. After that, the landlord is responsible for ensuring the alarms are in date (where applicable) and in working order at the start of each new tenancy.

Legionella Assessment

Legionnaires' disease is a form of pneumonia which can potentially be fatal, especially to young children, the elderly or infirm. It is caused by the inhalation of small droplets of contaminated water which contains Legionella. Man-made hot and cold water systems could potentially provide an environment where Legionella can grow. Landlords have a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of their tenants, including prevention of health hazards such as Legionnaires' disease. For further information please visit www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires.

The government guidelines recommend Legionnaire Assessments are carried out every 12-24 months or between tenancies.

Deposits

Deposits taken from tenants under an assured shorthold tenancy must be protected by one of the three tenancy deposit schemes. The prescribed information regarding the deposit has to be given to the tenant within 30 days of receiving the deposit.



Right to Rent Document Checks

The Immigration Act 2014 imposes an obligation on Landlords, or their Agents, to check the passport or other identity documents, with the applicant present. This is to ensure any individuals living in a rental property have the right to live in the UK and if they require a visa or work permit that they have the valid authorisation/are complying with the terms. Bourne will check this information at the start of a Tenancy and at renewals. However, if a property is not fully managed by Bourne it will be the responsibility of the Landlord to ensure that the work permit or visa is renewed.

Tax

The details shown are only a guide and are correct at the time of printing. You should seek the advice of your professional advisor or tax office.

Tax - UK resident landlords

If you are a landlord resident in the UK, your net taxable profit from your rental business, that is rental income less tax allowable expenses, represents income received without deduction of tax at source.

This income will need to be added to your other taxable income in order to work out the overall tax liability for a particular tax year. The normal method of reporting your taxable income to the Inland Revenue and calculating your tax liability is via a Self-Assessment Tax Return.

Tax - Non UK resident landlords

The Non-Resident Landlords (NRL) scheme is for taking the UK rental income of persons whose 'usual place of abode' is outside the UK. On valuing your property we will provide you with the appropriate NRL form and guidance notes which we will require all parties named on the agreement and living abroad to complete and send to the Inland Revenue.

Subject to their approval, Bourne will be sent an exemption certificate and an approval number. Landlords are responsible for obtaining their

own exemption certificate which is issued to the agent and is non-transferable.

Unless the landlord/s can provide us with an exemption certificate from the Inland Revenue, we are obliged by law to deduct base rate tax from rent received and account to the Inland Revenue on a quarterly basis. Further information regarding non-residents is available from the Inland Revenue at:

NRL Scheme, Fitzroy House, PO Box 46 Nottingham, NG1 1BD
Telephone: 0151 472 6208

All regulations are subject to change and are accurate at the time of printing.



Landlord's Checklist - *To help prepare your property for rental we have put together this useful checklist*

- ☐ Complete, sign and return terms of business
- ☐ Arrange or give permission to arrange EPC
- ☐ Obtain consent from your mortgage lender
- ☐ Obtain consent from any superior landlords for leasehold properties
- ☐ Advise insurance company that the property will be let and provide a copy of buildings insurance
- ☐ Complete and return property information questionnaire
- ☐ Complete and send NRL forms to the Inland Revenue if you are going overseas
- ☐ Check any furnishings comply with Fire and Furnishing Regulations
- ☐ Fit smoke alarms on each floor of the property
- ☐ Fit carbon monoxide detector
- ☐ Arrange gas safety certificate by Gas Safe registered engineer
- ☐ Arrange Electrical safety certificate by appropriate engineer
- ☐ Provide us with 3 sets of keys, 2 for tenants and 1 for Bourne
- ☐ Professionally clean your property, including carpets and oven
- ☐ Clean all windows inside and out
- ☐ Ensure all appliances left at the property are in working order and if possible provide manuals
- ☐ Redirect your mail
- ☐ Advise telephone provider and utility companies that you are renting the property and from which date
- ☐ In winter months we recommend keeping heating on a constant low temperature to help avoid burst pipes
- ☐ If the property is likely to become vacant in winter months, we recommend leaving some lights on timers so the property appears occupied



The Extras

*We are much more than just sales and lettings.
We can help you every step of the way. Read on
to find out more about the other services we offer...*

EPCs

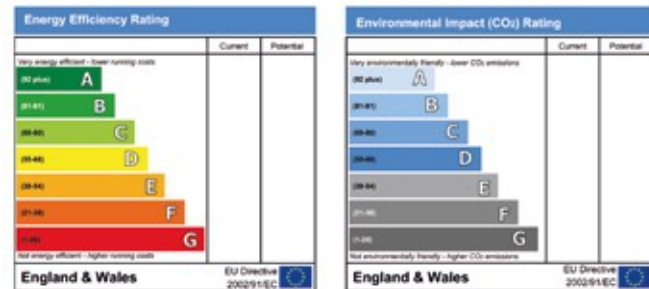
Following the changes made at the end of May 2012 most people are now aware that they will require an Energy Performance Certificate(s) (EPC) before they are able to market their home.

Once you instruct Bourne to market your home, we can appoint one of our trusted Domestic Energy Assessors, who can ensure your EPC is processed with the utmost speed and efficiency.

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is the Government's chosen way of complying with the Energy Performance of Building Directive (EPBD). Its purpose is to record how energy efficient a property is. The certificate will provide a rating of the energy efficiency and CO₂ emissions of a building from A to G, where A is most efficient and G is least efficient.

EPC's are produced using standard methods with standard assumptions about energy usage so that energy efficiency of one

building can easily be compared with another building of the same type. This allows prospective buyers, tenants, owners, occupiers and purchasers to see information about the energy efficiency and CO₂ emissions from their building so they can consider energy efficiency and fuel costs as part of their investment.



An EPC will always be accompanied by a recommendation report that lists cost effective measures and other recommendations (such as low and zero carbon generating systems) to improve the energy rating of the building. The certificate is also accompanied by information about the rating that could be achieved if all the recommendations were implemented.

Properties are graded from A (the most energy efficient) to G (the least) and an energy graph is attached to your property details. Landlords looking to re-let or market their properties for rental will also require an EPC.



The little extras that make us so much more than just selling or letting...

Conveyancing

At Bourne we have built up a strong working relationship with a panel of solicitors we are happy to recommend. We have handpicked local owner-run companies who share our passion for getting the job done. When you instruct Bourne to sell your home we would also recommend instructing a solicitor, as steps taken early in the whole process can prepare the way for a quicker exchange, and the sooner you get there, the less chance that something can go wrong! We will provide you with a choice of solicitors who will happily provide you with a detailed quote on conveyancing and moving costs.

Anti-Money Laundering

Under Anti-Money Laundering (AML) legislation, all estate agents are required to check the identity for anyone who markets a property for sale. When you instruct Bourne, we will follow legislative guidelines to establish seller's identity and residency in line with Money Laundering Regulations.

Finance

Bourne has access to a wide range of mortgage and mortgage-related products via our associated Financial Advisors. They will search the entire market place to find the right deal to suit you, offering free, simple, up-to-date, straight talking advice.

Land and new homes

If you feel your property has some development potential, be it a large garden or a plot of land, we'd be delighted to visit you and advise you on the best way to maximise that potential. We are experienced in dealing with land and assessing sites.

We have many years of experience in dealing with house builders and marketing new homes sites. So if you are looking to market a site, Bourne are definitely the agent to talk to for a flexible and tailored approach to marketing. We'd be only too happy to hear from you.





Presentation is Everything

A refreshing guide on how best to present your home.

The aroma of coffee brewing in the kitchen, fresh flowers on view and gentle background music. These are some of the better known tips many sellers use to help make their home inviting to potential buyers.

There are many other plays you can use when marketing your home to maximise its full potential. Some may seem more obvious than others, but you'd be surprised how many people overlook the basic rules when presenting their most valuable asset.

We have put together this guide to help our clients 'set the stage' when marketing their home. Create the right atmosphere that goes with the property and the right amount of space for buyers to see themselves living there.



The Hallway

While the hall may just be a walkthrough, it's crucial to create the right impression to get the viewing off to the best start. Clear as much space as possible. Things such as pushchairs and childrens' bikes should be moved elsewhere. If it's a small space try to replace the hall table with a small shelf for post and keys. Co-ordinated accessories or pictures will add some interest and the right lighting will set the right scene.

Outside

First impressions do play a huge part in successful house selling. Make sure your property looks well-cared for from the outside. Sweep the pathways, remove the bins, clear the area around the front door and give it a good clean if needed, including the front door and its fixtures, tidy the garden and add a few in-season plants to make the outside look more inviting.

A scruffy exterior and peeling paintwork can be a big turn-off for the majority of buyers. So a fresh lick of paint to the front door and window frames if they're looking tired, can make a big difference. This is a potential buyer's first impression of your home, so make sure it's a good one!





The Bathroom

A spotlessly clean bathroom is essential. Taps should sparkle and the areas around them free from limescale. Mirrors should be polished, tiles should be scrubbed to remove any mould from the grouting and toilets should be cleaned, bleached and left with the lid down. Always replace your shower curtain with a neutral new one or a more contemporary screen where possible.

Add some new fluffy towels for a touch of luxury. Clear away any shampoo and other similar clutter, leaving a few quality toiletries on show. Try to make as much space as you can by keeping any toys, potties, baby baths and other items that can make the room look smaller, out of sight.

The Kitchen

The kitchen and bathroom are the rooms many regard as the most important and are often key to securing a sale. The kitchen should be spotless, so a good clean to remove any unsightly grease or grime 'spots and spills' is a must. Remove as much clutter as possible from the work surfaces, leaving only a few gleaming utensils, matching cooking jars and the odd cook book on display to create a 'useable' environment. Everything else such as piles of washing, pet's food bowls, childrens' 'artwork' and shopping lists on the fridge should be filed away.

If your units look tired, try painting them a neutral colour and add some inexpensive modern handles found in most large DIY stores. Consider replacing the doors if they're beyond repair with off-the-shelf or plain ready-to-paint MDF ones. This should help to transform the look of your kitchen.





The Living Room

Less is definitely more here. Fewer things in a room will mean fewer distractions to the eye of the viewer and more importantly, the bigger the room will appear! You may be moving because you've run out of space, but you must avoid leaving the impression with any potential buyers that your property is cramped or too small.

When people view, they are visualising a lifestyle, so you should accessorise accordingly. If yours is a young professional's apartment, leave a few appropriate magazines on the coffee table. If it's a family home, it's acceptable to have several toys neatly stored in an appropriate place. This will show the room can accommodate children. Try to smarten up any tired furniture. A throw will cover that worn sofa or co-ordinated cushions can distract the eye, but keep them neutral and unpatterned.

It's important if you have a fireplace to make it the focal point of the room, not the TV! Again, decluttering is important. Clear the mantelpiece, window sills and other display areas, leaving just a few coordinated objects. If it's winter, have the fireplace ablaze and really draw attention to it.

The Dining Room

There has been a recent trend towards painting dining rooms bright intense colours. These may look nice and cosy at night, but the next owner may wish to use the room for another purpose, such as a playroom or office. Help them envisage the room being used in a different way by repainting it in neutral shades.

If you don't have a separate dining area, create a well-defined eating space in the lounge area. This will mean placing a table and chairs away from the sofas in order to create the space and may also mean placing some unessential items of furniture into storage until you have sold.

If your living room is too small to incorporate a defined eating area, you could apply the same method as per your kitchen.





Bedrooms

Light coloured walls, carpets and curtains, colour co-ordinated bed linen, bedspreads and a few scatter cushions not only create that much needed 'wow factor', but add the sense of tranquillity and calm, which a buyer will want to experience when they walk into the main bedroom. Patterned and brightly coloured bed linen can make the bed appear larger than it is and shrink the room.

Try not to over-accessorise. A few framed prints, cushions and one or two perfume bottles on display can help make the place look lived-in rather than looked lived-in or just appear lived-in

Position the bed so there is access on three sides, if there's a good view out of the window, place the bed so that people can imagine themselves relaxing on a Sunday morning, coffee in hand, taking in the view.



Children's Bedrooms

Many DIY and home stores are now selling matching storage boxes, making it easy to get the children's 'paraphernalia' sorted and tidied away. Over-the-top themes such as Sponge Bob or Dora may need some toning down to help a buyer envisage their children of different ages or opposite sex playing in there. Removing boy band or similar posters is also recommended but may take some persuading and no doubt some incentives!





The Back Garden

Can I maintain a garden without it 'taking up' every weekend? Can I relax out here with a glass of wine in the summer? Will the children be happy playing here? Is the garden overlooked? These are the questions people will ask themselves as they step outside into your garden. Put yourself in their shoes and try to create the haven they'll be looking for.

The garden should appear as low maintenance as possible. Ensure the grass is cut, the patio swept and there isn't a weed in sight. Add a few more plants to provide colour if you haven't any already. If you're selling in winter-time, add some evergreen plants for that year-round greenery.

Add some style to your garden with some galvanised steel planters or terracotta pots, filled with box shrubs or fashionable grasses. Keep children's toys to a minimum and try and put them in one corner or even away in the shed. This will help your garden appear bigger.



Viewing preparation tips

- Leave all internal doors (except toilets) open
- Try to make the property a no-smoking zone, preferably for the whole time that you're on the market.
- Switch lights on during the day in any dull rooms.
- If you have a cat/dog, put them outside until you've established if the viewer likes pets.
- Invest in a few plug-in air-fresheners. They'll help disguise any pet smells, but don't go over the top!
- Make sure most of the family are out, too many people makes a home look smaller.
- File away any personal paperwork.
- Try not to cook any strong-smelling food the night before or just prior to a viewing.
- Clean ALL windows, inside and out.
- Professionally clean your property, including carpets and oven
- In winter months we recommend keeping the heating on a constant low temperature to help avoid burst pipes.



Tips for showing buyers around

Whilst a member of the Bourne team will usually be on hand to show potential buyers around, there may be occasions when you'll want to show people yourself. There's something to be said for sellers 'waxing lyrical' about their home. Some clients actually prefer to show around potential buyers. We have compiled our 'top tips' to ensure the viewing goes as smoothly as possible.

- Make sure the chain is off the latch, you don't want buyers to think crime is a problem in your area.
- Start upstairs. It helps to whet the appetite for what's to come, gives them a view of the garden and as bedrooms are quite self-explanatory, offers an opportunity to discuss other general information about the house.
- Let the viewer enter a room first and follow them in.
- Let them know how happy you've been there, what attracted you to the property and why you bought it. Things such as local schooling, shops or public transport links (if relevant) can be worth mentioning.
- Keep it simple when explaining your onward move, buyers will want to feel they can buy your home with ease.
- Don't be pressed into discussing price. If asked simply inform them you'd like the best price but to discuss that with the agent.
- Buyers are sometimes late. Fifteen minutes is normally how long we would give them. After that just let us know and we'll give them a chase.



Social Media & Marketing

In line with our principal of leaving no stone unturned, we access all the leading property portals and utilise the latest digital technology on behalf of our clients. This helps our clients to consistently stay up to date via our social media channels and showcases the marketing of properties through boosted posts and paid adverts.

We believe this provides a powerful method of exposure on our client's behalf, adding value and opportunity in every sale and let we are instructed on. With this additional investment in marketing, we are able to put your property in front of as many potential buyers and tenants as possible.





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