

GUIDE TO SERVICES FOR ESTATE AGENCY

Middleton Ross & Arnot retains a major share of the Ross-shire property market whilst the practice as a whole has been operating for over 100 years. We have many years of combined experience of handling property sales throughout the Highland Region and beyond. Our offices are located on the High Street of both Dingwall and Alness which are the two largest towns in Ross-shire.

PERSONNEL

The Property Department is staffed with experienced full time personnel of a Property Manager and a full time Property Assistant with additional support from our helpful Receptionists who are frequently the first point of contact for enquiries. The Property Manager, Lisa Simpson, who is native to the area, will generally be the person who will come out to assess your property and is responsible for taking the particulars, photographs drawing floor plans and writing up the text of your property schedule. Susan Black, the Property Assistant takes care of the preparation and printing of the schedules and the administrative work involved in the marketing of the properties. The Receptionists all get involved in arranging appointments for viewers and phoning the viewers for feedback.

INITIAL VISIT

Initially, your property will be visited by Lisa and after completion of her inspection she will make comparisons with the recent market in your area and you will be advised of the price recommended to commence the marketing. This will be based on experience of the market knowledge of the local area and access to sales information particularly through the records available to member firms on the Highland Solicitors Property Centre web site. The price will be the value which, in Lisa's considered opinion, will attract viewers to the property without being so low that those who cannot afford it will be wasting both their and the seller's time or so high that it will be above the price range for the type of property and the area. At this stage, Lisa can also advise on possible changes or improvements to the presentation of your home to attract viewers and potential buyers. On occasion, particularly on unusual or country properties, advice is available to the property staff from the highly experienced team of solicitors in the firm who have had many years of experience and knowledge of property selling and conveyancing.

HSPC

You will be advised of the marketing options available to you. The firm is a member of the Highland Solicitors Property Centre and we will usually recommend registration with them to take advantage of the wide range of marketing tools used by the Solicitors Property Centre to bring your property to the attention of the wider world. The HSPC web site, www.hspc.co.uk has around 2,000 visitors per day with an additional presence on Facebook and Twitter, also the monthly published Property Review is available at over 150 outlets throughout the Highlands and they also have external window displays all over the region. In addition, through your registration with HSPC your property will also be advertised on the new www.spcscotland.co.uk web site which brings together most of the Solicitors Property Centres throughout Scotland and also on zoopla.co.uk one of the UK's largest property portals.

LOCAL PRESS ADVERTISING

The firm also recommends advertising your property in the local press who often run features for particular areas and also have property pull out sections and additional web space. Lisa will advise sellers of when these features arise.

HOME REPORTS

It is a legal requirement for every home advertised for sale, whether through an agent or privately, to have a Home Report available before the property goes on the market. The report will contain three sections, a survey prepared by a qualified surveyor, an energy report giving information on the property's energy efficiency rating, also prepared by a surveyor, and a property questionnaire completed by the seller giving details about the house. The firms of surveyors have also agreed to include with the survey a valuation report which may be used by a purchaser's lender. At Middleton Ross & Arnot, we are able to make all the arrangements for the Home Report to be compiled by surveyors from the area who have systems in place for carrying out this work and for it to be made available to purchasers who have noted interest. The reports are available free of charge from our own and the HSPC web site. If requests are made for hard copies from our offices an administration fee will be paid by the purchaser. Middleton Ross & Arnot can arrange for the preparation of the report and we always obtain the report from an independent surveyor to ensure that the valuation is impartial and likely to be acceptable to a purchaser and their lender.

PROPERTY GUIDE

Because our offices are centrally situated in both Dingwall and Alness and have large windows we have excellent displays to show off your property to the passing public of both towns. This easy accessibility also gives us the opportunity of meeting potential purchasers who can leave their details with us for our Property Matching Service which is carried out on each property new to the market. Each person who makes an enquiry about property or comes in to collect the Property Review will be handed a copy of our own Property Guide which is updated on a regular basis and sent out to a mailing list at the beginning of each month.

WEBSITE AND MARKETING

The Middleton Ross & Arnot web site has proved to be a popular site which is very easy to negotiate and is an effective marketing tool. Recent improvements to the site include additional photographs of properties which can be seen prior to downloading the full schedule which is available as a pdf file. We now also have photographs of staff members with a write up about each to present a friendly face. The majority of prospective purchasers download the sales schedules from the internet which keeps down the costs of printing sales particulars, no extra charge is made for the preparation of the pdf file. Middleton Ross & Arnot also have Facebook and Twitter accounts where all of the properties are posted, so if you 'like' and 'follow' our pages you can share the link to your property amongst your friends and followers, this has proved to be a very effective way of getting your property noticed. Your sales particulars are prepared by Lisa in the Dingwall office and we are able to print them in small quantities as required without the need for ordering large stocks from a printer, thereby cutting down on the outlay to the client and harm to the environment. We usually recommend that you have a For Sale sign placed at your property but again this is at the discretion of the client. No additional charge is made for signs and as such we may sometimes ask that a client collect and erect a sign themselves. There are no additional marketing fees or registration fees.

RENTAL PROPERTY

Although we no longer advertise rental properties we are happy to carry out the legal work for tenancy agreements. If you provide us with the tenants' details, we will pass it to our legal department for the tenancy agreement to be drawn up. This is when our involvement will end until the next time that property becomes available to rent. Landlords should be aware that the onus is on them to comply with regulations for letting property, registration with the local authority as a landlord, gas, electric and solid fuel safety checks, providing an Energy Performance Certificate and lodging deposits with a tenancy deposit scheme.

CLIENT CARE

Throughout the marketing of your property contact will be maintained with you and advice given on the process of negotiation with prospective purchasers. You will receive updates on notes of interest and offers when they are received. If your property does not sell within a reasonable timescale Lisa will advise on how to increase the interest whether that be through reviewing the price, further advertising or taking fresh photographs. Because your property schedules are prepared in house, it is an easy matter to make changes to the schedules at minimum cost and wastage. By dealing with us, you have the assurance that we put your interests first, that our advice is not compromised by a need to meet targets or sell mortgages or insurance products to you or to prospective purchasers, and that all our work is covered by the Law Society of Scotland complaints procedure.

If you have opted to have the conveyancing work carried out by our experienced solicitors the titles will be checked and all necessary reports obtained. Once an offer is received your business will be placed in the hands of your solicitor who will deal with the exchange of missives with the purchaser's solicitor until a bargain is concluded. He will then deal with the process of transferring the title to the purchaser's name as well as arranging repayment of any loan funds you may have outstanding on the property and ultimately the settlement of the sale. At Middleton, Ross & Arnot, we recognise that selling and purchasing property can be very stressful and in the Property Department we made every effort to support you through the process of selling your property and to give your property the best possible advantage in the market. We will deal with you honestly and give you the benefits of an experienced and caring group of people to advise and handle your house sale.