

PROPERTY NEWS

LONG HAUL FAMILY HOLIDAYS

GOING FURTHER AFIELD TO CREATE MEMORIES WITH YOUR FAMILY

HALF TERM HOLIDAYS
BRING THE ENTERTAINMENT
TO THE KIDS THIS HOLIDAY

GARDENING GUIDE
GET OUTDOORS IN YOUR
GARDEN THIS MAY

THE BEST HOT TUBS
THE BEST SELECTION OF HOT
TUBS FOR THE SUMMER

PREMIER LEAGUE
TITLE AND RELEGATION
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As glorious summer days swiftly approach, many of us will be left feeling overwhelmed at the prospect of getting our homes ready for the hotter period. Following the cold winter months, some homes may be looking a little bit worse for wear and needing some sprucing before we can host get-togethers and big occasions to celebrate the beautiful upcoming weather. Follow these simple tips to get your house ready for the most beautiful time of the year.

TEST YOUR DETECTORS AND SWITCH CEILING FANS

One of the first pieces of preparation you should do is to check all the detectors in your home are in good working order. Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are literal lifesavers and ensuring they are in good working order should be a priority. You should also make sure to switch the rotation of your ceiling fans. During the warmer months, ceiling fans should be set to spin counter clockwise. This will then see cool air blown downwards and throughout the room, while also drawing moisture out of the air to drop the overall temperature.



WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION

Spring has sprung and we're all getting ready for summer. This month, on pages 2&3 we look at ways to get your home summer ready; inside and out. Meanwhile, on pages 4&5 we look at some fantastic long-haul family friendly holiday options.

It doesn't feel like five-minutes since the Easter Holidays, and now we're up to half-term again! On pages 8&9 we look at how to keep your kids entertained while not even leaving the house. On page 7 we delve into screen-free week, and how it can help grown-ups de-stress. Talking about stress, on page 6 we show you how to take the stress out of installing fresh skirting boards in your home.

With the hotter weather returning, and the chance for us all to get out into our gardens, on pages 12&13 we look at the best hot tubs you can buy as well as the ultimate BBQ marinade recipes for cooking for your family and friends. We also have your monthly gardening guide, as well as a preview of the run-in for the Premier League.

So grab a glass of vino, sit in your garden, and enjoy this month's magazine.

Jonathan Wheatley
Editor



GET YOUR HOME READY FOR SUMMER

There are plenty of changes you can make both inside and out

SHINY WINDOWS ARE THE WAY FORWARD

Windows go through a lot over the winter months. Rain, snow, sleet and wind would have all pelted your home's windows. This means when it comes to the spring and summer time, your windows have been through a bit of a bashing, so it is time for a good clean. After all, why spoil the glorious views of blossoming nature by looking through smudged and dirty windows? Start by grabbing a microfibre or paper cloth to remove any dust. Then use warm water with washing-up liquid and a soft white cloth to wipe the windows down. To leave your window looking that bit extra sparkly, you could spray one part distilled white vinegar to 10 parts warm water onto a cloth and rub down the window at the end.

BRING THE OUTSIDE IN WHEN REDECORATING

You may decide to move your home around slightly as we head into the summer months. If you are redecorating, you could introduce a snapshot of the beauty of nature that is growing outside using houseplants. It is well-documented that houseplants can lift the mood of those living in the home and they also act as a stunning accent or feature in a space. Take a trip to your local garden centre or major supermarket to browse the wide selection of houseplants that are available.

GET YOUR GARDEN LOOKING FANTASTIC

One of the best features of the summer is the stunning weather that will cover the country, even

if this is only for a couple of days. There are few things as British as squeezing as much sunny fun into the handful of blistering days we get each year. To make sure you are ready to make the most of those eagerly anticipated sunny days, get your garden into shape for hosting now. Whether planning big family barbecues or looking to just have a handful of friends round for some drinks, you will want your garden to look welcoming. To do this, give your lawn a bit of care and attention by removing any common weeds and give the area a good mow. When cutting the grass, make sure the height is no lower than 1 cm as being too short will leave the area looking unhealthy.

DEEP CLEAN THE BARBECUE

As previously stated, many of us will be heading outside for family gatherings when the weather is looking fine. The centre point of one of these gatherings could well be the barbecue. After being stored away and out of use for many months, you should make sure your barbecue is in working order. While many will give their barbecue a good clean after every use, as they should, a deep clean ahead of the summer is a brilliant idea. To do this, turn the heat up as high as it will go and keep the hood closed. After about 10 minutes, open up the lid and scrape the grates using a metal grill brush. Then move onto the outside grill box, which you should empty and wash out using warm and soapy water. If there is any tough-to-move grime or burnt food lingering on your barbecue, you can use specialist cleaning products.



LONG HAUL FAMILY HOLIDAYS

Go further afield and make incredible memories with your family

We are lucky to be able to travel anywhere, especially in this modern climate

The family holiday is always a highlight of the year. Children love getting excited as soon as they know where you're going, and that excitement naturally extends to us too. We are lucky to be able to travel anywhere, especially in this modern climate, but there are some destinations that can transform a family break from a simple getaway to a full-blown experience. We're talking about long haul holidays—destinations that are beyond our usual travel range of Spain, France and other European countries. If you and your family are looking for an amplified sense of adventure with countless new experiences compared to domestic and close-to-home holidays, why not consider one of these countries? If your kids can manage the longer flight durations, they'll benefit so much from the cultural enrichment and lifelong memories.

CANADA

Let's start with the destination that will be the most similar to the UK, while still being exciting enough to justify the 8 – 10 hour flight. The first big thing to note is that there will be little to no language barrier, which will help your children feel comfortable if they are not used to travelling far away. There are many options for cities if you choose to visit Canada, with each offering its own benefits. If the hustle and bustle of a city takes your fancy, you could look into Toronto, home of the iconic CN Tower. The lakeside area offers stunning views over Lake Ontario, and you can get a boat ride over to Toronto Island to enjoy some more natural scenery. Nearby are the famous Niagara Falls, a giant horseshoe-shaped waterfall on the Canada-US border. There are also outstanding areas of natural beauty if you look further west, including the stunning Rocky Mountains, and you



could even have a skiing holiday in Whistler, British Columbia. With the potential to spot wildlife such as mooses and bears—from a very safe distance—and popular attractions such as Canada's Wonderland, there is plenty for the whole family to get excited about.

JAPAN

A bucket-list destination for many people, Japan represents a complete departure from the familiarity of the UK. You and your family will get to see and experience things that you would never find at home, making this a great choice for your long haul family holiday. There are many famous places to visit in Japan, and the iconic shinkansen bullet train will help you travel around in style, minimising travel times after the approximately 12 hour flight. Starting in Tokyo, your family will be awestruck by the modern metropolis, with its countless lights, screens and towers. Take it all in from the top of the Skytree, and enjoy a moment of peace in the grounds of Meiji Jingu, a hugely popular Shinto shrine in the heart of Shibuya. This is a real attraction of the country—wherever you are, you can find a shrine or temple at which to take a breather. Another cultural capital is Kyoto, where you can enjoy a slightly quieter time and visit popular areas such as Gion, a well-known geisha district, and Uji, the matcha tea capital. If your children are into theme parks, Japan has an abundance of well-known destinations,

The pristine beaches and crystal oceans provide the perfect setting for you all to unwind and forget about the stresses of life.

including Disney Sea, Universal Studios Japan with its newly opened Super Nintendo World, and Ghibli Park, perfect for fans of Hayao Miyazaki's internationally renowned work. Japan's range is another reason it is so popular—Okinawa's golden beaches contrast dramatically with the snow of Hokkaido, and of course if you visit in spring (the most popular time) you will get to witness the world-famous sakura cherry blossom. Top it all off with splendid natural views of oceans, mountains and forests, and you have a well-rounded family holiday in a beautifully different culture.

BARBADOS

Our final suggestion is the epitome of a relaxing family break. The pristine beaches and crystal oceans provide the perfect setting for you all to unwind and forget about the stresses of life. You'll feel much more free than if you were to visit Spain, for example, as the 8 hour flight will separate you perfectly from the responsibilities of home. The Caribbean island is a popular choice for holidaymakers, with its wonderful all-inclusive resorts on the west coast. The gentler seas on this side of the island will allow your kids to have an amazing time paddling, while you enjoy Bajan rum and delicious local food. You can also visit the Barbados Wildlife Reserve and learn about the native wildlife, including monkeys and iguanas. It will be a beach holiday like no other!



EXPERT FINISH - SKIRTING BOARDS



They can be one of the most under appreciated features of your room



An expertly fitted skirting board can provide your most recent home renovation project with a professional finishing look. This can be a feature which many people leave to sort at the end of their work, so make sure you get this just right. Skirting boards are used to cover up the corner joint between the wall and the floor, providing a seamless and unobstructed look to your decor. Here is a step-by-step guide to fitting skirting boards in your room.

How to fit skirting boards in your home

- 1) The first step to a piece of DIY just like this is to be cautious. Use a pipe and cable detector to check the area of your wall where you intend to fix the skirting board for any internal pipes or cables. Once you feel satisfied you are not going to cause any damage, apply a grab adhesive to the back of your skirting board and press this firmly to the wall, wiping away any excess adhesive that emits.
- 2) When fixing skirting to a masonry wall, you will now need to use a specific masonry drill bit to go through the skirting and into the wall. Insert a wall plug and a screw, tapping into place until you feel resistance from the screw. Then screw the head until it is below the surface of your fresh skirting.
- 3) Use a cartridge gun to apply a flexible caulk to the top of your skirting, which will seal it off and fill any remaining small gaps between the wall and the skirting. Wipe away any excess caulk using a damp cloth, which will also smooth the surface.
- 4) To give your work an expert finishing look, go over any countersunk nails and screws by filling this in and sanding down, meaning your skirting is now finally ready to paint.





ADULT ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR SCREEN-FREE WEEKS

Celebrated each year during the first week of May, it began in 2010, with the first such week being called TV Turnoff Week. Today, however, because there are so many more screens we deal with on a weekly basis – such as smart phones, tablets, and TVs to utilise the ever-growing home streaming services, all of which have boomed in popularity and usage over the past decade – it’s called Screen-Free Week.

Henry Labalme and Matt Pawa created TV Turnoff Week in 1994, as they believed a healthy childhood depends on the idea of ‘play.’ Like many of us, they believed through creative play, children explore their physical world, build

their curiosity, and expand their imaginations. However, Screen-Free Week has now become just as relevant to adults, regarding so many more people now working from home than 30 years ago. Since 1998, the number of people that regularly work from home in the UK has increased by 2.73 million after the number of remote workers reached 5.6 million in 2020. This is a staggering statistic, and implies (at least in most cases) working with a computer-related device, therefore a screen. Today, more than ever, we need Screen-Free Week, so here are our top picks of activities to either rediscover or try for the first time, in place of using digital screens.

More UNIQUE ideas for how to spend your Screen-Free Week:

- ◊ Take up (or rediscover) a meditation technique that works for you.
- ◊ Bird watching, as it alleviates anxieties and generates calm.
- ◊ Enjoy a spa day with friends.
- ◊ Cosplay, either with friends or alone, because at the end of the day, it’s fun, so why not?!
- ◊ Thrill sports, such as skydiving, bungee jumping, or water skiing.
- ◊ Surfing, since it’s something anyone of all ages can do, even if you’re inexperienced.
- ◊ Find unique recipes you’ve never tried before, and cook them at home.
- ◊ Write a collection of poems for yourself through which to reflect on yourself and life.
- ◊ Go on a roadtrip, using only paper maps like the good old days.
- ◊ Embark on an interior design project for either your or someone else’s home.
- ◊ Landscape your garden, or decorate your balcony with plants and flowers.
- ◊ Volunteer and expand your work experience and people skills.

Common activities for the evenings and weekends:

- Reading
- Sewing
- Knitting
- Board games
- Jigsaws
- Painting
- Listening to and composing music
- Exercise (either indoors or outdoors)





ENTERTAIN THE KIDS DURING MAY HALF TERM



It's almost time for the schools to break up for the half term again, which means you'll have your children all to yourself for a week! While it will obviously be lovely to have them around during the day, it raises the question of how to keep them happy while still working—unlike our kids; we don't get breaks! Luckily, a lot of workplaces will let you bring work home so someone can be in the house with the little ones, so all you need to do is find things for them to do around the house while you're on the clock. These activities need to be engaging, so they can focus for long periods of time without coming back to you, and of course they must be fun and rewarding too—otherwise they simply won't do them! It isn't always easy finding the perfect activity, but we've compiled a list to provide you with some inspiration ready for the half term.

IN THE GARDEN

Now the weather has mostly brightened up, we're sure a lot of you have been looking out at the garden and thinking it's time

to get back out there. Well, why not get the kids on board and get them to help with the gardening? It's a productive pastime which will positively impact your children as much as your outdoor space—there is plenty of scientific evidence to suggest that exposure to soil and plants promotes many health benefits. Just make sure that you're happy for your young ones to be handling plants and soil, and keep an eye on them if need be.

Planting pots

Your children will love designing and planting their own plant pot displays! Once you've shown them how to carefully place a plant in a pot, you can leave them to it and see what amazing floral

and leafy pieces they have come up with! Once they're finished, it can then be their responsibility to keep it happy and healthy, which is an important skill for when they have a garden or houseplants of their own.

Their own patch

If you have enough space in the garden, it's a great idea to dedicate a small area to each of your children and let them do

Typically household chores are not a fan favourite amongst our kids, but with a little encouragement, you might be able to get them helping out



We look at some ways you can keep the kids busy while you work from home!



what they like! Giving them the freedom to use a space how they see fit is good practice for later in life, and it will also add some nice diversity to your garden! You could all go to a nearby garden centre and let them pick out their favourite bedding plants, which is a nice half term activity in itself if you have the time. We have seen a few people do this over the years, and the results are so varied! Rigid colour schemes, fruit bushes, rewilding... whatever your children come up with, we're sure it'll keep them busy and satisfied!

HOBBIES AND CREATIVITY

There's no end to the number of activities the little ones can do inside the house, either! Whether it's an established hobby or their first dabble with something new, finding the right thing can result in hours of quiet time that everyone in the house can enjoy.

Reading

One idea we've had is to set a reading challenge for the half term. You could help your child pick out a book that is appropriate—or even challenging—for their age, and see if they can finish it before going back to school. It would be perfect for both kids who haven't read much and those who love books, however don't force the matter—if they don't want to, that's okay.

Painting

How hands-off this will be for you depends on the age of your children, but we remember spending ages painting during school holidays. We would be given a huge sheet of paper and told to paint whatever we liked, and it always kept us entertained for hours. Older children can be trusted to be sensible and clean without your supervision, but it's definitely best to keep the younger ones in check yourself—decorating the walls is not a fun half term activity!

HELP AROUND THE HOUSE

Now, typically household chores are not a fan favourite amongst our kids, but with a little encouragement, you might be able to get them helping out with cleaning and tidying this half term. There are a number of ways to get them motivated, depending on their age. Younger children might feel satisfied with a reward chart or gold star system, which can end with them getting some nice treats as a result of helping with the housework.

If they're older, why not offer to hook up their favourite music to the speakers while they help you out? It'll make them have a nicer time, and will show that their interests and tastes are recognised and encouraged.



MAY GARDENING GUIDE

Get on top of the gardening jobs before summer

May is a wonderful month for gardening in the UK. The weather is starting to warm up, the days are getting longer, and the plants are beginning to come back to life. This is a great time to get outside and start working in your garden. In this article, we will discuss some of the gardening jobs that you should focus on in May.

PLANTING

May is the perfect time to start planting your summer bedding plants. This includes annuals such as petunias, marigolds, and geraniums. You can also start planting your vegetable garden in May. Vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, and courgettes can be planted outdoors in May, as long as the threat of frost has passed. Be sure to prepare the soil by adding compost and fertilizer before you plant.

WEEDING

Weeding is an essential gardening job in May. As the weather starts to warm up, weeds will start to grow quickly. It is important to stay on top of them, or they will quickly take over your garden. Spend some time each week pulling up any weeds that you see. Be sure to get the entire root, or the weed will just grow back.



PRUNING

May is a good time to start pruning your shrubs and trees. Pruning helps to promote healthy growth and can also help to control the size of your plants. Be sure to use sharp pruning shears and make clean cuts. Avoid cutting too much of the plant at once, as this can cause stress.



MULCHING

Mulching is an important gardening job in May. Mulch helps to retain moisture in the soil, which can be especially important during the warmer months. It also helps to suppress weeds and can provide a barrier between the soil and any pests that may be trying to get to your plants. Be sure to spread the mulch evenly over the soil, and avoid piling it up around the base of your plants.



WATERING

As the weather starts to warm up, it is important to make sure that your plants are getting enough water. This is especially important for newly planted plants, which may not have an established root system yet. Be sure to water your plants deeply, but avoid over-watering, as this can lead to root rot.



LAWN CARE

May is the perfect time to start taking care of your lawn. If you have not already done so, it is time to start mowing your lawn regularly. Set your lawn mower to the highest setting to avoid cutting the grass too short. This will help to encourage healthy growth. You should also consider fertilizing your lawn in May. This will give it the nutrients that it needs to grow strong and healthy..

DEADHEADING

Deadheading is the process of removing dead flowers from your plants. This helps to promote healthy growth and can also encourage your plants to produce more flowers. Spend some time each week deadheading your plants. Be sure to remove the entire flower, including the stem.

PEST CONTROL

May is a good time to start thinking about pest control in your garden. Pests such as aphids and slugs can quickly take over your plants if you are not careful. Consider using natural pest control methods, such as companion planting, to keep pests at bay. You can also use organic pesticides if necessary, but be sure to follow the instructions carefully.

In conclusion, May is a wonderful time to get outside and start working in your garden. There are many gardening jobs that you should focus on in May, including planting, weeding, lawn care, pruning, mulching, watering, deadheading, and pest control. By focusing on these tasks, you can help to ensure that your garden is healthy and thriving throughout the summer months. Happy gardening!

BEST HOT TUBS ON THE MARKET

The spring's here, so it's time to think about hot tubs, and making the wisest choice when it comes to purchasing

As the weather warms, there is no better prospect on a mild spring evening than chilling in your garden hot tub, drinking a glass of your favourite wine, as the sun sets over the horizon. You want your hot tub to be with you for many years, so it's wise to ensure it's well made and with the promise of longevity. With that in mind, here are our top picks of the best hot tubs on the market at the moment, with a variety of price points to choose from.



Lay-Z-Spa Miami Hot Tub
120 AirJet Massage System Inflatable Spa with Freeze Shield Technology, 2-4 Person
£299.99
<https://tinyurl.com/yfw6cz6a>



Lay-Z-Spa St Moritz Hot Tub
180 AirJet Massage System Rattan Design Inflatable Spa with Freeze Shield Year Round Technology, 5-7 Person
£358.10
<https://tinyurl.com/mvtzej33>

Lay-Z-Spa 60011 Vegas Hot Tub
With 140 AirJet Massage System Inflatable Spa with Freeze Shield Technology, 4-6 Person
£279.99
<https://tinyurl.com/5fje5mmp>



LAY-Z-SPA HOT TUBS ON AMAZON
Lay-Z-Spa is the most energy-efficient inflatable hot tub brand, according to an independent study of comparable products of competing brands, and the brand dominates the top of the list of hot tubs on Amazon in terms of customer reception. The following are some of the best customer-rated inflatable hot tubs on Amazon, all of which with four and a half stars.



Lay-Z-Spa 60025 Helsinki Hot Tub
180 AirJet Wood Effect Inflatable Spa with Freeze Shield Year Round Technology and Rapid Heating, 5-7 Person
£598.99
<https://tinyurl.com/5fcx28rw>

St. Lawrence Swim Spa
The St. Lawrence features seven hydro-massage seats - including a lying position seat - and 66 massage jets. The St. Lawrence is a real standout thanks to its generous size. Its spacious open area can accommodate up to an additional eight bathers or, most notably, an active swimmer.
£24,999
<https://tinyurl.com/hxuvfkh>

Canadian Spa Company Calgary 4 Person Plug & Play Hot Tub
The Canadian Spa Company Calgary Plug & Play spa is a roomy but compact spa, packed with all the features of a full-sized spa and accommodates 4 adults. It features 24 adjustable hydrotherapy jets. Energy-efficient and easy to install - just plug it into a socket and start relaxing right away. Warranty covers 10 year shell structure, 3 year shell surface, 2 year parts and labour.
£6,439.99
<https://tinyurl.com/2p95u78d>



TOP TWO LUXURY HOT TUBS



LIP-SMACKING DIY BBQ MARINADES

Be the talk of the town with these saucy toppings

Barbecue season is nearly here, but how can you make sure your food offerings really stick out this year? By perfecting marinades, you can get your food tasting delicious in no time and leave your guests coming back for more. Here are a handful of mouth-watering marinades you can make from home.



TERIYAKI SAUCE

Teriyaki sauce is an incredibly popular choice of marinade for a plethora of meats, including chicken, beef and lamb.

METHOD

Add 350ml into a saucepan with the sugar, soy sauce, garlic and ginger and bring this to a simmer and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Cook for five minutes until thickened, then combine the cornflour with 1 tbsp of water and whisk into the sauce. Add the rice wine vinegar and pour into a clean jar.

INGREDIENTS

- 85g light brown soft sugar
- 70ml light soy sauce
- 1 large garlic clove
- 4cm piece of ginger
- 1 tbsp cornflour
- 1 tbsp rice wine vinegar

COCONUT CHILLI MARINADE

Another excellent choice this summer is a coconut chilli marinade. This is ideal for spreading on chicken thighs or white fish, before leaving to stew in the flavour overnight, ready for the grill.

METHOD

Pulse the ginger, grated, with the chopped chillies, sesame oil, fish sauce and coconut into a chunky paste, using a food processor for the best outcome.

INGREDIENTS

- Thumb-sized piece of ginger
- 2 chopped chillies
- 7 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp fish sauce
- 40g desiccated coconut

BARBECUE SAUCE

Barbecue sauce is one of the classic options many of us will have in the cupboard ready for all manner of meals, however you could even try crafting your own. This finger licking sauce will particularly be ideal for chicken and racks of ribs.

METHOD

Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the onion. Cook this over heat for five minutes, until softened. Add the remaining ingredients and mix. Bring this to the boil and reduce to a simmer for 30 minutes, until thick. Mix this in a food processor for a smooth sauce.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 3 garlic cloves
- 85g brown sugar
- 3 tbsp malt vinegar
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbsp tomato puree

THE PREMIER LEAGUE TITLE RACE HEATS UP

It is all looking very good for a London side in red at the moment

The top flight of English football always grasps sporting headlines across the globe each year.

Many pundits and experts alike rate our top league as one of the best, with world class players and managers plying their trade here and more attracted each year.

There is always a scramble towards the top of the table for one team to be crowned the best, with Manchester City being the only side to have won the league in consecutive seasons in more than 10 years.

Before the 2022/2023 season began, the Citizens were fancied by many to secure a third straight title, after beating out bitter rivals Manchester United and Liverpool in the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 seasons, respectively.

Manchester City even bolstered their ranks in the summer transfer window, with the signing of highly rated Norwegian striker Erling Haaland.

Many fans also thought Liverpool would be vying for the title, having competed for the top gong for many years since the appointment of German manager Jurgen Klopp back in 2015. In this period Liverpool secured their first Premier League title, in 2019/2020, as well as

finished second twice, in 2021/2022 and 2018/2019, and won the Champions League in 2019.

Others sides fancied to compete for this year's title were Chelsea, buoyed by a raft of new signings thanks to new American owner Todd Boehly, as well as fellow London sides Tottenham and Arsenal.

WHO IS LEADING THE WAY SO FAR?

Few footballing experts would have predicted the runaway leaders in the Premier League this season.

North London side Arsenal have looked incredibly impressive and strong throughout the season, having defeated Crystal Palace 2-0 in their opening fixture and not looking back since.

The Gunners have looked increasingly impressive in recent years under Spanish manager and former player, Mikel Arteta. Under the Spaniard, Arsenal have gradually produced a team full of young, quick and exciting talents, including the likes of Gabriel Jesus, Martin Odegaard and William Saliba, as well as plenty of homegrown talents, like Emile Smith-Rowe and English golden boy Bukayo Saka.

At time of writing, Arsenal currently lead the way in the table having won 23 games out of

31 so far, with only three losses to their name.

WHO ARE THE CONTENDERS?

With Arsenal flying high, football fans will be looking to the closest team to them to add some drama and intrigue to proceedings in the weeks ahead. Pre-season favourites Manchester City are currently second, with 22 wins and four draws in 30 fixtures.

has taken to the Premier League like a duck to water, with 32 goals, which is nine more than second place Harry Kane.

Third place is currently Manchester United, who find themselves 15 points adrift of Arsenal, with a game in hand.

The Red Devils have blown hot and cold so far, but have performed admirably under the command of new manager, Erik Ten Hag. Completing the top four is yet another surprise package, in Newcastle United. The Magpies are flying high, boasting an incredibly impressive defence, built by manager Eddie Howe.

WHAT ARE THE BOOKIES SAYING?

Despite Arsenal currently sitting in first, Manchester City are actually the bookies favourites to claim their third straight Premier League title.

The current top four are currently favoured to retain their positions, in Manchester City, Arsenal, Manchester United and Newcastle United.

WHAT KEY DATES ARE LEFT?

Despite there only being a handful of games remaining to be played this season, there are a number of important fixtures.

A massive fixture will take place on April 26, when Arsenal travel to Manchester to take on Manchester City.

If both sides continue to match each other's results, Manchester City would overtake Arsenal with a victory, due to their game in hand.

The final games of this season will all be played on May 28, with Arsenal hosting Wolves, Manchester City travelling to Brentford and Manchester United taking on Fulham at Old Trafford.

This leaves Manchester City on 70 points and four behind Arsenal, meaning if the Manchester side win their one game in hand, they will sit just a single point behind the leaders.

City also boast the league's top scorer, in the previously mentioned Erling Haaland, who

Acorn Drive, Swaffham

£769,000



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Watton - 01953 883474

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£260,000



A very well presented modern three bedroom semi-detached house situated on a popular development on the outskirts of Swaffham. This superb property offers en-suite shower room, kitchen/dining room, gardens, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. Viewing is highly recommended.

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Captains Close, Swaffham

£550,000



CHAIN FREE! Superb substantial executive style five bedroom detached house with double garage, situated on an exclusive development conveniently within easy reach of Swaffham town centre. This fantastic property boast two reception rooms, modern kitchen and shower rooms, must be viewed!

SWAFFHAM - 01760 721389 - info@longsons.co.uk

Tuns Road, Necton

£350,000



An extended, spacious three bedroom detached, non estate bungalow in the well serviced sought after village Necton. The property boasts two reception rooms, garden room, well maintained gardens, two garages and good off road parking. Viewing highly recommended.

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Pollywigggle Drive, Swaffham

£425,000



CHAIN FREE!! Extremely well presented, modern spacious detached four bedroom house situated with countryside views to the rear on a popular development on the outskirts of Swaffham. This superb property offers open plan kitchen/dining/living area + lounge, en-suite and integral garage.

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Swaffham - 01760 721389

Watton - 01953 883474

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE NO OBLIGATION VALUATION

Bellmere Way, Saham Toney

Guide Price £350,000 – 375,000



Guide Price £350,000 - £375,000. A spacious four bedroom detached house situated in the sought after village of Saham Toney in a cul-de-sac location, boasting two reception rooms, fitted kitchen, family bathroom, UPVC double glazing, off road parking, garage, sizable rear garden. No onward chain.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - watton@longsons.co.uk

Blenheim Way, Watton

Guide Price £365,000 to £375,000



Very well presented 5 bedroom detached family house situated within an established development in the Norfolk town of Watton. This wonderful property offers 2 reception rooms, utility room, conservatory, en-suite shower room, ample parking and a double garage!

WATTON - 01953 883474 - watton@longsons.co.uk

Chequers Lane, Saham Toney

£425,000



Extremely well presented and spacious, detached three bedroom bungalow situated with open views to the rear in the popular village of Saham Toney. This superb property boasts garage, en-suite shower room, two reception rooms, utility room, carport, gardens, UPVC double glazing and solar panels.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - watton@longsons.co.uk

Hills Road, Saham Hills

OIEO £400,000



A spacious four bedroom semi-detached house situated in the semi rural, popular village of Saham Hills. The property offers utility room, cloakroom, gardens, parking, two reception rooms, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating.

Available chain free

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Long Road, Thetford

Guide Price £700,000 - £725,000



This stunning four-bedroom detached house in the popular hamlet of Saham Waite has it all! Enjoy open countryside views from the front, rear and sides, situated on a plot approaching one acre. This beautiful property offers everything you need for comfortable living.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - watton@longsons.co.uk

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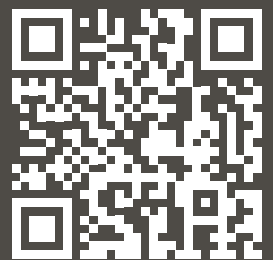
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**HOW MUCH
IS MY
PROPERTY
WORTH?**



Present your house for sale by de-cluttering...

Maximise your home's potential and create spacious rooms enticing potential buyers – simply by de-cluttering!

“ De-cluttering allows you to... maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important ”

If you are looking to sell your house, or have had your home on the market for a while now, then you probably want to get the maximum sale price in the quickest time. There are a few things you can't control – but the one thing that is in your control, is the look and feel of the interior and exterior.

While it's worth spending time fixing and cleaning your house before potential buyers come and view, it's also important to de-clutter. This creates spacious rooms and also allows you to decrease and organise your personal items before you move yourself. Of course it's understandable that you don't to want spend money, time and energy on a home you are about to leave, however, a lot of people are looking for a house in which they can move straight into. Maintaining your

property might even save you thousands of pounds; it could even reduce added expenses of living in your home whilst waiting for a sale. And it might even help avoid possible reductions in the asking price.

The main reason in which people move house tends to be because they lack space in their current home. They want a home that is spacious and in which they can grow into. If a potential viewer comes to your home and sees that there is lack of space, then this will turn them away.

De-cluttering allows you to remove any unnecessary items in an untidy or overcrowded place. It will help maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important.



So where should you start?

You need to create a great first impression and focus on the rooms themselves. You will notice that the first things you see in each room are personal items. Where possible you want to create the look of a

them into things you want to keep and things you want to get rid of. You may even find that you have collected a cupboard full of paper work. Get yourself organised! Don't just throw it all away, but file it and go through it thoroughly. This will also make it easier when you move.

De-personalising can also be a great way to de-clutter. Too many personal effects can be distracting to buyers. They want to see a house in which they can make their own memories rather than seeing yours. Again, personal items can be stored away. Remember

“ Where possible you want to create the look of a lifestyle that the potential buyer want. This usually has a ‘show home’ feel, rather than a ‘lived in’ feel. Minimising your things is the quickest way to do this: you want to ensure that potential buyers can do simple things, like, open any doors easily, ensuring that there are no obstacles.

lifestyle that the potential buyer want. This usually has a ‘show home’ feel, rather than a ‘lived in’ feel. Minimising your things is the quickest way to do this: you want to ensure that potential buyers can do simple things, like, open any doors easily, ensuring that there are no obstacles.

So, what do we mean by clutter? There are two types: genuine clutter, and items that you want to keep but don't work for the sale of your property.

Genuine Clutter: You need to go through the space and sort out each item, categorising

You also want to focus on little things like DVDs, books and trinkets. These items may have some small value so sell them or donate them to charity. Get rid of any old shoes and coats that are lying about in your porch or hallway. You might want to hide away the coats and shoes you do currently wear. Store them in your wardrobe, while you have viewings.

Items that you want to keep but don't work for the sale of your property: You may want to consider putting some items in storage while you sell your home. Sometimes items are too large or even too small for some spaces and can make the room look odd. If you want to keep these particular items, then store them until you move into your new home.

that this is only a temporary way of living and hopefully it won't be for long! If you find you are keeping more things than you are throwing out, then think about whether or not it's in the right room or do you even need it now?

As previously mentioned, you can attempt to sell some of the things you have acquired over the years. Use sites like eBay, Gumtree and social networking sites to try and sell items. You may want to even hold a house sale for the remaining items that you can't sell. Failing that, why not donate to charity.

The end goal is still the same and it's important to help potential buyers envision your house as theirs. So remember, de-cluttering will make your home more spacious and entice potential buyers!

Top Tips!



If you are throwing away paperwork, shred anything that is confidential



De-clutter before agents come and take photos of your property. This will help attract more potential viewers online and get that first good impression



Don't spend too long on certain items and don't get distracted. Keep yourself motivated and race against the clock!



Make it fun! Play some music or watch TV while you de-clutter





Your step-by-step guide to the conveyancing process

Once a sale has been agreed and is in the hands of your solicitor, it will go through the following stages. Sometimes additional work will be needed – for example, if the property is leasehold or is yet to be registered with the Land Registry. It is also important for buyers to discuss the availability of their deposit with their solicitor early in the transaction, and we strongly recommend that you contact your solicitor regularly so that they can keep you fully up-to-date with the progress and the latest timescales.

Seller's solicitor's steps

- Obtain a copy of the Title Deeds (or office copies if the title is registered)
- Obtain a copy of the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) (if applicable)
- The seller(s) will return a completed Property Information Form and a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form to the solicitors
- Copies of the above documents, plus a draft contract – this is known as an 'Information Pack' – will be sent to the buyer's solicitor
- Answer the buyer's solicitor's additional enquiries (for example, specific questions about fixtures and fittings) and obtain copies of any planning consent documents
- Agree the contract and arrange for the sellers to sign it in readiness of the exchange (below)
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

Between exchange and completion

- Obtain redemption figures from the mortgage lender and reply to requisitions on title
- Approve the transfer and arrange for the seller(s) and buyer(s) to sign
- Receive the agent's fee account and seek the seller's consent to settle this out of completion funds

Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

Upon completion

- Receive completion funds and (only when this has been completed) instruct your estate agent to release the keys to buyers. Redeem mortgage and forward the financial statement. Forward any surplus funds (unless these are being used to fund an onward purchase). Ensure all outstanding bills are paid
- Forward transfer documents and deeds to the buyer's solicitors
- Forward evidence of 'discharge of mortgage' to the buyer's solicitors

Buyer's solicitor's steps

- Obtain the Information Pack, including a copy of the EPC (if applicable) from the sellers' solicitor and raise any additional queries
- Initiate any specialist searches (for example: a coal search). Submit local, environmental and water searches and a chancel check. This takes about 10 working days in total, and enquiries are then usually raised from the results
- Approve the contract when all enquiries are satisfactory and complete. (At this stage, a mortgage transfer deed will need to be signed and witnessed)
- Receive a mortgage offer and instructions from the lender and deal with any conditions set out by them. Make sure that life cover and buildings insurance is being arranged
- Request the deposit, report back to the buyer, and arrange for the contract to be signed. Place buildings insurance and life cover in force
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

Between exchange and completion

- Raise 'requisitions on title' and prepare the draft transfer deed
- Report on title to mortgage lender and obtain funds for completion, including Stamp Duty (if appropriate)
- Prepare accounts, obtain signature to mortgage deed and undertake final Land Registry and Land Charges searches

Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

Upon Completion

- Forward to the seller's solicitors the balance of funds - it is only then that they can authorise the release of the keys. Receive from the seller's solicitors, the transfer document deeds
- Stamp the Transfer Deed, register the buyer's ownership with the Land Registry and forward the deeds to the lender or client (where appropriate)

Contract - The agreement that sets out the main terms that have been agreed - for example: price, address, names, etc. Two copies are drawn up, and each party signs one in readiness for the exchange of contracts.

Deposit - The part of the purchase price (usually 10%) which the buyer pays on exchange of contracts.

Exchange of contracts - The swapping of signed contracts by the solicitors (together with the buyer's deposit). After this, the contract is binding.

Energy Performance Certificate - This contains information on energy use, energy performance, carbon dioxide emissions, and fuel bills.

Land Registry - The Government department that records who owns what land, and under what conditions.

Local Authority Search - A list of questions that are specific to the property and intended, for example, to discover if there have been any planning applications on the property, if the road to the house is maintained by the council, etc.

Mortgage Redemption Figure - The amount required to repay the outstanding capital/ interest of a mortgage.

Property information form/fixtures, fittings and contents form - Standard forms about the property that the seller answers for their solicitor (for example: what will be left behind, details of guarantees, etc.)

Title Deeds - Legal documents that prove ownership of land/buildings, and the terms on which they are owned.

Transfer of Title - The document that passes the ownership from the seller to the buyer.

Stamp Duty for buy to let investors and second home owners - An additional tax, paid by the buyer purchasing an additional property that is not their main residence. It includes buy to let landlords and those buying second homes and holiday homes. The higher rates will be 3 percentage points above the current rates of duty shown below.

Requisition on title - An enquiry relating to the completion arrangements.

Seller's Pack - This comprises a Property Information Form, a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form, a copy of the title deeds and the draft contract.

Stamp Duty - Currently, the Stamp Duty threshold for residential properties is £250,000. For first-time buyers you can claim a discount and won't pay Stamp Duty up to £425,000 on the purchase price and after that you will pay only 5% between £425,001 to £625,000.

However, how much you pay is also dependent on whether you already own another property or if you're a non-UK resident.



Moving house?

From meter readings to removal companies, there's so much to remember when moving house. Here's our checklist of what to do and when

First of all, congratulations on your new home! The excitement has probably now kicked in but moving home can also be one of the most stressful and emotionally draining things you can do. However, careful organisation and planning can help decrease the stress and anxiety of moving. This comprehensive and essential checklist will help you do just that.

Eight weeks - Research

Ideally, you want to start packing away any non-essential items as early as possible. This includes any items stored away in the loft, garage and shed. If you are not using it, pack it. Looking into your new area is also important, try to do this around eight weeks before you move. You might need to think about transferring your children to different schools and ordering new uniforms too. At this point, ensure you are also documenting all your important information away: that includes contact details, dates, contracts and information regarding your solicitor.

Six weeks - Removal companies or do it yourself?

Now would be the perfect time to decide on a local removal company. Or if you don't have too much to move, you may want to do it yourself. You could even look into different van hire companies. At this point you've probably started packing away some bits, but if there is anything you decide not to take, then look into selling these items or donating them to charity. This will also give you an idea on the volume of items you have to move.

Four weeks - Notify utility companies

This would be a good time for you to notify utility companies and inform them about your move to switch over. This includes gas and electricity, council tax, internet, phone rental and TV. You should also consider changing any car insurance, tax, memberships, phone contracts and inform your bank about the move. Now's the time to also arrange a date to have your new house cleaned before you move



“ It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush! ”

in, and start ordering any new furnishings for your new property. Start packing away more items, that being, out of season clothes, books, dvd's and even bulky items, like TV's that aren't used often.

Two weeks - Confirm all details

Confirm your move with your removal company or van hire, estate agents and schools. If possible, try to organise someone to look after your pets and children for the day of your move, as this can also be a stressful time for them too. If your removal company doesn't disassemble any furniture or sort out the un-plumbing for the washing machine, then now would be the ideal time to organise these. Remember to also cancel any local services you receive: this could be window cleaners, gardeners and newspaper deliveries. You should now also think about re-registering to vote and getting your post re-directed after your moving date. Continue packing away more furnishings, kitchen appliances and crockery that you won't be using for the next couple of weeks.

24 hours - Final check and walk round

You now have only 24 hours before you move, so double check that everything is packed away and ready for transit. It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush! You may want to create an inventory of your boxes and

furniture to help you keep track of what you have and to help you ensure it doesn't go missing.

Moving day

Today is the day! You need to be ready for when your removal company comes. Ensure that you let them know if there are any fragile boxes that need extra care when handling. If you're moving yourself, then pack up your car or van and work out how many trips it may take. Before you leave, also take note of your final meter readings and send these off to your provider. Don't forget to leave your keys for the new owners!

You have arrived at your new home!

Give your removal company instructions of which boxes go in which rooms and make sure you are happy with everything that has arrived. Ensure you check for any damage before the movers leave. Read your new utility meters and send your readings of to your supplier. Taking photos of them will also ensure you have the correct reading if you need them again in the future. Unpack your essentials such as bed linen and clean towels. Don't worry about the rest, it isn't going anywhere! Order a takeaway, have a cup of tea and enjoy your first night with your family.

Right, so now you're all moved in, it's time to settle down, unpack and enjoy your new place. Remember, planning is essential to ensure your move runs stress free.

Checklist

Eight weeks

- Pack non-essential items
- Research your new area (transfer schools and order new uniform)
- Keep all important documents

Six weeks

- Decide on a local removal company
- Clear out any unwanted items
- Keep packing

Four weeks

- Notify utility companies
- Start preparation for your new house
- Keep packing

Two weeks

- Finalise all details
- Organise pet and child care
- Cancel local services
- Keep packing

24 hours

- Check every room and ensure everything is packed
- Pack a night bag so everything is to hand
- Collect your new keys
- Make sure your phone is fully charged so you can get in touch with the estate agents or removal company

Moving in

- Prepare for the arrival of the removal company and give them directions/your contact details
- Ensure everything is ready to move
- Record meter readings

On arrival

- Give removal company instructions of what goes where
- Check for any damage before they leave
- Read your new utility meters and send them off to your supplier
- Check if the previous owners have left anything behind
- Unpack essentials
- Order a takeaway and sit back and relax!



Want to treat yourself to a proper removal company for your next move or are you prepared to do it yourself

Removal company or brave it yourself?

You're excited about your new home and location but the process of packing, organising and actually moving all of your items is something no-one really ever looks forward to. Not only that but you also have to contact utility companies, maintain a job, keep your children happy and clean your entire house. You do have super powers, right?

Removal companies

Unless you live in a small property or flat, it could be worth hiring a professional removal company to help relieve some of the stress on the day. They have many skills and experience and some of the services they can provide include packing and

unpacking, dismantling and assembling furniture, loading your belongings quickly and securely, including those fragile and specialist items. They can even supply you with packing materials.

Hiring a removal company will also allow you the time to collect the keys to your new home. You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth. Some services are great if you don't have much time to plan and get these done yourself; however these do often come at a premium and may not be suitable for those on a budget. When choosing a removal company

You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth



its key to look at those which have good recommendations and reviews, as you need a company you can rely on. You can use comparison sites, such as comparemymove.com and reallymoving.com, to help find you the best deals.

Getting quotes

You should aim to get at least three quotes from removal companies, preferably from firms which will come out to your property rather than those who just estimate the cost over the phone, as you don't want any nasty charges later on. Plus it will give the company an accurate idea of any restricted areas in your home, if they can park a van or lorry, and how many

items you have. You should also ask for the price to be broken down so you can see just how much you are paying for when it comes to certain aspects like insurance, packing, an hourly rate, mileage and any storage costs.

Once you have found a removal company, it can be useful to send them a briefing sheet that includes information about any items which need to be specially packed, any difficult or large items, plus any carpets and curtains which need moving. Finally, it can also be helpful to send them a floor plan of the new property so they can unload efficiently.

Top tips for packing

When packing, ensure you don't overload your boxes with heavy items, as these will be difficult to lift and could cause a back injury.

Fill any empty gaps using old newspaper, clothing, socks or even tea towels. This will help secure any items when they are being moved.

Create an inventory and label all your boxes and write the contents on each box with a marker. That way you will know which room each box is to go in. And if you are super organised, you could even colour code each room!

Pack heavier boxes on the bottom. This might seem like common sense but it will ensure that any of your fragile items won't break.

Pack a survival box. These are the things that you will need first and should include paper towels, bin bags, cutlery, the kettle, some mugs, tea, coffee, milk, sugar and finally, some toilet paper!



Spring in **YOUR STEP**

Here at Longsons, we are proud to help you get moving this spring. With our innovative marketing techniques, and excellent customer service we will help you find your perfect home.

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