

The banner features a collage of images: a road with a car, Big Ben, green fields, a tractor, and a construction worker. The text '2018' is in large blue and white font, with 'CLA RURAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE' in smaller white font below it. A white box in the center contains the text 'INSPIRING INVESTORS'.

2018

CLA RURAL  
BUSINESS  
CONFERENCE

INSPIRING INVESTORS

# Master Class Series:

## Key points

As part of the build-up to the CLA's national Rural Business Conference *Inspiring Investors* in November 2018, we hosted the CLA Investors Master Class series which brought together some inspirational business owners who have tackled a range of issues.

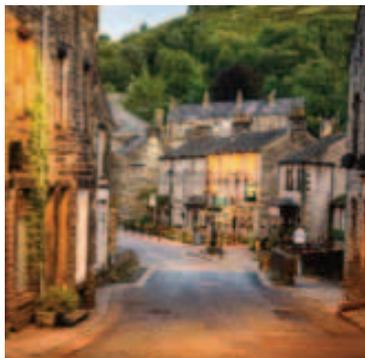
The three Master Classes had a number of common themes – the importance of communication, being outward-looking and setting strategy. This short paper, written by Strutt & Parker, highlights some of the key points made by the speakers at the Master Classes under each of these themes.



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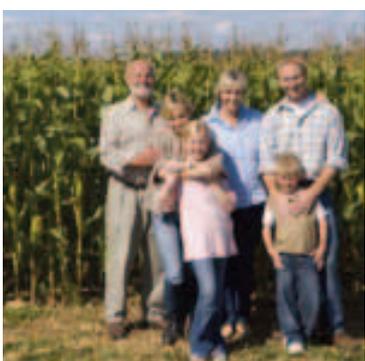


## INTRODUCTION



**1** The first Master Class focussed on **place shaping** and on the challenges and opportunities in establishing, growing and managing communities in rural locations.

**Place shaping – building homes and communities**  
Wootton Park, Henley-in-Arden, 11 September 2018



**2** The second Master Class looked at **strategies for family-run businesses**, and in particular succession and how to bring in new ideas, skills and talent from within and from outside a family to ensure the business grows.

**Strategies for family-run businesses**  
Loseley Park, Guildford, 27 September 2018



**3** The final Master Class was on **diversification** and, as well as seeing some inspiring examples from small to very large businesses, the skills, plans and knowledge needed for successful business ventures were discussed.

**Diversification**  
The Granary Estates, Woodditton, 9 October 2018

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

Clear, honest, regular and early communication was the ‘golden thread’ through all three seminars – whether within a business, when considering succession or with the community about long-term plans for a farm, estate or place.

Talking also identifies issues and concerns, which can make the difference between getting a business working for you, not you for the business.

**It is good to talk.**



### KEY QUOTES

*“Communication is the key – start early to share ideas, hopes and ambitions.”*

**Chris Belcher,  
Mills & Reeve**

*“You are never really sure when succession starts and ends – it evolves.”*

**Will Mathias,  
Mathias Nurseries**

*“Succession has been on [the agenda of] quarterly estate meetings for the 18 years I have attended them, so it has happened over a number of years and is constantly evolving.”*

**Alexander More-Molyneux,  
Loseley Park**

*“I would say my father is tight with money. He would say we are reckless. But sitting down and talking about things usually leads to agreement.”*

**Will Mathias,  
Mathias Nurseries**

*“Running the business can drain time from what you want to do, which for me is selling wine.”*

**George Unwin,  
Baythorne Hall**

*“Lessons learned – engage early, as parish councils are very influential and communities have long memories. Don’t be afraid of small scale and show a strong commitment to a place.”*

**Matthew Morris,  
Bolesworth**

*“An important element is to talk and deal with the difficult things, like money and parents.”*

**Richard Goring,  
Wiston Estate**

*“We are seeing more of younger generations sitting in the room when financial decisions are made.”*

**Karl McConville,  
Barclays**

## BE OUTWARD- LOOKING

Engaging with the ‘community’ was a recurring theme in all three Master Classes – local people, parish and local councils, other businesses, and bodies like National Park Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

Having community support made setting strategies, making plans, development and diversification much easier – and, in many cases, led to better outcomes for both the business and community.

Where communities were not engaged well or early, doing anything was much more difficult. Some of our speakers were ‘still licking our wounds’.



### KEY QUOTES

*“Make your strategic vision outward, not inward-looking.”*

**Richard White,  
Strutt & Parker**

*“For the local economy to grow, we need your businesses to succeed, and the LEP can help by unlocking barriers to growth”.*

**Doug Field,  
New Anglia LEP**

*“Community involvement is key, especially from local councils and local residents.”*

**Stuart Richards,  
Halls Surveyors**

*“Look over the garden wall – understand where you sit, what other assets are there in the area, who is investing and how their supply chain, including staff, works. Do this for your surrounding 10, 20 and 30 miles. Be ambitious and attract world leading organisations. People will pay a premium for their houses if they feel they are entering into a family.”*

**Henry Brooks,  
Tatton Estate Management**

*“Think about what assets you have and what the local area wants. We have nearly two million traffic movements pass our front door each year, going to the North Norfolk coast.”*

**Tom Blofield,  
Bewilderwood,  
Hoveton Estate**

*“It is all about community engagement – do it early when first residents move in – through community events and groups, and empowering residents to organise their own on-going activities.”*

**Anthony Kimber,  
Bournville Village Trust**

*“Creating a place with its own identity requires the right mix of economic, social and environmental activity. Getting this right requires extensive, on-going consultation by both the landowner and the planning authority with those living and working in the area.”*

**Andrew Shirley,  
CLA**

## SETTING STRATEGY AND MAKING PLANS

Setting a strategy can be challenging and time-consuming but it is a key element of success.

It helps identify challenges, as well as opportunities and gives a business direction, especially a complicated one like an estate.



### KEY QUOTES

*"Working out strategic goals is very difficult. Most businesses struggle to agree them but the hard work to do it is exceptionally important."*

**Ralph Crathorne,  
Strutt & Parker**

*"Why have we diversified? All farmers have suffered volatility in income from international commodity markets, so we try to spread the risk and take out the fluctuations."*

**Tom Raynham,  
Raynham Estate**

*"Never be afraid of exploring new ideas. It is okay to fail sometimes, but don't let one iceberg sink the ship."*

**Guy Taylor,  
The Granary Estates**

*"I suddenly realised the importance of setting a growth strategy. I employed an event manager, Amy, and she has helped grow business by 73% in her first year."*

**Guy Taylor,  
The Granary Estates**

*"Inspiration comes from your own passions – and quality trumps quantity, for all diversifications."*

**Tom Raynham,  
Raynham Estate**

*"We worked on our whole estate plan over about 18 months, with the national park authority and wider community, and it was an eye-opening experience and recommended."*

**Richard Goring,  
Wiston Estate**