

## The Barrister Broker - reducing your legal costs



It's been an eventful couple of months since my last column and I am extremely pleased with the positive response and being able to make a real difference to some local people by saving them money on their legal costs.

As a once divorced man, I always look forward to my fortnightly visits from my teenage girls, Katy and Emily, and now that I'm married to a lady who always knows what is going on in



the area, we are getting to experience lots of new things together. The girls had such a great time at the Sustainable Living Show in September and I'm delighted to say that my younger daughter will be joining me and Laura on the Chamber of Commerce Bonfire float this year, so we are really looking forward to that.

As The Barrister Broker, one area of my work includes helping people going through divorce or child contact and residence issues get highly expert yet cost-effective legal advice and representation from "Barristers" instead of going down the potentially expensive route of using solicitors. This leads me onto my next theme... Divorce and Contact...

Divorce is probably one of the most traumatic times in any person's life. It involves dealing with financial consequences and contact and residence

issues where children are involved. If a couple can amicably agree on the division of the matrimonial assets without commencing a court action (as my ex-wife and I did it) this has to be the way forward. Not only is it less stressful, you will avoid paying out legal fees, although it is always prudent to have some expert legal input and the benefit of an approved Court Order to prevent problems arising later.

Christmas is also a time when disputes can arise over contact with the children, and going direct to a Barrister can be financially beneficial in resolving such difficulties.

Unfortunately an amicable outcome isn't always possible, meaning a court action will be needed to obtain a final order. So, once the Divorce Petition has been served, next comes the question of financial orders relating to the matrimonial assets - i.e. who gets what? Who keeps the house?; what happens to the pensions/policies etc?; what are the arrangements for the children, etc, etc? Both parties file what is basically a statement of means (Form E) and the matter then comes before the court for a First Directions Appointment and subsequently a Financial Dispute Resolution hearing. Many matters settle at that point, but if necessary can proceed to a final hearing. Ideally, it shouldn't take longer than 12 months to get from the starting point to the finish.

Taking advice direct from a Barrister, the legal expert, as early as possible can have a significantly advantageous effect on the overall outcome of your case. Barristers will give you a realistic assessment of what you can and cannot expect to take out of your marriage. Besides the obvious court representation, Barristers can write letters on your behalf to your spouse's lawyer and quite often their very involvement can help to keep a lid on matters. With nearly 25 years in the business, rarely have I met a solicitor who would relish going head to head with an experienced Barrister.

It won't cost you anything to speak to me but I could end up saving you thousands!

Call me on 07971 285 796 or email me at [russell@thebarristerbroker.com](mailto:russell@thebarristerbroker.com)

*Russell Burton-Lawrence*