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# Ruth Dooley

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Ruth is a partner with almost 30 years accountancy and tax experience. She trained as an auditor and later moved to specialise in tax. She joined Hazlewoods LLP in 2009 having previously been a partner with Grant Thornton LLP.

In her career she has acted for a wide range of companies and private clients. Her corporate clients have ranged across many sectors and have included SMEs, AIM companies and Plcs.

Ruth has been involved for over fifteen years in various aspects of litigation. She has been instructed in over 100 cases and has witness box experience in family, professional negligence and commercial cases. She has attended many mediations and joint meetings of experts.

She is frequently retained to provide reports as an expert witness, particularly in cases involving matrimonial disputes and cases of professional negligence and loss of profits as a result of personal injury claims or commercial disputes.

Her business and share valuations experience as an expert extends to:

- Divorce cases
- Shareholder disputes
- Partnership litigation
- Commercial disputes

*"I am very much assisted by the expert Ms Dooley's helpful report (with her answers to subsequent questions). I accept her net valuation of the company."*

**District Judge – Valuation case**

In respect of her taxation advice for professional negligence cases she has covered a wide range of topics including:

- Film schemes
- Tax avoidance schemes
- Capital gains tax
- Termination Agreements
- Incorrect and late filings
- Warranties and indemnities
- Share schemes
- Offshore tax planning

She has prepared loss of profits/earnings reports in respect of:

- Personal injury claims
- Commercial disputes
- Insurance claims

In her spare time, Ruth has enjoyed triathlons and marathons. She is a regular snowboarder and skier. She is a PADI advanced diver and an RYA Yachtmaster.

## Memberships

- Expert Witness Institute Fellow
- Academy of Experts
- Resolution

*"Your report was clear, concise and well drafted. One that I would have no issues in serving on my opponent."*

**Adam Finch, Partner – Harrison Clark Rickerbys**

# Illustrative case experience

Hazlewoods expert was asked to comment upon another expert's valuation of an accountancy business. Most issues were agreed but there was a difference in opinion in respect of the correct multiple to apply. Following the joint meeting of experts, a compromise was agreed between the position of the two experts.

Hazlewoods were asked to comment upon a claim being brought against a valuer involved in a tax avoidance scheme centring around rights to Intellectual Property. HMRC had successfully challenged the scheme and for many participants reduced their tax claims to their cash contributions whilst excluding borrowed monies. The view of the Hazlewoods expert was that the valuation was an incidental part of the tax scheme and had no impact upon the efficacy or otherwise of the tax planning.

The husband's minority shareholding in the family farming company had to be valued together with an appraisal of liquidity in respect of the company. The experience and knowledge of Hazlewoods Farms & Estates team was crucial to this expert report.

An EMI scheme was put in place for a company a few years before it was sold but unfortunately the qualifying conditions were not met for one of the directors. Liability was admitted but it was not accepted that there was an alternative course of action. The report of Hazlewoods expert concluded that had the correct advice been given, it was likely that the tax would have been mitigated. The case settled before trial.

In this case, the issue of the net value of inherited investments needed to be resolved, as well as establishing whether or not the husband could claim principle private residence relief in respect of the matrimonial home. The information available was incomplete but the Hazlewoods report helped to clarify the issues.

Advice was given by a Financial Advisor in respect of mitigating inheritance tax for a farming widow in her 90s. There was an error in calculation which was admitted but a defence was raised that no real alternatives were available. With the assistance of the Agriculture team, Hazlewoods were able to establish that there were a variety of alternative approaches available to mitigate the IHT changes.

The Hazlewoods expert was asked to review the viability of a proposed demerger to split the assets between husband and wife. The tax also had to be calculated on the potential demerger or shares transfer.

The business had become a sole trade on the exit of one of two partners. A difficulty with the valuation was that the accountant for the sole trade did not agree with accountant for the partnership on the balances transferred. A view had to be taken as to reliability of information provided/

A forensic examination of the amounts paid to a director from various property companies was required as well as an assessment of the maintainable earnings that could be extracted from the companies.

As shadow expert for the wife the CGT calculations in respect of listed and unlisted shares, UK and overseas properties and carried interest were reviewed and challenged. This resulted in the overall effective tax rate reducing from 29% to 21%.

This was a valuation of an international consultancy business and the challenge was assessing the degree of dependence upon the owner manager. The future level of net maintainable earnings was also considered.

The divorce followed a demerger of a dental group and involved assessment of the accounting entries to effect the demerger. An assessment of tax on extraction and maintainable earnings was also undertaken.

A report was prepared in respect of the equal division of an offshore bond between the parties and the tax consequences. Hazlewoods Financial Planning were also involved to assist with the implementation of the division

A valuation of a hairdressing and beauty salon business was required for the purposes of buying the spouse out of the partnership. A full review of the capital accounts and drawings of the partners was also required.