

FOR ALL THE LATEST NEWS & VIEWS FROM PERRYS CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Perrys  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

# EXCEPTIONAL TIMES

DECEMBER 2022



- PERRYS' STAFF TO SUPPORT COMMUNIGROW
- PERRYS' HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022
- LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023
- CASE STUDY - WILLOW ALEXANDER

# Contents

In this edition of the **Exceptional Times...**

## 03



### **PERRYS' STAFF TO SUPPORT COMMUNIGROW**

We introduce you to our new chosen charity, Communigrow and how we are hoping to support them in the future.

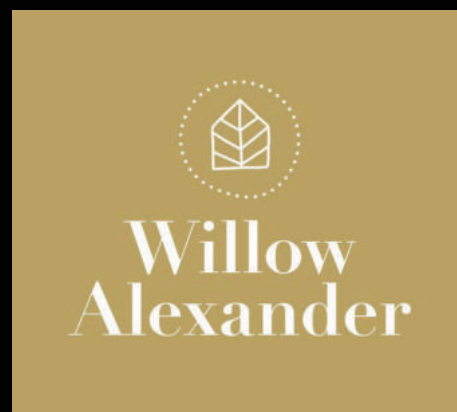
## 04-05



### **PERRYS' HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022 AND LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023**

We look at some of Perrys' highlights from 2022 and look forward to 2023.

## 06-07



### **CASE STUDY WILLOW ALEXANDER**

We speak to Samuel Collett, founding partner of Willow Alexander - the first ever UK garden maintenance business to be certified as carbon neutral.

# 2022 - a year of big changes

**Welcome to the December edition of The Exceptional Times.**

**It's always hard to believe that another year has passed. And 2022 feels to have been particularly short as we experienced the tail end of the pandemic following two tumultuous years for businesses.**

Many would be forgiven for seeing 2022 as quite gloomy - another fuel shortage, Russia invading Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis taking its toll on households are all notable features that have affected the economy and pushed up interest rates.

The death of our beloved Queen Elizabeth II in September was also hugely significant. Just months after we all celebrated Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, all eyes were once again on the UK as the Queen's State Funeral proceeded through London and Windsor.

All these things have brought about big changes for the UK, including a new King - King Charles III - and two prime ministers within short succession.

Here at Perrys, we've also been experiencing our own noteworthy changes. These include the addition of a new office in Tonbridge, the merger of our two London practices and the retirement of our CEO, Stewart Pope, after 35 years' service.

As we look to the future, we would like to remind you that we are always here offering support and guidance for your business. No matter the issue you are trying to navigate, our friendly team are here to talk, so feel free to pick up the phone, drop them an email or pop into one of our offices.

Sending you season's greetings and the very best wishes for 2023 from everyone at Perrys.



**Steve Hale FCA FCCA**  
Managing Partner Perrys

# Perrys' staff to support Communigrow



**At Perrys, supporting charities is something we have been doing for many years. As part of this work, we are keen to ensure our staff are involved as much as possible, so we asked them to vote for a charity they'd like to help.**

Staff were given a choice of a number of different categories that would cover all types of charity, including mental health and food banks, which came out on top. Due to Communigrow's close links with feeding the local community and the work they do to support people struggling with mental health issues and learning difficulties, the charity was the perfect fit.

Communigrow is an ethical food education charity that teaches people and communities the benefits of growing local, fresh and affordable produce in an organic and sustainable way.

From its site in East Malling, they organise regular workshops and educational sessions to help schools, groups and volunteers to gain practical experience of growing produce and the environment that surrounds it.

Staff from Perrys have visited the charity's large allotment to find out more about what it does and how they can help. First on our list was undertaking a sponsored dig to help create a pond. Donned in wellies and ready for anything, our team spent a Saturday in October working hard to get the pond formed. Once completed, the pond will be used as a sensory area, and to teach children about the importance of water for sustaining natural habitats.

Eventually, Communigrow will be adding a bereavement area to the garden for those who have lost loved ones. In the future, Perrys hopes to add a bench and plaque to commemorate Lesley Sexton, who sadly passed away from Cancer. Lesley was a very special employee, who joined Perrys as a trainee secretary when she was 18 and spent her whole working life with us until she left last March.

There's still a chance to donate to the team's sponsored dig and donations can be made using [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/perryscharity?utm\\_term=VNkDMJQQ5](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/perryscharity?utm_term=VNkDMJQQ5).

## Annual Charity Golf Day raises £5,500



**We were absolutely delighted to be back for our usual June fixture at Dale Hill Hotel & Golf Course in Ticehurst, East Sussex for our annual charity golf day this year.**

On a gloriously sunny day, 19 teams turned out to support us by helping to raise an amazing £5,500 for Family Matters, which provides free therapy and counselling services to survivors of childhood sexual abuse and rape.

Following a hard-fought competition, the teams relaxed during a three-course meal. Our raffle, which featured some great prizes donated by our clients, added to our fundraising efforts.

Congratulations to the winners, Team Mercer, who came out on top with 106 points – just three points ahead of the runners up. The team, which was made up of Paul Shields, Jason Bedford, Warren Lee and Mark Henderson, were presented with their prize by our managing partner, Steve Hale.



# Perrys' Highlights

From an office merger to an apprentice winner, we look at some of our highlights from 2022...



Exceptional as Standard

## Perrys merges with Gilbert Allen & Co

Earlier this year, we were delighted to announce our merger with Gilbert Allen & Co in Tonbridge.

An established practice with a wealth of knowledge and expertise, the team at Gilbert Allen & Co have already made great strides into contributing to the success of our practice. We're looking forward to what the next chapter brings.

## Katherine Cheung raises £2,000 for Cancer Research UK



In July, Katherine Cheung, who has worked as a secretary at our Tunbridge Wells office for many years, took part in the Race for Life and raised an incredible £2,000 for Cancer Research UK.

Katherine was diagnosed with bowel and liver cancer in October 2021, so taking part in the race was particularly poignant for her. She said:

“

Since my diagnosis, I have realised how many wonderful people there are working tirelessly to find a cure for cancer. The money raised through events like Race for Life helps this work to continue.

”



## Harpreet hailed as Apprentice winner!

Perrys was delighted earlier this year when our client, Harpreet Kaur, was announced as Lord Alan Sugar's 2022 winner of The Apprentice.

After going head-to-head with 15 other candidates, Harpreet was awarded with a £250,000 investment for her business, Oh So Yum. The company produces delicious desserts that are delivered directly to doorsteps across the UK. Congratulations Harpreet!



## A fond farewell to our CEO, Stewart Pope

After 35 years spent guiding and nurturing the business, our long-standing CEO, Stewart Pope, stepped down from his role to embark on his well-earned retirement earlier this year.

After training at his father's practice, Stewart joined Perrys as a qualified accountant at the Wrotham office in 1988. Under the guidance of our then namesake, Mike Perry, Stewart quickly made a mark at the practice, opening our London office and becoming Perrys' youngest ever partner at age 24.

Following Mike Perrys' retirement in 2006, Stewart took the mantle as Perrys' CEO, guiding the firm through further expansion and success.

It goes without saying that Stewart has been pivotal to Perrys' growth. His time spent heading up the practice will leave a lasting legacy for many years to come, and the team will miss seeing him at the office. We wish Stewart all the very best for a relaxing retirement.

Stewart has been succeeded by Steve Hale, who has taken up the role of Managing Partner. We are delighted to have such a seasoned professional and expert advisor leading us into the future and look forward to many more years of developing a practice that we are all proud to be part of.



## Emma Palmer promoted to Partner

After working for 16 years as Perrys' Practice Manager, Emma Palmer received a well-deserved promotion in August when she became our first Admin Partner.

Emma has been key to operations across the practice while supporting staff and managing our marketing initiatives.

# Looking ahead to 2023

## Perrys to celebrate 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary



Next year is a huge milestone for Perrys, as we celebrate our 40th anniversary since we opened in 1983.

To mark the occasion, we will be planning a variety of initiatives and events, including supporting our chosen charity, Communigrow and a summer party for our staff.

We hope you will join us in wishing Perrys a very happy anniversary – we look forward to seeing what the next 40 years bring.

## Calling all Landlords and Self-employed – time to get ready for Making tax Digital

Making Tax Digital (MTD) is a key part of the government's plans to get businesses using HMRC's digital platform for their VAT records and returns.

From 6 April 2024, MTD will be obligatory for sole traders and landlords with a total business or property income of more than £10,000 per year.

At Perrys, we are urging individuals in this category to prepare well in advance. If you need help with MTD-related matters, then please get in touch with our team.

For other important dates and deadlines, have a look at our Tax Timeline on page 8.

## Join us for our Annual Charity Golf Day

Taking place at Dale Hill Hotel & Golf Course on Friday 30 June, tickets cost £100 per person and include a full English breakfast, an 18-hole round of golf, entry into the hole-in-one competition and a three-course dinner.

For more information, or to register, please email Caroline Hoare, [hoare@perry-company.co.uk](mailto:hoare@perry-company.co.uk) or Jodie Parkin, [parkin@perry-company.co.uk](mailto:parkin@perry-company.co.uk). Alternatively, please call 01892 543900. All funds raised will go to Communigrow.



## CASE STUDY

# Willow Alexander

After 20 years working in PR and global communications for some of the UK's top brand names, Samuel Collett, along with his founding partner, Alexander Oakley, decided to embark on a complete career change and enter the world of garden design and maintenance.

Since opening the doors in 2019, their business Willow Alexander has become the first ever in the UK garden maintenance industry to be certified as carbon neutral. Here, Samuel explains the ethos behind the business and how, with the support of Perrys, they are hoping to expand nationally in the future.



### Tell us about Willow Alexander and what makes the business stand out from its competitors.

When we set up Willow Alexander, our vision was to connect people to their outdoor spaces. Our design and build service strives to create beautiful yet functional gardens that people want to spend time in, while our garden care and maintenance packages offer customers the flexibility to keep their outdoor spaces in great condition so they can enjoy them all year round.

However, we also wanted our business to work in harmony with nature, so we developed our Green Planet Promise. Through this, we pledge to provide a whole range of climate conscious services that operate with minimal environmental impact.



**We work with a broad range of clients – everything from huge estates with acres of land to modest residential properties.**



In 2021, we became the first UK garden maintenance company to be recognised by One Carbon World as Carbon Neutral Certified.

Following the success of our garden model, we decided to expand our portfolio of carbon neutral services.

Our customers have busy lives, so we created a business model that enables them to book home and garden services through their phone. Our online platform also allows them to shop for sustainably focused products.

Care is at the heart of our ever-growing business. This includes caring for our clients, caring for their homes and garden, and, just as importantly, caring for the planet.

## How do you ensure your business operates sustainably and remains carbon neutral?

We've been actively investing in new technologies and looking for ways we can evolve Willow Alexander to minimise our footprint on the planet. Becoming carbon neutral is the first step on our path to being net zero.

We work closely with One Carbon World and their UN-verified offsetting projects to rebalance our emissions and have a number of trusted partners that help us to achieve this.

Our solutions include driving electric vehicles and using battery operated tools, only working with organic products, sourcing our energy from sustainable providers, reusing water and organic waste, recycling waste materials we can't repurpose elsewhere and offsetting our staff's personal carbon emissions. Alongside this, we contribute globally as much as we can, including planting trees that capture carbon and funding renewable solutions or projects that make a positive contribution to areas of the world that are most affected by climate change.



**In 2021, we became the first UK garden maintenance company to be recognised by One Carbon World as Carbon Neutral Certified.**



## How important is your carbon neutral status to your customers?

It's extremely important. We are finding more than ever that people are looking to live their lives in a more environmentally conscious and sustainable way. Businesses have a huge responsibility to contribute to this - not just by reducing the impact on the planet through the way they operate, but by helping their customers to do this too.

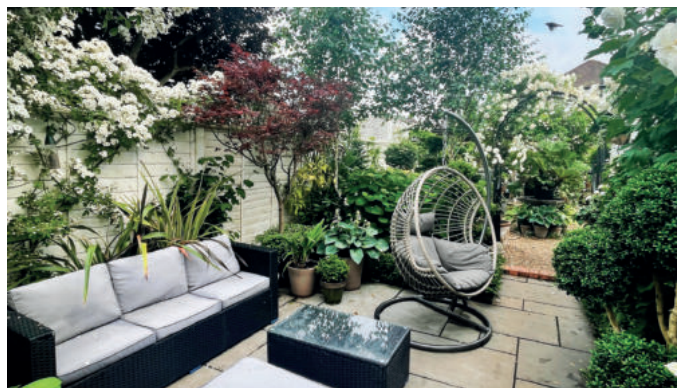
## What type of customers do you work with?

We work with a broad range of clients - everything from huge estates with acres of land to modest residential properties. Our garden care and maintenance services are offered as subscription packages, providing lots of flexibility. Customers can choose how much they want done, how often and when.

## You mentioned that you are looking to expand. How are you hoping to achieve this?

We have recently launched our national franchise opportunities to help drive local green economy as well as a personal carbon offsetting subscription service for customers that will be directly connected to our franchise network of trade services.

Our goal is to train and educate a new wave of small businesses under the Willow Alexander name that are all working towards a cleaner, greener planet.



## That's great! What type of person would be the ideal franchisee for Willow Alexander?

We see our franchisees as either existing sole traders or employees who are currently working in, or experienced in, garden maintenance and care services, who want to build a business that is carbon neutral certified. Becoming carbon neutral certified is a complex process, so we have simplified this through our franchising model. This will allow individuals to meet the relevant criteria and offer a carbon neutral service more quickly and easily.

For us, it's about education and community building. We put purpose over profit and genuinely want to help other like-minded trade professionals to build a happy sustainable business for themselves.

## How has Perrys contributed to the success of your business?

I met Zoe [partner at Perrys in Orpington] after moving to Kent from London. I was a consultant at the time and Zoe was doing my accounts. We got on really well, so when I decided to change career, I didn't hesitate to get in touch. She was brilliant and gave me so much input into how to set up my business - helping with the financial model and advising on the best way to approach things. She has been pivotal in building the business and making it a success. She brings lots of enthusiasm and genuinely makes accountancy much more interesting - which is a very difficult task by anyone's standards! More than that though, Zoe is very honest and authentic - she has a great attitude and works hard to ensure her clients get the best advice and support.

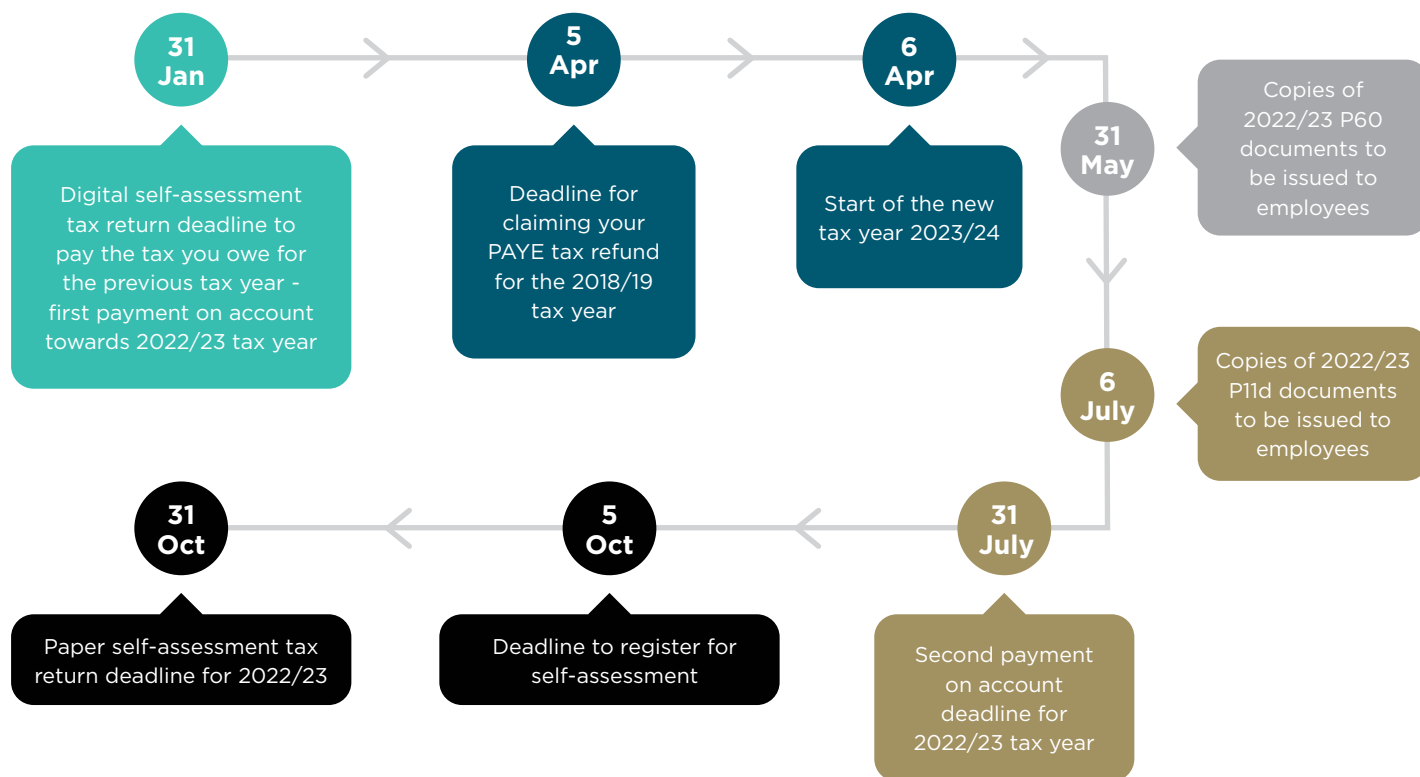
We have also had the pleasure of working with Perrys' sister company, AMR Bookkeeping Solutions. They do a great job ensuring everything is taken care of and aligned with Zoe's work.

**To find out more about Willow Alexander, book a service or to discuss franchising opportunities, please visit their website [willowalexander.co.uk](http://willowalexander.co.uk), [willowalexanderfranchises.co.uk](http://willowalexanderfranchises.co.uk) or call 0800 047 8738.**



# Tax timeline

With so many different tax dates to remember, we've put together this handy guide to help you avoid missing a deadline.



## London

4th Floor,  
399-401 Strand, London,  
WC2R 0LT

020 7408 4442

## Kent

### Orpington

3 Roberts Mews,  
Orpington, Kent  
BR6 0JP

01689 823175

### Historic Dockyard Chatham

Suite 2, Second Floor North,  
The Fitted Rigging House, Anchor Wharf,  
The Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TZ

01634 245900

### Tunbridge Wells

10 Upper Grosvenor Road,  
Tunbridge Wells, Kent  
TN1 2EP

01892 543900

### West Malling

19-21 Swan Street,  
West Malling, Kent  
ME19 6JU

01732 870032

### Tonbridge

Churchdown Chambers,  
Bordyke, Tonbridge,  
Kent TN9 1NR

01732 770100

### Wrotham

The Square,  
Wrotham, Kent  
TN15 7AA

01732 882488

Perrys is the trading name of Perrys Accountants Limited. Registered to carry out audit work in the UK, regulated for a range of investment business activities, and licensed by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales to carry out the reserved legal activity of non-contentious probate in England and Wales. Company registered in England and Wales. Registered office: 4th Floor, 399-401 Strand, London, WC2R 0LT. Company No. 07745523



**ICAEW**  
ACCREDITED  
FOR PROBATE

**Perrys**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS  
Exceptional as Standard

[www.perrysaccountants.co.uk](http://www.perrysaccountants.co.uk)