

NEWSBRIEF

conferences and events

Davos: January 28 & 29

Registrations are rising for the Centre's 17th winter conference – entitled '**Global Employee Equity Plans 2016: Dividing the cake more fairly**'- which takes place in the four-star **Hotel Seehof** in **Davos Dorf** on **Thursday January 28 and Friday January 29 (2016)**.

Members who want to register more than one representative for Davos can make a huge saving of almost **£400** from the cost of our two-night half-board accommodation + conference package deal, as a special reduction offered solely to Centre members.

Attendance at this seminal event in the Centre's calendar, which opens only days after the closure of the World Economic Forum, gains delegates 11 hours of credits under the Law Society's CPD programme.

Confirmed speakers to date include: **Mike Landon**, a director of **MM & K**; **David Pett**, partner at **Pett, Franklin & Co. LLP**; **Jeremy Mindell**, director at **Primondell**; **Kevin Lim** of **Solium UK**; **Euan Fergusson** of **White & Case LLP**; **Malcolm Hurlston** CBE Centre chairman and international director, **Fred Hackworth**. Channel

Islands based trustee Centre member **Bedell Group** has agreed to chair the popular conference trustee panel session.

You can find more info about the conference draft programme and about Davos on the Centre [website](#). We are looking for more presentations on technical share plan and executive compensation issues and equity plan case histories where, in the latter case, the lectern is normally shared by service provider and client.

The Centre's deal with the **Hotel Seehof** allows us to **reduce attendance fees by at least £100** as compared to those in force last February. Our *Early Bird* charges for the two nights half-board accommodation + conference + cocktail party package deal in the Seehof are: **Speakers:** practitioners **£825**; plan issuers **£399**; **Delegates:** member practitioners **£945**; plan issuers **£495**, non-member practitioners **£1450**. *No VAT is charged as the event takes place outside the UK*

Centre member advantages:

*Registered speaker or delegate **service providers**, who are Centre members, may invite a **second** person from their organisation to attend as a delegate (qualifying for the accommodation and conference package deal – see *above*) for the much reduced price of **£550** (instead of the normal delegate price of £945).

*Speakers may invite an **issuer** client to attend for the member package deal price of **£399**, irrespective of whether the client is a Centre member or not.

Email Fred Hackworth now fhackworth@hurlstons.com, with copy to the Esop Centre at: esop@esopcentre.com to reserve your speaker or delegate place and/or to suggest topic themes for this annual share schemes brains trust. As usual, there will be an informal dinner for delegates in the Seehof on Wednesday January 27, the night before the conference starts. The Parsenn, nextdoor to Hotel Seehof, is the largest ski zone in the Davos region, offering 35 high quality ski runs.

ESOP Awards dinner set to sell out. Sponsorship opportunities available.

There are only two tables remaining for the Centre's fourteenth annual employee share ownership [awards dinner](#) to be held at the [Reform Club](#), Pall Mall, on **Wednesday October 28**.

Main and supporting **sponsorship opportunities are available**, please contact Jacob Boulton for information: jboulton@esopcentre.com ; 020 7239 4971.

The evening will begin with a champagne reception, followed by dinner.

The award presentations will conclude by 10:00pm to ensure that guests with travel or family commitments are able to leave in time.

Ticket prices

Members £185, table of ten £1700

Non members £260

To reserve your place please contact the Centre by emailing esop@esopcentre.com or calling 0207 239 4971, or complete the [Esop Awards 2015 booking form](#) and send to the Esop Centre, Phoenix Yard, 65 Kings Cross Road, London WC1X 9LW, email to esop@esopcentre.com or fax to 0808 280 1938.

A list of accepted nominations is available on the [Awards 2015](#) web page.

Centre / MM&K plan issuer breakfast

The Centre's next complimentary breakfast seminar for companies with employee share plans will be hosted by MM&K on **Tuesday September 22** 8.30-10.30am at the City of London Club, 19 Old Broad Street, London EC2N 1DS.

With increasing pressure on costs, companies could be expected to make more use of the UK's generous tax exemptions for share plans when rewarding employees; but the number of SIP, SAYE, CSOP and

EMI plans has declined in recent years. This session gives the opportunity to discuss how tax-advantaged share plans can help support a variety of HR strategies. It will include:

- lesser known changes in Finance Acts 2013, 2014 and 2015
- basing SIP free and matching share awards on performance
- using CSOP tax advantages for performance shares
- pros and cons of JSOPs and growth shares
- using the increased ISA limits

After an introduction, participants will be encouraged to discuss between themselves how tax-advantaged plans could meet their particular objectives.

Places are limited so early registration is advised. If you would like to attend this complimentary breakfast please contact Jacob Boulton - esop@esopcentre.com; 020 7239 4971. If there are any matters you would like to see covered in future breakfasts please contact Jacob.

Centre / STEP Guernsey seminar 2015

With 30 delegates already registered for this leading Guernsey learning and networking event, now is the time to secure your place. Join us at the annual ESOP Centre / STEP Guernsey seminar which brings together UK and Island based expert speakers to deliver a share schemes update for trustee delegates. The seminar will take place on the morning of **Friday October 9 2015** at the St. Pierre Park Hotel, St. Peter Port and will run from 9am to 1.15pm.

Gavin St Pier, States of Guernsey minister for treasury & resources will deliver a keynote speech rounding off the conference. Gavin is a former member of the Centre's steering committee.

Among the topics to be covered are: legal cases relevant to the administration of EBTs and ESOPs; current HMRC attitudes to tax mitigation using share schemes and EBTs; rewarding growth using jsops and growth shares; a UK tax update in its post-election political

context; a review of the disguised remuneration rules.

The seminar will be prefaced by refreshments and followed by a congenial lunch.

The following expert speakers will be presenting: Stephen Woodhouse, **Pett Franklin & Co**; Alison MacKrill, **Carey Olsen**; Jeremy Mindell, **Primondell**; David Craddock, **David Craddock Consultancy Services**; Mahesh Varia, **Travers Smith**.

Delegate prices

ESOP Centre/STEP members: £325

Non-Members: £450

To **register to attend as a delegate** please contact the Centre at esop@esopcentre.com or call on 0207 239 4971.

For further details, including updates to the speaker programme, please visit the [event page](#).

Vienna to host Centre annual conference June 2 & 3 2016

The elegant five star **Steigenberger Herrenhof Hotel**, in central **Vienna**, will host the Centre's 28th annual international share schemes conference on **Thursday/Friday June 2 & 3** next year. The 100 year old Herrenhof Hotel is situated in **Herrengasse**, near the Kohlmarkt and Golden Quarter in the old city centre, is classified by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage site and is minutes walk away from major historic landmarks, such as the Hofburg Palace, Café Central, the Spanish Riding School, Sisi Museum, the state opera house, Burgtheater (the Imperial Court Theatre) and gothic St. Stephen's Cathedral. If you wish to speak in Vienna (Austrian and East European interest is expected), or attend as a delegate, please inform us by e-mail to: fhackworth@esopcentre.com with copy to esop@esopcentre.com.

Members', national and international news

Centre profile: Rasmus Berglund

Rasmus, managing associate of employment and incentives at Linklaters, recently joined the Centre's Steering Committee.

In what ways does employee share ownership serve a useful purpose?

Share plans enable employees to feel they can make a real contribution towards and share in the success of the business they work in.

How can we widen and deepen the adoption and use of employee share ownership?

By telling the stories and sharing the experiences. Share plan participation is a highly valued benefit to employees and employers need to know that.

What is the greatest obstacle to wider and deeper employee share ownership?

The cost and complexities of establishing a share plan which often deter smaller companies from getting involved.

What has been the most important development in employee share ownership during your career?

I think the international development and globalisation of share plan offerings have had a profound impact on the industry. Share plan participation is no longer just a UK / US phenomenon.

Which change to employee share plans legislation, in the UK or elsewhere, would you most like to see?

HMRC has already taken steps to simplify the tax legislation governing share incentives but I think there is more work to be done. A review and consolidation of the vast amount of regulation on remuneration in financial services would also be on my wish list.

Is there a particular employee share plan you have been glad to work on? If so, why?

There are many but one in particular sticks out as a true success story - a global employee share purchase plan with a very impressive take up which later paved the way for a number of other employee benefits.

Which aspect of the ESOP Centre do you value most?

The fact that it provides an open and inclusive forum for both advisers and companies to debate, promote and lobby employee share plan participation – and of course the high table dinners!

Which book has most changed your life?

I'm not sure it changed my life but A Thousand Splendid Suns certainly made a huge impression on me.

Which living person would you most like to meet?

Birgitte Nyborg from Borgen (although she is a fictional character so not sure if that counts).

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Hmmm, probably leaving the land of Hans Christian Anderson and pickled herrings when I was 23 to become a lawyer in London.

Do you have a favourite sport?

Swimming and snowboarding.

How do you relax?

Experiencing new things and travelling to new places. I am really not good at sitting still on a beach.

If you would like to suggest a profile for newsbrief please contact Jacob Boulton: jboulton@esopcentre.com; 020 7239 4971.

HMRC calls on companies to check for outstanding share schemes returns

HMRC issued an update to the Employment Related Securities (ERS) forum, of which the Centre is a member, expressing its concern over the number of outstanding share scheme returns. HMRC is concerned that in many instances this is due to companies making errors in registering schemes, for example by duplicating registrations. You can read the full update including details of how to check for outstanding returns [here](#).

OECD proposes pension limits on employee shares

In the [consultation paper](#) 'Draft recommendation of the council on the core principles of private pension regulation' the OECD has proposed limits on company shares in employee pension plans. Recommendation 4.16 states, "Investment in the assets of the plan sponsor, in parties related or affiliated with the governing body of pension fund, the pension entity or pension fund management company should be prohibited or strictly limited to a prudent level so as to ensure diversification (e.g. 5 percent of the pension fund assets) or otherwise avoid undue risks or costs to members." The consultation is open until October 20.

UK Court of Appeal rules on choosing governing law for share plans

The UK Court of Appeal confirmed that it is prepared to ignore the express agreement of an employee to the exclusive jurisdiction of overseas courts in share plan documentation and apply UK law - even where the share plan contract is with the non-UK parent company, not the UK employer. You can read Linklaters' update on the case [here](#).

Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders support for ESOPs

Bernie Sanders, a Democratic candidate for US President, a long-time supporter of ESOPs, is praising them prominently in his [campaign](#). In a recent [speech](#) to the US ESOP Association he said "The ESOP is a model that says the worker is more than just a worker. A worker has brains, a worker can and should be part of the entire process, a worker should be able to contribute to figuring out how that company can be more effective, more profitable, more productive. That's what ESOPs are about."

Corbynomics and Esops

The views of the new Labour leader and his shadow cabinet remain to be defined, but Dave Ward of CWU was a leading union backer as was Centre activist Peter Kenyon, former member of the party policy-making committee. There is every reason to believe that multi-party support for Esops will be maintained.

FASB calls for simplification of share-based accounting

The US Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) released a draft paper with proposals designed to simplify accounting for share-based compensation. The paper is part of FASB's wider simplification initiative, which is designed to identify areas of generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) in which the cost and complexity can be reduced while maintaining or improving the usefulness of the information provided. Towers Watson issued an [update](#) which runs through the main proposals.

EY expands its consultancy business

EY has continued to expand its business beyond the audit market with the [acquisition](#) of London digital consultancy Seren.

Dividend and pension tax Budget changes

While initially it seemed there was little affecting employee share schemes in the July 8 Budget the significant changes to dividend taxation may give a boost to share schemes and Share Incentive Plans in particular. The continuing reshaping of the pension regime may encourage the use of share schemes as a means of making additional provision for old age. Pett Franklin picks out some of the important [changes](#).

ButcherJoseph advise on sale of building firm to an ESOP

ButcherJoseph advised in the [sale](#) of Builder's Bloc to an ESOP. President of Builder's Bloc, Kevin Deptula, said "This transaction opens the door for Builder's Bloc to expand our business operations, and employee owners will benefit greatly from these new growth opportunities."

Update on proposed tax evasion measures

James Bullock, writing for Pinsent Masons, [reviews](#) the proposals in the four government consultations on tackling offshore tax evasion. They contain two new offences and increased fines for tax evaders and those who facilitate it.

Eliau expands its business through acquisition

Eliu has expanded its corporate services and structure finance operation having [bought](#) SFM Europe. "This deal will complement Eliu's corporate services business and extend the group's geographic reach in the key European financial markets of Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Lisbon, Madrid, and Milan," said Eliu ceo Paul Willing.

Massachusetts takes steps towards ESOP priority on company sales

The Massachusetts House of Representatives has given initial approval to a [bill](#) that would require people who intend to sell their companies to notify employees that they are eligible to bid on the business. It specifies that employees "shall have the right of first refusal in bidding to purchase said business corporation through a cooperative or [employee](#) stock ownership program."

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