



Mills & Reeve Norfolk Grey Partridge Award

This is the ninth year leading national law firm Mills & Reeve has awarded their Norfolk Grey Partridge Award. The award was launched in 2006 to promote the recovery of grey partridge numbers in Norfolk and is presented to the farm or estate which it is felt has done most through habitat management and predator control to encourage grey partridge numbers. The award is presented at the firm's annual Royal Norfolk Show breakfast.

This year's finalists were Holkham, Westacre - Home Beat and Manor and Lilac Farms, Litcham with the eventual winner being Holkham Estate

The judging took place at the three short-listed estates in early June, following the analysis of the statistics from The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust's autumn and spring counts.

The backdrop to the judging of the award in 2013 was, in 2012, the worst year for wild game birds since 1933. The late, cool spring of 2013 again proved challenging with little food for young chicks, although the warmer summer did enable some second broods. A mild winter followed by an early and warm spring, with evidence of increased insect numbers (a crucial source of food), has led to some optimism about this year's chick production. As ever, the weather over the next few weeks will be very important.

Justin Ripman, the partner at Mills & Reeve responsible for the award spoke about this year's judging. He commented: "It was noteworthy that last year none of the finalists were what are sometimes described as the big Norfolk grey partridge manors, but all had done a huge amount to encourage and nurture the numbers of this wonderful, iconic, bird. This year we had three very worthy finalists in Holkham, Manor and Lilac Farms, Litcham and Westacre. At Westacre, Henry Birkbeck has gone back to a totally wild bird shoot and the efforts which he, and his keeper, Chris Carter, have gone to in encouraging grey partridge numbers were very evident. Norfolk Farm Produce run a very commercial farming operation at Litcham. I think I am right in saying they are the second largest growers of rhubarb in Europe – an interesting and unusual cover for grey partridges. Their keeper, Robert Hill is dedicated to encouraging all kinds of bird life. Holkham has been a finalist before and Lord Leicester's commitment to increasing grey partridge numbers has been evident for many years. Keven McCaig who was previously at Sandringham, seems to have taken this to the next level in terms of habitat management and a very impressive integration with what is a significant commercial farming operation."

He added: "Norfolk remains hugely significant in the drive to increase grey partridge numbers nationally. In addition to the award itself, Mills & Reeve will, again, be presenting a case of champagne to one of the farms and estates who have participated in the count scheme".

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Notes to the editor:

Mills & Reeve LLP

Mills & Reeve is a major UK law firm renowned for its outstanding service to national and international clients, for its collaborative culture and for its deep sector expertise.

The firm has a strong sector focus with expertise in agriculture, charities, education, food and beverage, health, insurance, private wealth, real estate investment and technology.

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Clients include businesses – from PLCs to start-ups – high net worth individuals and landowners, more than 120 universities, colleges and education bodies and over 100 healthcare organisations.

Mills & Reeve is one of the top performing law firms in the UK when it comes to client satisfaction, according to the latest edition of *Chambers UK*. The annual guide, which accumulates feedback from thousands of clients, places the firm in the top four law firms based on the number of top ranking lawyers and the top six based on the number of top ranking practice areas.

Mills & Reeve has also been recognised as one of the top 50 innovative law firms in Europe in the 2012 *Financial Times* Innovative Lawyers report.

The firm has been named for a record tenth year running as one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For in *The Sunday Times*' annual survey.

Mills & Reeve was ranked 57th, up 33 places from last year, and is one of only a small number of organisations nationally to have achieved a listing for 10 years running, and the only UK law firm.

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