

# Ho Sanderson's companies in administration

Jul 29 2009 by David Black, The Journal

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ALL of Ho Sanderson's companies have been placed in administration by the businessman following the shooting riddle which left him horrifically injured.

Landowner, farmer and property developer Mr Sanderson, 59, suffered serious facial injuries when he apparently tripped and shot himself while walking in the fields surrounding his home at Eshott Hall near Felton, Northumberland, in March.

Now Mr Sanderson, his wife Margaret, and sons Mark and David have taken the decision to place the family's portfolio of businesses in administration.

Joe McLean of Newcastle-based accountants Grant Thornton has been appointed as administrator, and will carry out a detailed review of the businesses in an attempt to resolve a number of complex issues surrounding them.

Mr Sanderson and his family yesterday placed Hartford Hall Estate Ltd, Eshott Hall Estate Ltd, Hartfound Ltd, Filebase and some dormant companies into administration.

The Filebase document handling business was almost immediately sold by Mr McLean back to the family, and will be run by Mark and David Sanderson with support from industry experts. Mrs Sanderson and David will also retain a managerial role in Eshott Hall, which is a wedding venue and niche hotel, while it is in administration.



Hugh Fell, managing partner of Northumberland estate agents George F White, has been helping to advise the Sanderson family on their businesses affairs since last November.

Last night he said: "This has been a very difficult period for the family, combining extremely difficult trading conditions in the property sector with the impact of Mr Sanderson's shooting accident.

"The combination of these two factors has led the family, on the basis of advice from their advisory team, to put the businesses into administration. It is a reflection of the current difficulties in the property sector.

"Mr Sanderson is on a slow road to recovery, but he is going to require extensive and lengthy reconstructive surgery over the next few years."

About 15 people are employed by the property-based businesses which are now in administration. Last night Mr McLean said: "I am concentrating on the business side of things and there are lots of issues for me to deal with.

"This is not a straightforward situation and I will be working with people such as the residents at Hartford Hall to resolve all of the issues."

Two months ago The Journal revealed how Mr Sanderson was facing the prospect of having his seven businesses struck off and dissolved by Companies House. The threat was a result of their failure to file annual accounts for 2008 and/or annual returns for 2009, some of which should have been done by January.

Mr and Mrs Sanderson are currently being prosecuted by Northumberland County Council over alleged breaches of planning conditions during the redevelopment of the former Hartford Hall mansion and its grounds near Bedlington.

The proceedings have been adjourned until September.