

THE LAWYER

Addleshaws and Lawrence Graham score Wimbledon FC
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Lawrence Graham and Addleshaw Goddard are continuing to benefit from the woeful financial state of English football, with the two firms sharing the spoils of the Wimbledon FC administration.

Lawrence Graham and Addleshaws are advising Grant Thornton, the administrator of the football club.

While Wimbledon's recent problems have not been helped by the management's decision to move 65 miles up the road to Milton Keynes, the root of its financial problems lies in the collapse of ITV Digital.

Wimbledon first approached Lawrence Graham several months ago to advise on some pre-administration matters, but the firm was already advising the Football League, which Wimbledon plays in, on its legal battle with Granada and Carlton, joint owners of ITV Digital. The firm recommended Addleshaws partner Louise Verrill.

In the meantime, Lawrence Graham was dropped as the Football League brought matters in-house to save on fees.

When matters escalated at Wimbledon and the club was placed into administration, Addleshaws referred the administration to Grant Thornton. The firm returned the original favour, recommending that Lawrence Graham also be instructed by the administrator now that the Football League conflict was over. Lawrence Graham, then, will advise Grant Thornton on any issues when Addleshaws is conflicted.

Ironically, despite having alienated many of its fans, Wimbledon's move to Milton Keynes seems its most likely way out of the mess.

Although the move is estimated to cost around £3.5m, football fans in Milton Keynes have already purchased 60 per cent of next year's season tickets. The new town has failed to produce a leading side of its own, but is enthusiastic about taking a team from elsewhere. The money from these sales has been ringfenced and is unaffected by the administration.

Kennedys has been advising Wimbledon on the relocation.