



## Press Release

by **Howard Gardener, director specialising in disputes and family law**

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### ‘No hiding place’

‘For anyone hoping to escape the long arm of the law, beware,’ warns Howard Gardener, family solicitor at Phillips, ‘there’s no hiding place, as we discovered when trying to track down a client’s ex-wife in Spain to serve Court documents. My client’s former wife of 15 months had moved to Spain, to an unknown destination working as a bar person, and would not respond to telephone or ‘dead letter’ correspondence. The costs of tracing her were disproportionate to the issues so I was at a loss, but my young team of solicitors came up with a brainwave which was definitely out of my comfort zone – Facebook!’

‘Activity on Facebook in office hours is a capital offence’ says Howard ‘but with permission Hollie Jones, trainee solicitor, identified Mrs F’s Facebook account within minutes. Rob Parker, associate solicitor in the family team, had recently read a High Court commercial case where permission had been given to serve documents by Facebook in Australia. After further nifty research by the team an application was drafted to the local Court for what is thought to be the first Order for Service of matrimonial documents in County Court proceedings via Facebook.

Albeit perplexed by my sudden knowledge of Facebook’ admitted Howard, ‘the Judge duly granted the Order which was so served. I would never have come up with such an innovative solution nor indeed be capable of effecting Service which of course I left to my young team ‘in the know’. So if anyone thinks they can disappear and avoid Service of documents, think again!’

**Howard Gardener, director and solicitor, specialising in disputes and family law.**

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**Note to editor:**

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