

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY

**REPORT OF THE
GENERAL COMMITTEE
FOR 2017/18**

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2017/18

President:

Ms E. Weir, Hassocks

Vice-President:

Ms J Gillespie, Brighton

Immediate Past President:

Mr. J. Grant, Crawley

Honorary Treasurer:

Mr. D.J. Edwards, 30 Old Steyne, Brighton, BN1 1FZ

Honorary Secretary:

Ms. C. Sayer, 44 Grand Parade, Brighton, BN2 9QA

General Committee:

Ms. V. Eunson-Hickey

Ms. H. Goacher

Ms. J. Hardaway

Mr. O. Maxwell-Jones

Ms. J. Payne

Mr S. Rozzier

Mr. P.W. Richards (Council Member)

The following were co-opted onto the Committee:

Ms. R. Owen, Ms. G. Tisshaw

**SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY
REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE FOR 2017/18**

PRESIDENT'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Despite having to be thoroughly convinced to take on the role of President I can honestly say I have had a very rewarding and enjoyable year in the role. I will be pleased to hand over to Jackie Gillespie, our next President ,who I am sure will do a fantastic job during her year.

I have been pleased to interact with many other local law societies and continue to strengthen our links with them during my time as President. The combined Sussex Law Societies meeting continues to be a particularly important opportunity to come together to share ideas and discuss strategy and I was glad to have the opportunity to attend in July.

Our Junior Lawyers Division has gone from strength to strength this year with the support of Sussex Law Society which is exceptionally pleasing to see. They have held a number of events which have been very well attended and we have promoted these through our newsletters and online forums and will certainly continue with this support in the coming year. The Junior Lawyers Division is an extremely useful support network for our law students and junior lawyers and it is my hope that local firms will continue to encourage their junior staff members to take advantage of all that can be offered from this division.

A key theme of my Presidency has been the strive to promote gender equality in the profession as we celebrate 100 years of women in the law. I highlighted a number of startling statistics during my speech at our annual dinner and have continued to highlight various campaigns which the Law Society is undertaking during the Presidency of Christina Blacklaws on this topic, many of which are long overdue. These will continue throughout this next year and I do hope all local members will continue to actively engage with these as the strive for gender equality is certainly the responsibility of us all.

The profession is still facing significant challenges with new entrants to the market and ever increasing regulatory burdens. The introduction of the new SRA handbook in the next year marks the end of a major programme of reforms and will encompass far-reaching changes to the way solicitors and their firms currently practise. The Law Society has been heavily involved in opposing some of the more controversial proposals on behalf of the profession and we will now wait to see whether this opposition will have an impact. This highlights, however, the clear value in having representation on both a national and local level for solicitors with both the national Law Society and locally with Sussex Law Society. The committee of Sussex Law Society will continue to represent the views of the local profession and provide information and guidance to members regarding these reforms.

The continuing education programme and training courses offered by Sussex Law Society have again been very well supported this year and remain a key benefit to our members. We have received some excellent feedback regarding our speakers and I am very proud of the excellent and diverse training programme that we offer.

The social and events programme offered by the Society has also been well supported this year and we are always looking to offer a wide variety of events to cater to everybody's taste. The quiz has proved so popular that we have now organised a Spring and an Autumn one, certainly they are a highlight of my calendar....even more so when my team wins! The Annual Charity Ball was another great success this year and thank you to all who attended and supported the event, I do hope you all enjoyed it.

I would finally like to send my thanks to both the Sussex Law Society Committee and our COO Jeanette Lacy Scott for their invaluable support to me during this year. They are an extremely dedicated group of individuals who are all very committed to ensuring the Sussex Law Society offers significant benefit and representation both to and for its members.

EMMA WEIR

HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT

It has been a pleasure to be the Honorary Secretary of the Sussex Law Society (SLS).

It has proven to be a very productive year. Much of the credit for this must be given to this year's President, Emma Weir, and Jeanette Lacy Scott, Chief Operating Officer, for all their hard work and dedication.

Sussex Law Society continues to be a strong local law society which strives to serve and supports its' members despite the increasing challenges facing the profession. SLS reaches out to and connects its' members via the SLS website, Newsletter and by offering Professional Development courses as well as numerous social events throughout the year. SLS has also provided assistance to the recently revived local Junior Lawyers Division, and it is hoped that the younger entrants to the profession will come to perpetuate SLS in due course.

Consequently, with the progressive vision of Jackie Gillespie, our new President, I am sure that SLS membership will keep expanding and experience another positive year.

CERY S SAYER

HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

The accounts for the year ending 31st August 2017 are included in this report. As with previous years, now that the AGM is held on a date between 1 September and 30 November, the accounts included in the Annual Report are a year behind.

Accounts to 31 August 2017

The accounts show a profit of £9051, which is an encouraging reversal of last year's loss of £2804. Sponsorship income, membership subscriptions, and surplus in seminars all improved, and expenditure was contained. The balance sheet has strengthened further, with a balance of £27523, up from £18472 in 2016.

The committee remains of the firm view that the Society offers our members good value for money and worthwhile membership benefits. This is a considerable achievement. We are grateful to all of our sponsors who, in various ways, support our Annual Dinner, website, courses, newsletter and individual social events. JLT took over from AON as our main sponsor during this year I am pleased to report that this sponsorship was renewed for the 2017/2018 financial year. PSG, STL, Searches UK, Indexpi, Conveyancing Data Services, Crown Office Row and Wesleyan have also all been great supporters of the Society and it has been a pleasure working with them all. Our website continues to attract favourable comment. It has attracted sponsorship and it is hoped, as we attract more traffic, will encourage more sponsors.

The support of the members of the Society is apparent in the accounts to 31 August 2017. The continuing support of members of the Society's courses and social programmes will further strengthen the Society.

I shall be retiring as Hon.Treasurer at the 2018 AGM. I am pleased that during my time we have significantly strengthened the financial health of the society, modernised our financial practices and record keeping, reduced cost in some areas, invested in a successful new website and better and cheaper email software, as well as introducing various administrative changes to reduce unnecessary bureaucratic burdens on the Society's Chief Operations Officer, Jeanette Lacy Scott.

I have discussed a number of improvements that can be made over the next few years with the committee, and I wish my successor well.

I would like to record my thanks to the various committee members who have supported me during my time as Hon. Treasurer, in particular to our COO Jeanette, with whom it has been a great pleasure to work.

DAVID EDWARDS

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

The recently completed annual member satisfaction Survey indicates a vast improvement with member experience of the support provided by The Law Society.

The “Shaping Our Future” programme continues to focus on simplifying its structure and operations, as already approved by the Board earlier this year, and now rationalised more particularly on members services and experience, policy and insight, and corporate strategy/performance.

Feedback to Updates, “My Law Society” and the new look Gazette has been very encouraging. This is pivotal to the relationship of Council Members to their constituents. Practice Notes and Judicial successes have been widely made available.

My responsibilities to Report on consultations, debate and Policy have become much easier with finally perceived increased support from the regional relationship support team. At last we are seeing more engagement with disconnected provincial local law societies, the growing number of in-house and newly qualified Solicitors.

PATRICK RICHARDS

REPORT OF THE CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Over the past few years the Committee have been concerned about the potential impact of competition from the many providers of legal education and on-line and in-house training on numbers attending Sussex Law Society courses. The introduction of the new SRA regulations on continuing professional development for solicitors in November 2016 added to this concern but I am pleased to report again this year that numbers have remained pretty stable.

We are fortunate in having a solid core of loyal attendees who support our regular property courses and annual updates in civil litigation and private client work. We are also attracting more attendees from neighbouring societies (particularly Worthing and Eastbourne) who are unable to offer the same range of courses and high level speakers and the influence of our website and our use of social media, particularly LinkedIn, has also had a positive impact on numbers.

It is clear that, for many, attending a course, provides a valuable training experience. Being able to interact with an ‘expert’ (the speaker) and fellow professionals from other firms in a forum where common experiences can be shared can be of great benefit and also provides a useful networking opportunity. The fact that the Society’s courses are local and inexpensive, saving precious time and money, only increases their attraction further.

In the training year 1st September, 2017 to 31st August, 2018 we ran 18 courses and the average attendance was 19 participants at each. The update courses continue to attract the highest numbers and we are looking to add annual employment and family updates to the programme going forward. Sadly, some of the more specialist courses we have tried to run (including personal skills courses) have had to be cancelled as we just haven’t had enough people to make them viable. Good speakers command high fees and venue costs are ever increasing. The Society needs to at least break even and at the same time is committed to keep the attendance fees at a reasonable level. It is a juggling act for sure!

We rely on members to continue to support our continuing education programme and encourage others to do the same. You can help by visiting the website <http://www.sussex-law.co.uk/courses/> regularly to see what is coming up (as new courses are added throughout the year), spreading the word through social media and letting us have your ideas for topics and/or speakers you think would be popular.

JEANETTE LACY SCOTT

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Once again the AGM in October was followed by a social event. This year 21 members were led by Silas the Ghostwalker through the narrow passages and tightly packed buildings of the Brighton Lanes and told spintingling and macabre tales of murders and hauntings! The mist and rain on the evening created the perfect atmosphere and a

lot of fun was had by all! Some delicious tapas in Casa Don Carlos rounded up the evening nicely and it was an opportunity to say thank you and goodbye to one of our longest serving committee members and Past President of the Society, Hugo Hunt.

The ever popular Quiz was again held in November. Fiercely competitive as always and with the usual array of interesting but mostly unpublishable team names, the quiz was this year enhanced by some live singing from a member of the Crown Office Row team just to get one extra point (some might call it desperate!!) It was, however, in vain as Griffith Smith came away with another coveted Champions' trophy. The staff at Al Duomo looked after us very well and we raised £150 for the Presidents' charities. Thank you to Becket Chambers, Colemans, Coole Bevis, Crown Office Row, Edward Harte, Goodlaw Solicitors, Griffith Smith, Howlett Clarke, Martin Searle, Rix and Kay and Tishhaws for supporting this event.

The 33rd annual Past Presidents' Dinner took place on the 17th November at The Grand Hotel Brighton. There are usually 17 or 18 Past Presidents of the Society who are able to attend spanning a period of well over 25 years. A wonderful tradition!

Christmas Cocktails were enjoyed by a group of members at the Plotting Parlour in Kemp Town at the beginning of December. It was great to catch up with friends and old colleagues in this cosy cocktail bar which serves some amazing drinks! Just right to get the festive season going.

It appears that you can never put on too many quizzes!! As we were unable to accommodate the demand for team places at the November quiz, the committee decided that we should introduce another in the Spring. This was held in March, again at Al Duomo and the team from Colemans Solicitors in Haywards Heath were the worthy winners. Once again it was a really great evening full of fun and laughter and raising over £200 for the President's charities.

We held our Annual Charity Ball on 11th May at the Grand Hotel and had a record 260 people attending. It was a fantastic evening and everyone appeared to be having a wonderful time. President Emma Weir delivered a funny and inspiring speech and the band, 'Shine on' were so good we have booked them for the 2019 dinner already! The 'Heads and Tails' game (which is now a firmly established ritual at the dinner) raised around £1500 for the President's charities 'the Cleft Lip and Palate Association' and 'Alzheimer's Research UK'. Our thanks to JLT and Crown Office Row for sponsoring the event and donating raffle prizes and to the Grand Hotel who, as always, looked after us superbly and donated a generous game prize. If you have never attended one of the Society's Annual Balls the next one is on 17th May, 2019. It is a really great opportunity to meet up with old friends and colleagues in the local legal community and to make new connections.

On the Networking Events front, with the help of JLT, we organised a lunchtime event for Managing Partners in February at Malmaison, Brighton Marina which was pleasingly well attended and received very positive feedback. The presentations were most interesting and there was also some very useful discussion from the managing partners about the issues facing local firms. We plan to organise further such events for this group.

We are currently planning another Practice Managers' event for the New Year on the topic of Wellbeing for Lawyers.

Finally, the Sussex Law Society Golf Society continues to thrive in the capable hands of its Secretary, Paul Sagoo. If you are interested in finding out more and/or joining (there is no joining fee) all you have to do is contact Paul Sagoo by email pps.sagoo@googlemail.com or telephone 01342 710363

Please keep a look out for the Society's social and networking events in our monthly Newsletter and let us have any ideas you may have for new events.

JEANETTE LACY SCOTT

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY HELD AT THE
OLD SHIP HOTEL, KING'S ROAD, BRIGHTON, BN1 1NR, ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 2017
AT 6.00 PM**

Present:

The President, Hon. Secretary and 16 members.

1. Apologies were received from 5 members whose names were read at the meeting.
2. The minutes of the AGM held on 27th October, 2016 were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Report of the General Committee for 2016/17 and Annual Accounts

It was proposed that the report and accounts be accepted. Proposer: Mr J Grant. Seconded by: Ms G Tisshaw with all present in favour.

5. Election of Officers

Mr Grant said that he had enjoyed his year and thanked the General Committee and Mrs Lacy Scott for their help and support. He said that he was pleased to have seen the Sussex Law Society initiate more networking events during his year and very much hoped these would continue as he felt the Society served members well as a networking medium. The relaunch of the Sussex JLD during his year was excellent news and he stressed the Committee's commitment to support young lawyers locally. Finally he said that the Annual Ball in May had been a great success with over 220 attendees which helped attract sponsorship from local businesses.

He said he was delighted to propose Ms E Weir to be elected as the Society's next President and this was seconded by Ms Eunson-Hickey with all present in favour. The following office holders and general committee members were then elected:

Vice-President: **Ms J Gillespie** (proposed by Ms J Paine and seconded by Ms E Weir with all present in favour).

Hon. Secretary: **Ms C Sayer** (proposed by Mr O Maxwell-Jones & seconded by Ms J Paine with all present in favour)

Hon. Treasurer: **Mr D Edwards** (proposed by Mr P Richards & seconded by Mr H Hunt with all present in favour)

6. Election of General Committee Members:

Ms H Goacher (proposed by Ms G Tisshaw & seconded by Ms A Miller with all present in favour).

Mr S Rozzier (proposed by Ms E Weir & seconded by Ms V Eunson-Hickey with all present in favour).

7. Any Other Business

None

8. President's Address

Ms Weir began by thanking Mr Grant for doing a fantastic job as President which she hoped to emulate during the forthcoming year.

She said that she was a local girl who qualified as a solicitor in 2003 and joined the Tax, Trusts and Estates team at Griffith Smith in 2006 and is now a partner in the firm.

Ms Weir said that she had served 4 years as a committee member of the Sussex Law Society, originally joining to meet other lawyers locally. She said that she had been very impressed by the work and the commitment of the committee who she felt really cared about the local profession. She said that the Society offered a really good opportunity to meet other lawyers in a relaxed setting.

She went on to say that her focus for the year was to get the message out about what the Society does using more Social Media. She also said that she hoped to work closely with the revived JLD, offering support in their efforts to engage local young solicitors and hoped that some of the more senior members of the profession would be willing to help with this.

Ms Weir concluded by saying that although there were many challenges at the moment, not least Brexit, she wanted to try and move away from all the negativity and talk about the joy of being a lawyer.

After the meeting some members went on a Ghost Walk around the Lanes in Brighton followed by dinner.

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY
PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2017

| | 2017 | | 2016 | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Income | | - | | - |
| Other income | | | | |
| Sponsorship income | 10,463 | | 7,900 | |
| Membership subscriptions | 10,741 | | 9,989 | |
| Surplus on seminars | 13,779 | | 9,407 | |
| Surplus/(deficit) on society events | (198) | | (384) | |
| Surplus/(deficit) on annual dinner | - | | (748) | |
| | <u> </u> | 34,785 | <u> </u> | 26,164 |
| | | 34,785 | | 26,164 |
| Expenditure | | | | |
| Telephone | 663 | | 728 | |
| General printing, postage, and stationery | 466 | | 758 | |
| Courses, events printing and copying | 1,097 | | 2,031 | |
| Insurance | 834 | | 769 | |
| Website & computer expenses | 1,450 | | 4,024 | |
| Gifts | 111 | | 178 | |
| Subscriptions | 45 | | 60 | |
| Sundry expenses | 279 | | 682 | |
| Travel | 764 | | 32 | |
| Clerical assistance | 18,000 | | 18,000 | |
| Accountancy fees | 1,400 | | 715 | |
| Bookkeeping | 260 | | 605 | |
| Legal fees | 44 | | - | |
| | <u> </u> | 25,413 | <u> </u> | 28,582 |
| | | 9,372 | | (2,418) |
| Finance costs | | | | |
| Bank charges | | 210 | | 308 |
| | | <u> </u> | | <u> </u> |
| | | 9,162 | | (2,726) |
| Depreciation | | | | |
| Computer equipment | | 111 | | 78 |
| NET (LOSS)/PROFIT | | <u><u>9,051</u></u> | | <u><u>(2,804)</u></u> |

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET

31 AUGUST 2017

| | Notes | 2017 £ | £ | 2016 £ | £ |
|----------------------------|-------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| FIXED ASSETS | | | | | |
| Tangible assets | 2 | | 332 | | 443 |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | | | | |
| Trade debtors | | 3,636 | | 70 | |
| Prepayments | | 300 | | 334 | |
| Bank balances | | 29,124 | | 23,681 | |
| Cash in hand | | 219 | | 214 | |
| | | <u>33,279</u> | | <u>24,299</u> | |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | | | | |
| VAT | | 4,428 | | 3,257 | |
| Trade creditors | | - | | 224 | |
| Credit card | | 80 | | - | |
| Deferred income | | - | | 689 | |
| Accrued expenses | | 1,580 | | 2,100 | |
| | | <u>6,088</u> | | <u>6,270</u> | |
| | | | <u>27,191</u> | | <u>18,029</u> |
| NET ASSETS | | | <u>27,523</u> | | <u>18,472</u> |
| FINANCED BY | | | | | |
| CAPITAL ACCOUNT | 3 | | <u>27,523</u> | | <u>18,472</u> |

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2017

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements have been compiled on a basis which enables profits to be calculated in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice and which provides sufficient and relevant information to enable the completion of a tax return.

2. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

| | Plant and machinery £ | Computer equipment £ | Totals £ |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| COST | | | |
| At 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017 | 7,307 | 6,244 | 13,551 |
| DEPRECIATION | | | |
| At 1 September 2016 | 7,307 | 5,801 | 13,108 |
| Charge for year | - | 111 | 111 |
| At 31 August 2017 | 7,307 | 5,912 | 13,219 |
| NET BOOK VALUE | | | |
| At 31 August 2017 | - | 332 | 332 |
| At 31 August 2016 | - | 443 | 443 |

3. CAPITAL ACCOUNT

| | 2017 £ | 2016 £ |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Brought forward | 18,472 | 21,276 |
| Add Net profit | 9,051 | - |
| | 27,523 | 21,276 |
| Less Net loss | - | 2,804 |
| | 27,523 | 18,472 |