

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY

**REPORT OF THE
GENERAL COMMITTEE
FOR 2018/19**

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2018/19

President:

Ms J. Gillespie, Brighton (to January 2019)
Ms J. Hardaway, Uckfield (from February 2019)

Vice-President:

Ms J. Hardaway, Uckfield (to January 2019)

Immediate Past President:

Ms E. Weir, Brighton

Honorary Treasurer:

Mr. O. Maxwell-Jones, 15 Prince Albert Street, Brighton, BN1 1HY

Honorary Secretary:

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

General Committee:

Mr J. Bradshaw
Ms. H. Goacher
Ms. J. Payne
Mr S. Rozzier
Ms G.Waller

Mr. P.W. Richards (Council Member)

The following were co-opted onto the Committee:

Ms. G..Tisshaw

**SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY
REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE FOR 2018/19**

PRESIDENT'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Firstly, I would like to thank Emma Weir and Jackie Gillespie for assisting me in the smooth transition of taking on the President's role in February this year. Due to their clear objectives during their time as Presidents, it made a near seamless progression for me to take on the role and carry the baton to continue their good work – so thank you both very much.

In fact, I was very pleased to have had the opportunity to continue their promotion of gender equality within the profession, as this coincided with Christina Blacklaws' Presidency objectives and the celebration of 100 years of women in law. In this vein, the Sussex Law Society held a round table meeting to discuss gender equality and to provide input and support to the world's largest survey of women in law being carried out by the national Law Society, resulting in the launch of the 'women in law charter'. The committee were proud to have been part of this research and I was able to develop this theme further in my speech at the annual Charity Ball this year and emphasise how equality and diversity generally within our profession is a good way to promote our businesses, retain talented people and support an independent and effective justice system.

There have been a number of changes and updates in the profession during the last year, including the transparency rules, digital tax, no fault divorce, the criminal justice campaign, the new solicitors' qualification exams and the new SRA Handbook. The committee have worked hard to provide information to our members via the newsletter, training courses and also responding to consultations, where appropriate. Information and training on the new SRA Handbook and the new Solicitor's Qualification Exams will continue into my next Presidential year, as these are important changes for the profession.

The young solicitors of Sussex have been well represented by the Junior Lawyer's Division, with events being well attended and the JLD provides a good support and social network for junior lawyers making their way in the profession.

The Sussex Law Society have also maintained and developed its good relations with other local Law Societies and the national Law Society by attending combined meetings and events, which enables the SLS to provide its member firms with information, support and guidance affecting the whole of the profession. I have seen first-hand how this information benefits our member firms.

On a lighter note, the events offered by the Society have been very well attended and well received and they provide good networking opportunities for all law firms in Sussex. The annual Charity Ball was extremely well attended again this year and provides a highlight of the Society calendar. The smooth running of this amazing event is all down to the organisation skills of our COO, Jeanette Lacy Scott, to whom we are extremely grateful.

It has been an honour in my Presidency, not only to attend events organised by other local Law Societies and the national Law Society, but also to have been invited by The High Sheriffs of East and West Sussex to their respective Judge's Services, representing the Sussex Law Society. This will be an amazing opportunity to meet with so many of the county's Judiciary, High Sheriffs, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer and to exchange views on issues affecting our profession.

JACQUELINE HARDAWAY

HON SECRETARY'S REPORT

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

Our President, Jacqueline Hardaway, has made a hugely positive impact on the Society and Jeanette Lacy Scott, Chief Operating Officer, together with the rest of the Committee, have been as hard working as ever.

SLS continues to be a strong forward thinking local law society which strives to serve and support all members. Efforts to integrate with the Junior Lawyers Division are certainly paying off with SLS attracting new enthusiastic

practitioners.

I am sad to say that this will be my last year as an active member of the society, but I hope to stay in touch with SLS and its members into the future.

CERYS SAYER

HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

The draft accounts for the year ending 31st August 2019 are included in this report. The accounts show a small profit for the year of £904.00 down from £1,651.00 the previous year. Whilst other incomes sources have increased, the surplus from the Society's courses has fallen dramatically by just about half and echoes a continuing downward trend of recent years. Obviously disappointing, especially given the hard work put into these by our COO Jeanette. This is a trend that the Committee is well aware of and it has been aware of for a number of years. It is also a reflection of the change to the legal education market. Income from subscriptions and sponsorship remains healthy, and the annual dinner returned a profit this year.

The committee remains committed to ensuring the financial strength of the Society. This year, to improve financial management the Society switched to using the online accounting software – Xero – to manage its day to day, management information and accounting.

It is only through the regular support of its members that your Society, its courses & social programmes, and this committee gather strength. So please, I urge you, continue to doing so. What the Society offers to its members is good value for money with worthwhile membership benefits.

OLIVER MAXWELL-JONES

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

There are so many regular updates and commentaries out there from The Law Society and legal publications that you should be up to speed with the major developments of the last year. These include the SRA Handbook Education and Training, Freelance Solicitors, the stagnation of legal aid, access to Justice, “deserts” and Court closures.

The debate on TLS and SRA internal governance rules rumbles on. On the flip side you can read the SRA's own regular bulletins and gauge what appears to be a rapprochement, despite its urge for total separation. For my part I wish to concentrate on progress being made with the phases within the Member Experience Programme. The Law Society is pledged to support and represent. It has invested considerable resources in those three main areas which I outlined in my monthly report earlier this year.

The new My Law Society website is scheduled to launch early next year and the proposed new learning management system within it expected in February. In the meantime, JLD information and participation has been shown to be particularly popular.

The forthcoming challenges and demands should not be underestimated. Regulatory changes, the impact of (expensive) technology and how the Banks might react to a post Brexit economic slowdown

Your Committee continues to press for inclusion in regional events such as LawTech and those delivered by the Law Management Section.

PATRICK RICHARDS

REPORT OF THE CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

As the Treasurer said in his report, profit from courses has fallen by around half this year which is concerning as this is one of the Society's main sources of income. Over the past few years, the Committee have been discussing how to sustain a healthy profit from courses. Initially this was because of competition from the many providers of legal education and a general increase in firms using on-line and in-house training. More recently however there has been an inevitable impact of the new SRA regulations on continuing professional development introduced in November 2016. All solicitors must now adopt the SRA approach to continuing competence. This means that

solicitors must reflect on their practice and undertake regular learning and development so their skills and knowledge remain up to date – any approach to learning and development is valid as long as you can demonstrate it contributes to how you remain competent to deliver a proper standard of service. This means that attendance at formal, accredited CPD courses is no longer a requirement.

It is also worth adding that whilst speakers' fees, venue and printing costs rise annually, we have not increased our course fees for members since 2006 and this is something the committee will be looking at in the near future along with other ideas to make the courses programme attract more participants. In the training year 1st September, 2018 to 31st August, 2019 we ran 17 courses and the average attendance was 18 participants at each – in the current climate these are still good numbers but as overheads increase we need to attract more people to avoid a big increase in attendance fees.

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 use high quality speakers and are local and inexpensive, saving precious time and money, only increases their attraction further.

We are very grateful to those members and member firms who consistently support our continuing education programme by regularly attending our courses. We get excellent feedback and encourage others who may not have considered attending a Sussex Law Society course to look on the courses page of [the website](#) regularly to see what is coming up (as new courses are added throughout the year). If you have any ideas for topics and/or speakers you think would be popular just [send me an email](#).

JEANETTE LACY SCOTT

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL & NETWORKING EVENTS COMMITTEE

The Autumn quiz kicked off the year's social and networking events on 18th October, following the AGM at Al Duomo in Brighton. It was nail biting stuff with a tie breaker finish between teams 'Too Cunning' from Cunningtons Solicitors and Hennings' 'The Galloping Seahorses', but 'Too Cunning' grabbed the title with their impressive knowledge of Scrabble! As always it was a really fun evening and there were teams from Griffith Smith, Warrens Law, Colemans, Howlett Clarke, Cunningtons, DMH Stallard, 1 Crown Office Row, Hennings, Mayo Wynne Baxter, Martin Searle and Coole Bevis.

The annual Past Presidents' Dinner took place in November.

A trip to the Theatre Royal in Brighton on 22nd November to see a new play by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman, inspired by extraordinary real-life events, was thoroughly enjoyed by a group of members.

On 31st January we held the second meeting of our Practice Managers' networking group. GRL Legal sponsored the event and, following a buffet lunch at the Hove Club, Ann Langford gave a fascinating talk on how to impact your personal resilience and wellbeing in an interactive workshop.

We had a great turnout for the tour of the Old Police Cells, under the Town Hall in Bartholomew Square, which proved to be a popular and entertaining event on 7th February. Our knowledgeable guide took great time to impart the historical background of the building and purveyed tales of local crime, some touched by the paranormal. Not for the feint hearted!

We held our Annual Charity Ball on 17th May at the Grand Hotel and had over 250 people from the local legal community attending. It was a fantastic night and raised nearly £1500 for the President's charities: Rise (a Sussex based charity supporting people affected by domestic abuse) and Taylor Made Dreams (helping children with life-limiting illnesses to fulfil their dreams). Thanks as always go to our event sponsors, Marsh JLT Specialty, Newman Business Solutions Ltd, Orion Legal Marketing and One Crown Office Row.

On 24th May we held our second Managing Partners' networking event at Malmaison in Brighton Marina. Following breakfast, there was a very interesting and useful roundtable discussion with Legal Eye, discussing the recent changes to the SRA handbook, followed by a market update on Professional Indemnity insurance and risk management by Marsh JLT Specialty. If you are a Managing Partner of a member firm, come and join us at our next event on 29th November, 2019 where practical and legal guidance on the management of employee absences, with a particular focus

on stress management and mental ill health will be the topic for discussion.

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 rps.sagoo@googlemail.com or telephone 01342 710363

Please keep a look out for the Society's social and networking events on our website and 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 AL
DUOMO, 7 PAVILION BUILDINGS, BRIGHTON, BN1 1EE
ON THURSDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2018 AT 6.00 PM**

Present:

The President, Hon. Secretary and 21 members.

1. Apologies were received from 9 members whose names were read at the meeting.
2. The minutes of the AGM held on 8th October, 2017 were accepted as a true record. Proposed by Mr O Maxwell-Jones and seconded by Mr S Rozzier.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Report of the General Committee for 2017/18 and Annual Accounts for the year ending 31/08/2017

It was proposed that the above report and accounts be accepted. Proposer: Mr P Richards. Seconded by: Ms J Paine with all present in favour.

5. Election of Officers

Ms E Weir said that she was delighted to propose Ms J Gillespie as the next President of the Society and this was seconded by Ms J Paine with all present in favour. Ms Weir said that she had enjoyed her year as President, representing the membership at a local and national level, and was very grateful to the Committee and Mrs J Lacy Scott for their invaluable support. She particularly wanted to thank the contribution made by Mr D Edwards, who was stepping down as Treasurer. She said that Mr D Edwards had worked very hard for the Society as Treasurer since 2010 and had left the Society's finances in good order. She also thanked Ms V Eunson-Hickey, who was stepping down from the General Committee, for her hard work and enthusiasm since joining in 2010. The following office holders and general committee members were then formally elected:

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

Vice-President: TBC. Ms E Weir proposed that Rule 9 (e) be applied, whereby the General Committee have the power to appoint a Vice President. Mr S Rozzier seconded the proposal with all present in favour.

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

Hon. Treasurer: **Mr O Maxwell-Jones** (proposed by Mr D Edwards & seconded by Mr S Rozzier with all present in favour)

6. Election of General Committee Members:

Mr J Bradshaw (proposed by Ms J Gillespie & seconded by Ms E Weir with all present in favour).

Mr G Waller (proposed by Ms J Hardaway & seconded by Ms H Goacher with all present in favour).

7. Any Other Business

None

8. President's Address

Ms J Gillespie thanked Ms E Weir for all of the work she had undertaken during her year as President. She said that she had qualified as a solicitor in 2002 and was now Managing Partner at Howlett Clarke. She had always been involved in the Society and had, in the past, served as a member of the General Committee. Ms J Gillespie said that she planned to continue the good work, started by recent presidents, encouraging networking events for members and supporting the local JLD. She said that she would also focus on women and diversity in the legal profession as these were both of great importance to her. Her chosen charity for the year was Brighton RISE.

After the meeting the Society held a Quiz Night and Supper at Al Duomo.

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY
PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2019

	2019		2018	
	£	£	£	£
Income		-		-
Sponsorship income	7,359		6,471	
Membership subscriptions	12,129		10,981	
Surplus on seminars	5,519		10,519	
Surplus/(deficit) on society events	(126)		(1,023)	
Surplus/(deficit) on annual dinner	3,535		147	
	<u>28,416</u>	28,416	<u>27,095</u>	27,095
		28,416		27,095
Expenditure				
Telephone	753		724	
General printing, postage, and stationery	292		357	
Courses, events printing and copying	504		394	
Insurance	841		826	
Website & computer expenses	747		931	
Sundry expenses	256		218	
Travel	569		187	
Clerical assistance	21,613		20,000	
Accountancy fees	1,623		1,400	
	<u>27,198</u>	27,198	<u>25,037</u>	25,037
		1,218		2,058
Finance costs				
Bank charges		252		324
		<u>966</u>		<u>1,734</u>
Depreciation				
Computer equipment		62		83
NET (LOSS)/PROFIT		<u><u>904</u></u>		<u><u>1,651</u></u>

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET

31 AUGUST 2019

	Notes	2019 £	£	2018 £	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	2		187		249
CURRENT ASSETS					
Trade debtors		285		1,200	
Prepayments		325		316	
Bank balances		35,384		33,507	
Cash in hand		-		218	
		<u>35,994</u>		<u>35,214</u>	
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
VAT		3,699		4,423	
Trade creditors		916		-	
Credit card		38		492	
Accrued expenses		1,450		1,401	
		<u>6,104</u>		<u>6,316</u>	
			28,890		28,925
NET ASSETS			<u>30,078</u>		<u>29,174</u>
FINANCED BY					
CAPITAL ACCOUNT	3		<u>30,078</u>		<u>29,174</u>

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2019

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

	Computer equipment £	Totals £
COST		
At 1 September 2018 and 31 August 2019	6,244	13,551
DEPRECIATION		
At 1 September 2018	5,995	13,302
Charge for year	62	62
At 31 August 2019	6,057	13,364
NET BOOK VALUE		
At 31 August 2019	187	187
At 31 August 2018	249	249

3. CAPITAL ACCOUNT

	2019 £	2018 £
Brought forward	29,174	27,523
Add Net profit	904	1,651
	<u>30,078</u>	<u>29,174</u>