

Dear Member,

We hope you had a relaxing Easter weekend. Our President, Lucy Tarrant, is having a well earned break at the moment so isn't providing her usual update but we have lots of other news and information for you in this month's Newsletter so read on!

NEWS

- **Warwick & Barker** (partnership) becomes Warwick Barker LLP as from 1st April 2021 – management and personnel remain the same.
- **Family Law Partners** are delighted to welcome Specialist Family Solicitor Farhana Shahzady who joins as a Director in their growing London team and Jayne Llewellyn as a Consultant based in Winchester and surrounds.
- **Renaissance Legal** has announced the launch of Renaissance Financial, a dedicated financial services offering designed to deliver tailored investment advice to families of a disabled or vulnerable individual. Find out more [here](#).
- To mark its 10-year anniversary on 1st April 2021, **Family Law Partners** has announced the creation of a £36,000 scholarship fund with the University of Brighton Business School to support law students from BAME & lower socio-economic backgrounds. Find out more about this [here](#).
- **Lawson Lewis Blakers** are delighted to welcome Tim Richardson, formerly of Bosley & Co, who joins our Peacehaven office as a Solicitor specialising in residential conveyancing who will be an invaluable asset to the team.
- **Martin Searle Solicitors** are looking for tenants for the lower ground floor of their five-storey period building (418 sq ft). The recently-reduced property is situated on Marlborough Place overlooking the revamped Jubilee Gardens. The two offices, plus a middle room for copying/scanning, are a good size, suitable for social distancing and can be accessed via a separate street access. There are shared kitchen and WC facilities. For more information please contact amanda@ms-solicitors.co.uk
- **Claire Nash Solicitors** are pleased to confirm that they have been approved by the SRA as an authorised training provider and have taken on their first trainee solicitor, Emma Santos, who will be supervised by Claire Nash, principal solicitor.

COMMON PLATFORM

Common Platform is a new digital case management system in the criminal courts for HMCTS, the judiciary and professional court users, including defence solicitors and the Crown Prosecution Service. The Common Platform is already operational in Surrey courts and is due to be introduced in Sussex shortly – see the letter we received from HMCTS on 6th April [here](#). Defence solicitors will need to sign up for an account in order to access it. Common Platform access will allow users to:

- associate users to a case/defendant so the Legal Aid Agency [LAA] are informed for payment purposes.
- self-serve case materials inc. IDPC & PET form.
- serve documents on the court and CPS for Common Platform cases.

[This Link](#) takes you to the most up to date guidance. Below are contact details for the various aspects of the common platform:

Common Platform support Contact the CJS Common Platform Service Desk for issues ONLY relating to Common Platform:

- An issue about registering, setting up or logging into Common Platform (specifically)
- Common Platform is slow (other applications are fine)
- An issue within Common Platform screens (data / cases or functionality)

By telephone: 0300 303 0688 - Always call if your issue is urgent. By email: CJSCP-ServiceDesk@hmcts.net - Issues can be logged at any time via email but will be responded to during core hours (Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 8am to 2pm). Any emails sent outside of core hours will be actioned the working next day.

Courts and Tribunals Service Centre (CTSC) - Contact the CTSC for:

- Business queries on a Common Platform case.

By email: ProfessionalContactCrime@justice.gov.uk By telephone: 0330 808 4407. The Crime Service telephone lines operate from 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

(These times are under constant review as Common Platform is rolled out)

HAVE YOUR SAY ON FUTURE WORKING PRACTICES OF THE FRC IN THE POST PANDEMIC WORLD

HHJ Farquhar has been tasked by Mostyn J, the National Lead Judge for the Financial Remedies Court to chair a group to consider all of the future working practices of the FRC in the post pandemic world. The group has been set up to consider, inter alia, whether it is appropriate to conduct any remote hearings in the future. The group includes Judges of all levels together with Barristers and Solicitors. It has been decided to prepare a survey of all lawyers that appear in the FRC in order to gather views and ideas. They are looking to consider all processes within the FRC to see if improvements can be made and it is not just limited to remote hearings. [The survey can be found here](#) - It should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Time is of the essence in terms of any replies as the group need to consider what steps are taken as soon as possible after the lockdown ends. They should be returned ASAP but no later than 9th April 2021. If they are provided shortly after that time they will still be fully considered but as they have to report back by early May some time is needed to consider the replies.

Please complete the survey if you can – important decisions need to be made as to how we do work in the FRC in the future and the group need as much information as possible to make informed decisions.

KEITH ARSCOTT

It is with the deepest sadness we remember Keith Arscott, a highly respected solicitor in Hove who died peacefully at his home in West Sussex on the 22nd February 2021 aged 74. His funeral service took place last month at Worthing crematorium. Keith will be truly missed by his wife, children and grandchildren together with the many friends and clients who held him in such high esteem.

SOLICITORS' FIRM – SOLE PRACTITIONER – LOOKING TO SELL OR MERGE

Solicitors' firm – sole practitioner on the South Coast looking to sell or merge. Clients based, locally, London and further afield. Mix of work is c60% conveyancing (including small amount of commercial), c40% private client. Will bank c325. Seller retiring, but happy to remain as a part time consultant for a few years. SQM accredited. On a number of lender panels including Lloyds, Halifax, Barclays, Nationwide, Virgin and member of Lender Exchange. Seller owns premises and happy to provide lease if required. Reasonable offer accepted especially if a buyer can progress in the next few weeks. Please contact [Jeanette Lacy Scott](#) if interested and she will pass on your details to the seller.

ISSUES WITH THE COURT OF PROTECTION

At our last General Committee meeting it was clear that some members were experiencing problems in their dealings with the Court of Protection. If these issues are widespread, we would like to take this up on members' behalf so please let [Jeanette Lacy Scott](#) know if you have had any general or specific issues/experiences in your dealings with them.

CLOSURE OF SOLICITORS' INDEMNITY FUND

After the end of September this year, the Solicitors' Indemnity Fund will cease accepting new claims. The closure will impact on current and former principals and employees of law firms. [This short article](#) outlines the impact and suggests practical steps which solicitors can undertake to protect and mitigate.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO TRIAL WITNESS STATEMENTS

From 6 April 2021, the way that witness statements for use at trial in the Business and Property Courts are prepared changed substantially, meaning there is more work to do. 'Trial witness statements' (with several exceptions) will have to comply with the recently published [CPR Practice Direction 57AC](#) ('the Practice Direction') and its accompanying Appendix: [Statement of Best Practice](#) ('the Statement of Best Practice').

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

Since the last edition of this newsletter, there has been a change of officers at The Law Society. On March 22nd, Stephanie Boyce became the first black president of the Society and has made it the mission for her term in office to leave the profession a "more diverse and inclusive one" than she entered. Stephanie is the 177th president of the Society and is joined by Lubna Shuja as vice president. This is a moment to celebrate as we solicitors continue to work together to deliver a strong, modern, diverse and inclusive profession.

At the most recent Law Society's Council meeting, the chief executive reported on the Society's activities across its strategic insight & influence priorities set by Council at the beginning of the last business year. There are six themes; promoting access to justice; upholding the rule of law; regulation & AML; promoting a modern, diverse & inclusive profession; supporting economic value and viability of solicitors' businesses; and supporting the international practice of law. If you would like to see a copy of this report, and also another on member experience, please contact me.

For me, as your council member, I can report that I have been appointed to the Law Society's Scrutiny and Performance Review Committee. Simply put, this committee reviews the decisions or

actions taken, under delegated powers, by the Society's presidential officers, the Board, and two other committees.

As always, the SLS and the Law Society will continue to provide you with up to date information, guidance, training and representation. If there are any areas where you feel we could be providing more, please do let us know, keep your communications coming in, keep talking to each other, to us, to your fellows – more than ever I believe we are all stronger and feel better together. If you haven't already done so, please sign in to your '[My LS](#)' account via the [Law Society's website](#) to set up your own bespoke updates. Why not set it up as your web browser's home page.

By the time you are reading this, Easter will have been & gone. So I hope you took the time to enjoy the long weekend following the first step in the relaxation of the lockdown.

Finally, in this selective summary, as lockdown lifts (once again) why not take stock of the numerous technological platforms and tools available to optimise virtual working. The Gazette has just published its 'Digital Transformation' guide which includes features and articles all designed to make law firms more efficient, productive and up to date. This is available to download from the Gazette's website [here](#).

Oliver Maxwell-Jones
Law Society Council Member (Inner Sussex)

SDLT FOR NON UK RESIDENTS

From 1 April 2021, different rates of SDLT will apply to purchasers of residential property in England and Northern Ireland who are not resident in the UK. The non resident surcharge (NRS) is 2% of the purchase price. It applies to all buyers including First Time Buyers. Note that UK means England/Wales/Scotland/NI but does not include the Channel Islands or Isle of Man. Buyers are classed as non-UK resident if they are not present in the UK for at least 183 days during the 12 months before their purchase (these do not have to be consecutive days). If there are 2 or more parties to the purchase then the rules apply to each person. Therefore if any are non-UK resident in relation to the purchase, then all buyers are treated as non-UK resident and the surcharge is payable. If the buyers are married and one is UK resident, then they are both treated as UK resident in relation to the purchase. In relation to married couples/those in a civil partnership, a word of caution. The relationship must subsist at completion. Therefore divorcing couples, where they live apart but are still married at the date of completion, would not be exempt if one of them were non-resident. Note however "Crown Employees" are exempt from the surcharge, such as diplomats, members of the Armed Forces, and their spouses or civil partners. More information can be found [here](#).

CALLING ALL IN-HOUSE LAWYERS

We are in the process of setting up a sub-committee for in-house lawyers. It is intended that this subcommittee will represent the views of inhouse lawyers in the Sussex Law Society constituency and pass on any developments/news relating to them to the general committee. Its members are likely to include representatives from local authorities and industry. We would like to provide a forum for Sussex inhouse lawyers, which amongst other matters, might provide courses or social events. We would be delighted to hear from any in house lawyers with ideas of what the Sussex Law Society can do for you and, just like anything new, we would also welcome some volunteers to help put your ideas into practice. Please contact [Jeanette Lacy Scott](#).

PROPOSALS TO INCREASE COURT FEES IN VARIOUS PRACTICE AREAS

The MOJ are running a consultation about increasing a number of court fees in various practice areas. [Here is the link](#) to the proposals and details of the consultation. The deadline for responses is 17th May, 2021.

IMPORTANT NOTICE – ELECTRONIC FILING IN BRIGHTON (& HORSHAM), WORTHING & HASTINGS FAMILY COURTS

Electronic Filing (e-filing) will be introduced at the above-named courts from early April 2021. This is an automated e-mail system that will file each e-mail and document onto the court file within 10 minutes of it being sent if the document contains the correct case number in the correct format. From the 1st April 2021 the sussexfamily@justice.gov.uk e-mail account will be operated by an automated e-mail system. If you correctly file a document using this e-mail account, it will go automatically onto the electronic court file which can be viewed immediately by the Judiciary and Court Staff within minutes of sending the email but please be advised that the Court still has five days to action the work.

Can I still lodge paper documents?

No - paper copies of documents are not necessary, and they will not be accepted by the court unless you are a litigant in person and are unable to send your documents this way because you do not have access to a computer.

What if my email requires urgent action?

Anything that is urgent and requires attention (e.g. applications) are flagged up to the Admin Team who will deal with them. The automated e-mail system reads the body of your e-mail, so it is important to be precise about what the reason for your e-mail is to assist the system correctly process your enquiry.

What about divorce cases?

Divorce files are not converting to digital files, the e-filing only applies to Private Law and Family Law Act cases.

The guide [which can be found here](#) should help you successfully file your documents with the court.

HMRC CRACKDOWN ON COVID 19 FRAUD

In the March 2021 budget Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced the creation of a new major fraud taskforce, the Taxpayer Protection Taskforce, established as part of a wide-reaching crackdown on criminals exploiting UK government support schemes. The new taskforce represents one of the all-time largest responses to a fraud risk by HMRC. It has been reported that the government is losing around £1 billion a week due to exploitation of the furlough scheme emergency grants and loans introduced during the pandemic. Such losses have led David Clarke, Chairman of the Covid-19 Fraud Watch Task Force, to claim that the extent of the abuse of the pandemic financial aid may amount to the “biggest fraud in British history”. [Read more in this useful update](#) sent to us by Howden.

EXPOSING OURSELVES?

Speaking at the Law Society’s Risk and Compliance conference a few weeks ago, the SRA’s Director of Strategy and Innovation warned that amidst the well rehearsed increasing risks of cyber crime (trebling during this last year) and money laundering, some Solicitors are being found to overstate how much they do and specialise in. This could add to their existing exposures and attract negative

reviews. Most recent surveys also indicate that more than one third of Firms do not know the extent of price and service level transparency and should revisit their digital marketing strategy. In general however, the periodic sweeps on compliance with the Rules since their introduction at the end of 2018 were beginning to show considerable improvement. The SRA is considering what additional support can be made available.

WEBINAR 'SHARED OWNERSHIP, RIGHT TO BUY & HELP TO BUY: NEW DEVELOPMENTS'

April 2021 is due to see the introduction of the New Model Shared Ownership Lease. In addition, Help to Buy in England is undergoing major changes as of 1 April 2021 and Right to Buy, including voluntary Right to Buy is an expanding but dangerous area. In this webinar Richard Snape aims to look at the existing law and new developments. Topics covered include:

- Shared Ownership Leases and the pitfalls
- The New Model Shared Ownership
- SDLT and Shared Ownership Leases
- The Help to Buy Scheme
- Council House Right to Buy and some of the pitfalls
- Voluntary Right to Buy
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The webinar is £100 + VAT for members and takes place from 10 am – 12.45 pm on Monday, 26th April. Full details of the content and the application form can be downloaded [here](#).

OUR CPD COURSES & WEBINARS

Click on the links below for full details of each course and application forms:

- **13th April, 2021** – [‘Anti Money Laundering Update’](#). LIVE Webinar. 9.30am – 12.30pm. Speaker: Joanna Morris.
- **26th April, 2021** – [‘Shared Ownership, Right to Buy & Help to Buy: New Developments’](#) LIVE Webinar. 10am – 12.45 pm. Speaker: Richard Snape.
- **26th April, 2021** – [‘Newbuild Issues in Conveyancing’](#). LIVE Webinar. 2pm – 5pm. Speaker: Richard Snape.
- **29th April, 2021** – [‘SRA Risk Outlook 2020-21’](#). LIVE Webinar. 9.30 – 11.00. Speaker: Joanna Morris.
- **10th June, 2021** – [‘Elderly Client Update’](#) LIVE Webinar. 11am – 12 pm. Speaker: Caroline Bielanska
- **22nd September, 2021** – [‘The CQS – Compliance & The New Assessment Regime’](#) LIVE Webinar. 9.30am – 1pm. Speaker: Tracy Thompson

OTHER WEBINARS/ARTICLES/RESOURCES

- Ask The Experts - Community Care Law Q&A's. Cate Searle, Head of the Community Care Law team, and Paula Jones, Associate and Services for Professional Deputies Lead, at Martin Searle Solicitors are running free monthly Community Care Law Q&A's focusing on topical issues in community care and mental capacity law. The next session is on **Tuesday 20 April** from 1 - 2pm and deals with "Re: ACC a year on – how is the Court of Protection responding to applications by Professional Deputies?". For more information and to book your place click [here](#)
- **22nd April, 2021** ‘Maximizing LinkedIn for Lawyers’ – FREE webinar presented by Rachel Tombs from 1pm – 2pm – for more details and to book your place see [here](#).

SITUATIONS VACANT

Listing job vacancies in the Newsletter & putting more detailed vacancies on the [website](#) is **FREE** for Sussex Law Society member firms and individual members and £50 + VAT for other contributors. Contact [Jeanette Lacy Scott](#) to place an advert. More details about each vacancy and how to apply can be found by following the highlighted links.

- Bate & Albon Solicitors are looking to expand in the fields of commercial litigation, company commercial, family law and private client, and are interested in talking with any individual lawyers, teams or small firms that might be looking for a new home. We are a growing, modern, cloud-based firm, established in 2015, with offices in Brighton, Worthing and (opening soon) Chichester. Our fee-earners are a mixture of consultants and employees, who enjoy flexibility around hours of work, and office or home-working. All approaches will be treated in strictest confidence. In the first instance, please contact Carl Bate (carl.bate@batealbonsolicitors.co.uk 01273 525766) or Chris Albon (chris.albon@batealbonsolicitors.co.uk 01903 369959). No agencies, thank you.
- **Commercial Property Solicitor or FILEX** - Bate & Albon Solicitors are looking to recruit a Commercial Property Solicitor or FILEX with c. 1-3 years PQE including extensive landlord and tenant experience. This position will be based in our Brighton Office. In the first instance, please apply for an Application pack to Debbie Knight, Office Manager, at 36 Vine Street, Brighton, BN1 4AG, debbie.knight@batealbonsolicitors.co.uk 01273 956671. No agencies, thank you.
- **Commercial property secretary/assistant.** This is a new vacancy in the Coole Bevis Horsham office. More details can be found [here](#).
- Green Wright Chalton Annis Solicitors are recruiting for a full-time **experienced Matrimonial / Family Solicitor/FILEX** to join their Hove office. Please apply with CV to christine.nestor@gwca.co.uk
- **Private Client Solicitor/Legal Executive** 3 years + PQE to join a firm in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. See [here](#) to find out more details and how to apply.
- **Private Client Solicitor/Legal Executive** - MJR Solicitors in Bognor Regis are seeking a full time/part time experienced private client lawyer. Full details and how to apply can be found [here](#).
- **Private Client Secretary** – Our busy team in the Coole Bevis Hove office need a further experienced secretary to work with them. More details can be found [here](#).
- **Property Solicitor** to join a law firm in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. The candidate should be able to deal with residential and commercial transactions with a minimum of 3 years PQE. This is an exciting opportunity for a solicitor looking for career growth. Please send a CV with a covering letter to info@corelaw.co.uk
- **Residential & Commercial Conveyancing Solicitor** – Worthing firm seeks a conveyancing solicitor/licensed conveyancer with 3-5 years PQE. This is an exciting opportunity for a solicitor looking for personal and career growth opportunities. Full details and how to apply can be found [here](#).

- **Residential Property Support.** Coole Bevis Brighton office would like to appoint an IT literate, people-oriented conveyancing secretary. More details can be found [here](#).
- **Senior Commercial & Governance Lawyer for Brighton & Hove City Council** – To find out more about this part time role (4 days) and how to apply see [here](#).
- **Will Writer** - MJR Solicitors in Bognor Regis are looking to grow their team in what has been a busy start to 2021. The successful candidate will be given the opportunity to manage their own wills caseload. You will need to have previous experience drafting wills or working in private client. Alternatively, if you have studied estate planning or have similar experience this is also acceptable. Full details and how to apply can be found [here](#).

LOCUMS

If you would like to be added to the a list of locums published monthly in this Update please email your details to [Jeanette Lacy Scott](mailto:Jeanette.Lacy.Scott). Listing your details here is free of charge for members:

- Margaret Dowdles - commercial/residential property. Happy to discuss how firms can practically work together so she can innovate on pricing and still deliver real value at this challenging time and going forwards -. Contact mgtdles@gmail.com 07947-771593. Call to check availability.
- Robin Bates - family and civil dispute resolution. contact mob 07710 202422 ; e-mail robin-bates@sky.com
- Elin Dukes - private client/court of protection - contact: elindukeslaw@gmail.com / 07384 401083
- Patrick Richards- Un-Notarised legal translations, office and Court interpreter services offered by fluent French and Italian speaking local Solicitor. Contact patrichards27@hotmail.com 07715928563.

LOST & MISSING WILLS

Does your firm hold a will for the following:

Maureen Frances Matthews (nee Mason) (RIP) D.O.B. 17/06/1939 Please contact her daughter in law, [Wendy Matthews](#), with any information.

Dorothy Ann HERALD (RIP) D.O.B. 17/02/1928 Last address: Mountfitchet House, Stanstead, Essex, CM24 8LH (address at time of will: 15 Neville Gardens, Emsworth, Hampshire, PO10 7XZ.

Please contact [Darren Price](#) with any information

Brian William Geoffrey PROCTER (RIP 19/02/2021) Last Address: 33 St George's Road, Hayle – but lived previously in Hastings). Please contact his cousin, [Heidi Procter](#) with any information.

All wills previously held by Howlett Clarke are now safely held with the Right Legal Group, Wyvern Business Park, 16 Stanier Way, Derby, DE21 6BF. Telephone number 01332 424511.

Please contact jeanettelacyscott@btinternet.com if you are looking for a will or if you want to be part of our lost/missing wills scheme (free of charge)

LAW SOCIETY DIVISIONS/NETWORKS

The Law Society has some really useful divisions/networks full of information and resources which are worth exploring. The links are here: [Ethnic Minority Lawyers](#); [In-house Lawyers](#); [Junior Lawyers](#); [Lawyers with Disabilities](#); [LGBT+ Lawyers](#); [Small Firms](#); [Solicitor Judges](#); [Women Lawyers](#)

SUBSCRIBE/UNSUBSCRIBE

Following the introduction of the new GDPR laws on 25th May 2018, if you are not an individual or corporate member of the Sussex Law Society and wish to continue to receive this monthly newsletter you will need to [opt in here](#). If you are unsure about whether you are/are not a member please contact [Jeanette Lacy Scott](#)

If you would like to receive information about courses and events in any of the following areas of law please sign up to one of the following lists:

[Litigators List](#)

[Private Client Practitioners List](#)

[Property Practitioners List](#)

[Family Practitioners List](#)

[Criminal Law Practitioners List](#)

Contact [Jeanette Lacy Scott](#) if you no longer wish to receive the monthly Newsletter and put **UNSUBSCRIBE** in the subject heading.