

Welcome to the year's final issue of the SLS News Update. We have had so much positive feedback about this monthly newsletter and are very grateful to all those who take the time to send in their news and contributions. If you or your firm/organisation haven't featured in the past – why not make it a New Year's resolution to consider sending us your news to share with your local legal community. Wishing all our readers a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

One of the privileges of being President of your Society is joining the ranks of its Past Presidents who, annually, meet up for dinner. This year, the dinner was on 18th November was one of my first duties and it was a pleasure to meet up and share time together, listening to stories both old & new and remembering those no longer with us.



*((l to r) front = Richard Dyson, Veronica Keen, Oliver Maxwell-Jones, Geoffrey Longfield, Gilva Tisshaw,
Back Michael Long, Michael Barry, Hugo Hunt, Veronica Keen, Tim Aspinall)*

I want to thank Laura Colville, President of Chichester Law Society, for her invite to their annual dinner on 2nd December. Regrettably, I was unable to attend so our Honorary Secretary, Eleanor Richards, kindly represented the SLS and I hear that she was warmly welcomed.

This time of year is doubly, probably trebly, as busy than usual. Not only are there the day to day of dealings with clients and colleagues, there are also the professional & social commitments of this time of year. On top of the important duties at home and for family. Time all ways seeming to run faster and days disappear. The Advent calendar adding to the daily reminder of time running out on the working year. The past couple of years have taught us all new skills, one of which is being aware of our own and others mental health and wellbeing. Quite rightly becoming a priority and reflected in changes to the way we work. At a time of year when we are reminded to think of others, it is equally important to remember self-care. Walking to work this morning, rather precariously due to the seasonal snow & ice, a billboard caught my eye. Repeated in seasonally warm colours were the words 'Just be Kind', a heartening message at any time of year. So, be kind to yourself and others.

Wishing you all a very merry holiday and a happy & peaceful new year.

Oliver Maxwell-Jones

LOCAL NEWS

- **Cognitive Law** are delighted to welcome Consultant Solicitor Nadine Baligod to the consultancy. Nadine provides family and later life legal services in both English and Philippine laws, a rare service of its kind that she has gained monopoly. She seeks to expand her reach south of England as a part of Cognitive Law's roster of uniquely skilled individuals and top-notch legal team.
- Our Honorary Secretary **Eleanor Richards** enjoyed an entertaining evening at the Chichester Law Society annual dinner on Friday 2nd December as a guest of their President Laura Colville. She received a warm welcome from the President at the event, which took place in the impressive Vicar's Hall in the grounds of Chichester Cathedral. After a delicious Christmas dinner with a live jazz band providing background music, there was a speech by former professional cricketer Chris Nash and then to bring the evening to a lively and fun conclusion there was a cabaret drag act.
- The Family Law Language Project (an initiative that Gemma Hope, Director at **Family Law Partners**, is involved in) was shortlisted for the Commentator of the Year at the Family Law Awards you can find out more about the Project online at <https://www.thefamilylawlanguageproject.co.uk/>.
- [Loch Associates Group](#), the specialist business and employment company based in Kent, Sussex and London, has appointed employment solicitor Amy White as its new Head of Training and Wellbeing. Amy will oversee the Group's external training and wellbeing provision for clients which integrates seamlessly with the Loch Associates legal, HR and mediation services.
- **Family Law Partners** are pleased to announce the arrival of Family Solicitor Hannah Gumbrell-Ward at their Brighton office to join the growing team.

SUMMARY OF CONCERNS RELATING TO DELAYS WITHIN HMCTS FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS

The Sussex Law Society with the assistance of its members has put together a short summary of concerns relating to the delays within the court system. This highlights the issues that have been raised by members. This information has been sent to a number of MPs. If you wish to use the following information to forward to your MP, please do not hesitate to do so.

Over a number of years we have been experiencing a significant decline in the efficiency of the court service which has had an impact on clients and other court users. The Sussex Law Society invited members to write in with the concerns that they had experienced with the courts and the impact that this was having. In summary, the common concerns are.

1. Awaiting court hearings dates. This is often taking many months.
2. Delays in applications being processed within financial proceedings/Children Act proceedings and civil cases.
3. Taking cases out of the list just before hearing. There have been numerous cases where the Court has contacted the instructed solicitors even sometimes just the day before the hearing to inform them that owing to a lack of judicial availability, the matter had to be adjourned.

The clients incur Counsel's fees. The usual terms and conditions are that if Counsel is cancelled two weeks to one week before the hearing, 50% of the fee is payable and up to one week before the hearing, a full fee is payable. This causes financial loss in terms of Counsel's fees, additional costs for delayed hearing preparation i.e. updated disclosure, delay in people being able to get on with their lives, frustration and emotional distress. In respect of applications for people to see their children, this delays contact between a child and a parent.

4. Difficulties in communications with the Court.
5. Inexperienced administrative staff and documents not being made available to Judge.
6. Being encouraged by the Court to have private hearing i.e..Financial Dispute Resolution Hearings. The parties pay a Private FDR Judge. The cost is on average £3,000 to £5,000 plus VAT to preside over a hearing to avoid delay in the court system.

A survey of Resolution (Family) Members found:

- (i) 20% said court delays caused client to rely on benefits.
- (ii) 34% said they had referred a client to a counsellor or therapist to help them cope with the stress of ongoing court delays.
- (iii) 90% said the court backlogs were causing additional and unnecessary stress and pressure for clients.

THE CHASELEY TRUST – INVITATION TO JOIN THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chaseley is a highly specialist Care Home situated on the seafront at Eastbourne in beautiful surroundings. Its Residents all have Acquired Brain Injury, whether it is through strokes, accidents or diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis. Nearly of them are in wheelchairs; some are unable to leave their beds. Nursing is central to the care they receive, plus individual attention from the Care Workers. Chaseley also has a very good Well Being and Activities department that provides enjoyment and diversions for the Residents. Every Resident is seen and treated as an individual. There are 55 Residents.

The Trustees would be very interested in recruiting someone with a legal background to join them. Experience in Social Care is not essential but would be very useful. So would HR. The Board does not wish to define exactly the experience that legal professionals could bring, but would be happy to hear from someone who feels they could contribute something of value and would have interest in the life of Chaseley. Good, all-round judgement is also desirable, as complex matters often arise, particularly at the moment when the whole area of Social Care is under great pressure.

The Board meets four times a year, at Chaseley, and during working hours. Meetings run for roughly 2 hours. For the rest of the time, Trustees communicate by email and occasionally by Zoom. Trustees can expect to be consulted from time to time about something that needs attention and for which they have relevant expertise.

The Trustees are all volunteers, but agreed expenses can be paid. The current Trustees are all experienced professionals – some retired, one still working. Our current strengths are in finance, marketing and general management. The CEO of Chaseley is dynamic and hardworking and enjoys good relations with the Board. The Board delegates all management functions to her but is ultimately responsible for financial and legal areas.

The Chair of the Trustees, Professor Gill Davies, would be very happy to hear from any interested individuals and to answer any questions they have. She can be contacted at davies.gill@btinternet.com

ANOTHER NEW DATE FOR 2023 ANNUAL CHARITY BALL !!

Once again we have had to move the date of our Annual Charity Ball as it clashed with the Resolution Conference Dinner in Brighton. We are now planning a Summer Ball on **Friday, 16th June, 2023** so please save the date. It will be held at the Grand Hotel in Brighton.

RITA SEN SOLICITORS JOINS COOLE BEVIS LLP

Coole Bevis LLP has acquired Rita Sen Solicitors which has an office in Rose Green, near Chichester. The acquisition will see Coole Bevis take on a fifth office in Sussex to add to their existing offices in Brighton, Horsham, Hove and Worthing. Five professional advisers, including a specialist in Court of Protection, will also join their growing Private Client department. Rita Sen Solicitors was founded in 2003 and since then it has grown to become a thriving business that is highly regarded by the community they serve. The practice specialises in advising on Wills, Probate, Intestacies, Inheritance Tax, Court of Protection and Lasting Powers of Attorney. Alex Bowers, Executive Partner at Coole Bevis LLP said, "We are delighted to welcome Rita and her team to the firm. The incorporation of the practice has further strengthened our presence in Sussex and significantly expanded our Private Client department, making it one of the largest in the county." "We are now focused on supporting Rita to build on the highly regarded reputation that she has worked hard to establish in the local community and beyond." Rita commented, "I am excited to announce the news that we are joining Coole Bevis and will now be part of a larger firm. This means that we are able to offer our valued clients advice on a wider range of legal areas." "My team and I will continue to operate from our Rose Green premises, providing the same excellent level of service to our clients as we always have done." "The acquisition marks a new chapter for the practice that I founded almost 20 years ago and I am very much looking forward to being part of an ambitious and growing firm."

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

There has been no Law Society Council Meeting since the last Newsletter. The next is 12th December which I shall report upon in the January Newsletter.

Many of you will be aware that the Government has issued a further response to the Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review (Clair) which was commissioned by the Government and presented by Lord Bellamy KC in November 2021. Lord Bellamy said a minimum 15% increase in defence legal aid fees was needed urgently to ensure their viability. The Government initially came up with proposals worth just 9% for Solicitors. The recent report has said this will increase to 11%, but with no time scale. This is in the face of no increase in defence legal aid fees since 2001, and an 8.75% reduction in 2014. The Deputy Vice President of the Law Society (and next but one President) is Richard Atkinson, a well-known Criminal Lawyer from Kent who is a Partner at Tuckers Solicitors. He, the President, Lubna Shuja, and Head of Justice at the Law Society, Richard Miller, have been excoriating in their criticism of the Government's failure to implement the Bellamy Review. An example is their release of 30th November: [Real-terms cut to legal aid leaves no viable future for criminal defence | The Law Society](#) that summarises the position. Duty Solicitor provision is now very sparse in some areas in the country and declining everywhere. If there is no solicitor available when the Police want to carry out an interview, then they cannot progress the case. That may have an adverse impact on the suspect, the Police, witnesses and victims. Suspects may have to be released without interview.

Justice delayed is justice denied - for all parties. This should concern anyone who cares for access to justice and the rule of law.

Andrew Bishop, Law Society Council Member for Sussex

JULIAN DOBSON SOLICITORS – INSOLVENCY LEGAL UPDATE 2022

An Insolvency Legal Update 2022 is now available to download from www.juliandobson.com (Hard copies can be requested [by email](#)). It examines some of the more interesting corporate and personal insolvency cases in 2022 and covers:

- Extending Administration orders
- Bankruptcy and “Homemade” Declarations of Trust
- Misfeasance claims against Directors
- Liquidator’s recovery of payments under s127 Insolvency Act 1986
- Orders for possession and sale in bankruptcy

COMPLIANCE & REGULATION

The last monthly digital issue of The Gazette dated 9th December 2022 neatly summarises what it lists as “19 things for Solicitors to look out for in 2023”. Tenth and Eleventh places on this chart are the continuing big blows, not hits, which your Committee has been considering and drawing your attention to in our own monthly Newsletters this year. These report and invite you to have your say by responding to the various Consultations as they are announced. Top of the list of all those being seen by the profession to be attacking it unjustifiably and in a heavy handed and disproportionate way is the SRA as it flexes its growing punitive muscles. Followed then by consumer lobbies urging a scientifically maximum degree of “transparency”, an over-arching Legal Services Board which whilst providing inadequate funding expects increasing competence standards, instant improvement to its own embarrassing complaints service and a Government which is about to squeeze us even further on Compliance.

It is perhaps no surprise that an increasing number of members of the designated front line legal regulators are beginning to begrudge these impositions and develop an appetite for an alternative or even a return to self-regulation.

Happy New Year!

Patrick Richards, Compliance & Regulation Standing Committee

MANAGING PARTNERS’ NETWORKING GROUP

Remote and hybrid-working is here to stay for the time being and there are no doubt pros and cons. Pam Loch, Managing Director of Loch Associates Group, will be presenting a lunchtime webinar on Thursday, 19th January 2023 from 12.00 – 13.30 pm and will be talking about the emerging trends in the employment law and HR world and the challenges firms face in our ever evolving workplaces, especially around mental ill health and remote/hybrid working and the menopause. If this is something you would like to join then please let [Jeanette Lacy Scott](#) know. There will be time for questions and a confidential discussion.

HOWDEN PREMIUM MATTERS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The Society's main sponsor Howden understand the importance of keeping you informed on the issues relating to PII, risk and legal practice and produce a regular quarterly update 'Premium Matters'. You can find the November issue [here](#)

WESTGATE CHAMBERS

Briefly Westgate – our bite sized, bi-monthly newsletter. Please sign up to receive legal updates, insight from our members and invitations to the most relevant social and training events. To sign up, just one simple click on the link [here](#) is all that is required. Chambers would like to place on record its thanks to our new and existing clients across all our practice areas. It remains our pleasure to work with you and we are extremely appreciative of the support and trust you place in us. Merry Christmas from all at Westgate Chambers.

'EXERCISING BREAK CLAUSES AND OTHER METHODS OF TERMINATING COMMERCIAL LEASES' WEBINAR

This is a very topical area in the post pandemic online world. Richard Snape will look at break clauses and other termination methods. Topics covered include: Conditions Precedent and Breaks; - The Time for Exercising the Break; - Right of Entry; - Tenants Notice to Quit. The webinar is from 9.30am – 12.30pm on Wednesday, 25th January. You can download an application form [here](#).

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY WEBINARS

Click on the links below for full details of each course and application forms. Check the website regularly as new webinars are being added all the time.

- **25th January, 2023** – '[Exercising Break Clauses Exercising Break Clauses and Other Methods of Terminating Commercial Leases](#)'. Speaker: Richard Snape. LIVE Webinar. 9.30am – 12.30pm. £100 + VAT (members), £120+ VAT (non members)
- **14th March, 2023** – 'Latest on CPR Reforms and New Cases'. Speaker: Dominic Regan. LIVE Webinar. 9.30am – 12.30pm. £100 + VAT (members), £120+VAT (non members)

OTHER COURSES/WEBINARS/ARTICLES/RESOURCES

- **Throughout January 2023, Martin Searle Solicitors** are running their 19th annual campaign, **Mind the Bump** to stamp out pregnancy and maternity discrimination in the workplace. They are offering a free 30-minute telephone advice line for employers and employees concerned about pregnancy and maternity rights and their employers duties. They are running a free virtual workshop for employee advisers and trade union representatives - '**Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination – A Guide for Advisers**' at 1pm on Thursday 26 January 2023. They are running a virtual seminar on '**Pregnancy & Maternity Discrimination - A Guide for HR Managers & Employment Lawyers**' at 10.30am on Tuesday 31 January 2023. For more details [click here](#).
- '**Top 7 Law Firm Marketing Strategies for 2023**' – read the article by Orion Legal Marketing [here](#).
- '**International Arbitration**' – read the article from Clerksroom [here](#).
- '**Islamic Marriage & the English Legal System: Mahr/Dower**' – read the article from Clerksroom [here](#).

- **'Islamic Marriage & the English Legal System: Dowry'**- read the article from Clerksroom [here](#).
- **'Islamic Marriage & the English Legal System: Nikkah'** – read the article from Clerksroom [here](#).
- **'Belsner v Cam Legal Services – The Case of the Year Already?'** – read the article from Clerksroom [here](#).

FAIRCHECKS CAMPAIGN FOR CRIMINAL RECORD REFORM

[Transform Justice](#) invite you to find out more and [sign up to their FairChecks Campaign](#) which is calling for the government to review the criminal record system with the aim of making it fairer and more proportionate. An outdated criminal record disclosure system is keeping people trapped in the past and unable to find work or progress in their careers with some who have had only minor brushes with the justice system often facing discrimination and stigma from employers, sometimes decades after the original offence.

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.

- **Client Service Executive** –An exciting opportunity has arisen at Mayo Wynne Baxter's Lewes office to be responsible for managing all enquiries received by the firm from initiation to completion from all channels, including live chat, email, telephone and website sources and providing excellent client service to the enquirer. You will also be responsible for answering and directing appropriately all telephone calls to the firm's switchboard numbers and other administration tasks when necessary. Full details can be found [here](#).
- **Commercial Property** – A R Brown & Co in Worthing are expanding their Commercial Property Team and are looking for a new Senior Property Lawyer to join the Commercial Property department, ideally covering both commercial and residential. The role will require you to hit the ground running and will involve managing a full range of commercial matters. Full details and how to apply can be found [here](#).
- **Employment Lawyer.** Martin Searle Solicitors are looking to employ an experienced litigation Solicitor, In-House Counsel / Barrister, Legal Executive or Case Worker to join their Employment Law team. For a full job description and to apply, [click here](#)
- **Family Solicitor/FILEX** - GoodLaw Solicitors LLP are looking for an experienced lawyer to join their family team. This is an opportunity for an ambitious Family Solicitor/FCILEX specialising in care proceedings to join a hugely successful law firm and take the business along with their career to the next level. You must be a self-starter, have excellent technical ability and have experience in handling care proceedings. A minimum of 3 years of experience is required. Those not on the Children Panel but with an interest to join the Panel will be considered, provided they have existing advocacy experience and support and funding for training can be provided. Salary DOE + generous bonus scheme. Candidates should apply with CV and cover letter to emma@goodlawsolicitors.co.uk

- **Legal Support Assistant** – Mayo Wynne Baxter have an exceptional opportunity for a Legal Support Assistant to join our team, mainly based in our Storrington office and other offices on occasion. You are likely to have previous administrative knowledge and good client care experience. Full details can be found [here](#).
- **Residential Property Paralegal** – Mayo Wynne Baxter have an exceptional opportunity for a Residential Property Paralegal to join our team based at our Storrington office and at home. Ideally you will have the ability to work independently and proven experience of working towards financial targets. You will have previous Paralegal experience and a high standard of interpersonal and communication skills. It is envisaged that this will be a full-time role but we are always willing to consider different working patterns. Full details can be found [here](#).

CHRISTMAS WINE TIPS

Thanks once again to Prof Dominic Regan for his trusty wine tips for some nice Christmas bottles.

If you are looking for a white for your turkey Dominic suggests that Waitrose Blueprint White Burgundy 2020 is delicious at £10-99.

He recommends a few reds, Waitrose Primitivo by Terre di Faiano at £9.99 being his pick. Sainsburys and others sell a delicious Rioja, Beronia Reserva 2017/8 at £15 if you want a stunner. Beaujolais comes in many guises, ranging from the simple up to the named crus. Brouilly is widely available and is elegant, not heavy or rich. Château Thivin at about £20 is the very best and can be found at Fortnum's and Harvey Nichols. Aldi and Lidl offer great value. Aldi has recently been selling a gorgeous Tasmanian Pinot Noir for £9-99 which would retail elsewhere for double. Lidl currently stocks 2019 Chianti at an absurd £5-99! Tesco own label Cotes Du Rhone is a fiver whilst it also stocks a serious version by Chapoutier (note the braille label) for £10. Waitrose has at £4-99 a range of own label wines with the Spanish red being outstanding.

If you want to celebrate with some fizz, Vintage Cava is widely available and is much better than Prosecco. Sparkling French Limoux at Aldi is £9. If only Champagne will do, then Tesco Finest is splendid. If it must be a name, let it be Piper Heidsieck which is on the shelf at £36 but regularly features on promotion, particularly at Sainsburys, where recently it came down to £19 on a buy 6 of anything promotion. Those who are flush will not go wrong with Charles Heidsieck at around £54.

Cheers!

LOCUMS

If you would like to be added to the list of locums published monthly in this Newsletter, 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. Charges realistic rates.
- Elin Dukes - private client/court of protection - contact: elindukeslaw@gmail.com / 07585800258.
- 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

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 [Jeanette Lacy Scott](#) if you are looking for a will or if you want to be part of our lost/missing wills scheme (free of charge for members)

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.