

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY

REPORT OF THE
GENERAL COMMITTEE
FOR 2023/24

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2023/24

President:

Ms M Nagra

Vice-President:

Mr D Dickson

Immediate Past President:

Mr O Maxwell-Jones

Honorary Treasurer:

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

Honorary Secretary:

Ms S O'Sullivan, Pacific House, 126 Dyke Road, Brighton, BN1 3TE

Council Member:

Mr A Bishop, Hove

General Committee:

Mr J. Bradshaw

Mr L Corr

Ms J Hardaway

Ms M Peci

Ms C Rents

Ms E Weir

The following were co-opted onto the Committee:

Mr P W Richards, Ms L Tarrant, Ms. G Tisshaw,

**SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY
REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE FOR 2023/24**

PRESIDENT'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Serving as President of the Sussex Law Society has been an incredible honour and privilege. I hope I have fulfilled this role in a way that makes our members proud. This experience has been immensely rewarding and has come with significant responsibilities. I felt a strong duty to embody the change I wished to see and to demonstrate that success is attainable regardless of our social and economic backgrounds. It is my hope that my tenure has inspired others to follow in my footsteps.

Throughout my term, I attended various local law society events, as well as others organised by The Law Society and the High Sheriff of West Sussex. A memorable highlight was attending the annual Judges' service at Chichester Cathedral, where I proudly wore my solicitor's gown, white collar and tabs. Another poignant moment was participating in the Chattri memorial service in Patcham, honouring Sikh, Hindu and Muslim soldiers from undivided India who lost their lives in World War I, wearing my chain of office and my late mother's pink headscarf.

A standout event during my presidency was the vibrant Bollywood Ball - a truly unforgettable evening filled with colour and joy. It was heartwarming to see so many members come together and I was deeply touched by the standing ovation I received while sharing my journey into law. By telling my story, I aimed to raise awareness about the importance of representation in our profession, which should reflect the diverse society we serve. Embracing diversity and inclusion not only strengthens our profession but also enriches it, allowing us to learn from one another's unique backgrounds.

Another impactful moment was receiving feedback from Chichester University after delivering the opening keynote at their Law Careers Conference. Learning that a group of minority ethnic students—who had been struggling to find their place at university and were contemplating dropping out — had decided to persevere after hearing my story, was truly heartening. It reaffirmed the importance of resilience in the face of adversity.

As my term comes to a close, I want to express my gratitude to the Sussex Law Society committee members for their unwavering support and dedication. I especially thank Immediate Past President Oliver Maxwell-Jones for his invaluable advice and guidance throughout my tenure.

This year's AGM will also mark the final, final farewell of our longest-serving committee member, Jeanette Lacy Scott, whose contributions over the past 30+ years have been unwavering and pivotal to the Society. We will greatly miss her.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our members and friends of the Society for their positive feedback throughout my term. This role has been an amazing journey and as I hand over the baton, I wish my successor great success in the year ahead. It will be a privilege to continue serving as Immediate Past President.

MANJINDER NAGRA

HON SECRETARY'S REPORT

The SLS Committee has met each month this year in the usual way; this has primarily been via Zoom, although an in-person meeting in Brighton and Hove's Council Chamber was a special treat. We have also had an opportunity to catch up in person with members and guests, particularly at the Society's quizzes and the fabulous annual ball at The Grand in June.

The Law Society welcomed Brett Dixon as the newly elected Deputy Vice President, who will become President in 2026.

As ever, there have been a number of matters of importance to our members being debated and discussed. The proposed new TA6 Property Information Form (5th Edition) has been a hot topic, leading to the consultation period being extended by the Law Society. I attended a lively online briefing in July, and subsequently a Special General Meeting aimed at addressing the members' concerns.

The SRA confirmed its agreement in principle to regulate the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX), should CILEX decide to redelegate the regulation of its members to the SRA. The change was first proposed by CILEX in 2022 and has been hotly debated ever since.

The SRA has stated that there are clear public interest benefits to it regulating CILEX members as well as Solicitors. Conversely, the Law Society remains firmly opposed to the proposal. The Legal Services Board and the Law Society would need to approve the regulation change, and the matter remains in consultation. Until then, it is regulatory 'business as usual'!

SLS shall be welcoming two new general committee members and a new Vice President in the upcoming year. The committee is delighted to welcome them and see what the next 12 months have in store in Daniel Dickson's presidential year.

I am standing for Honorary Secretary again in the 2024 AGM, as it has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve alongside my fellow committee members. I am very proud to be part of the Sussex Law Society.

SARAH O'SULLIVAN

HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to present the financial report for the Sussex Law Society for the fiscal year ending 31 August 2024. This report provides an overview of the Society's financial performance, highlighting key areas of income and expenditure, and our overall financial position. The total income for the year was £35,436, a significant increase from £27,246 in the previous year. This growth was primarily driven by:

- Sponsorship Income: £8,415 (up from £4,363)
- Membership Subscriptions: £13,762 (up from £11,525)
- Surplus on Seminars: £8,301 (up from £7,298)
- Surplus on Society Events: £4,958 (up from £4,060)

Total expenditure for the year was £30,276, compared to £27,406 in the previous year. Ultimately, Net Profit for the year was £4,915, a substantial improvement from the net loss of £405 in the previous year.

The Sussex Law Society has demonstrated strong financial performance over the past year, with significant increases in income from sponsorships, memberships, and events. Despite a rise in expenditures, the Society has managed to achieve a healthy net profit and improve its overall financial position. Moving forward, we will continue to focus on maintaining financial stability and exploring opportunities for further growth.

I would like to extend my gratitude to all members, sponsors, and the committee for their continued support and contributions to the Society's success.

OLIVER MAXWELL-JONES

COUNCIL MEMBER'S REPORT

Council

I have now completed my second year as the representative of Sussex on the Law Society Council and it remains a privilege to represent our wonderful County at the Governing body of the Law Society.

I would say that it took me 12 months or so to really understand the role and how the Society works. The various bodies – Officers, Council, Law Society Board, Chief Executive, paid employees and Committees all work together to make the Society function. There are sometimes tensions between them and this represents checks and balances that are important to an organisation of this size. A balance must be struck between the executive getting on with the day-to-day business of running the Society and Council, as representatives of the almost 155,000 practising Solicitors, being sovereign and directing policy.

SGM

This year the Chief Executive and President faced a vote of no confidence at a Special General Meeting in July. Such SGMs are rare, the last one was about a decade ago. The motion was “the meeting has no confidence in the ability of Mr Nick Emmerson, President of the Law Society of England and Wales, and Ian Jeffery, Chief Executive of the Law Society of England and Wales, to properly and effectively represent those members of the Society who undertake conveyancing...” This followed the formulation and implementation of the TA6 conveyancing form. The Law Society responded by suspending the implementation of the form to allow further consultation, which is ongoing.

At the SGM 207 members voted against the motion, 123 voted for and 20 abstained.

This was a good example of the constitution of the Law Society working well. It was clear that a not insignificant group of members felt that there needed to be a pause in mandatory implementation of the form. They exercised their right to requisition the SGM, the Law Society responded and the meeting, at which any member could attend and vote, rejected the no confidence vote.

I know Nick and Ian and I was pleased that the motion failed as I have seen first-hand how hard they have worked over the last year. Hopefully, the issue around the form can be resolved.

Riots

An example of the Law Society at its very best was during the riots in August this year. This culminated in a call on Wednesday 7th August for “patriots” to gather outside a number of named Immigration Law firm offices across the country. The preceding week had seen sickening far right violence and attacks on asylum centres and hotels. Now the intention was to attack the lawyers representing asylum seekers, including an office on Queens Road, Brighton.

There is no doubt that this was an attack on the Rule of Law itself.

Nick Emmerson the President appeared on numerous media outlets that day. Law Society staff made contact with lawyers working in the named firms. There was liaison with the Police.

In the end it wasn't just the Law Society that said enough was enough, but the general public showed its distaste for this violence. In Brighton a huge counter protest gathered to show that Brighton would not tolerate this sort of action and the handful of extremists who identified themselves had to be protected by the police.

It is impossible to dissemble the turn of mood in the general population and the impassioned words of the Law Society President that this was an attack on the Rule of Law but the two came together to face down those wanting to stop lawyers doing their job.

The Rule of Law is a phrase that may sometimes seem remote and aloof, but it really meant something on 7th August when those seeking to intimidate lawyers were faced down.

Judicial Review

The Law Society also showed its mettle in supporting Criminal Defence lawyers by bringing a Judicial Review of the Government's failure to implement in full the conclusion of Lord Bellamy that only an immediate (as at November 2021) increase in legal aid fees of 15% could stem the flood of lawyers leaving this work.

The Law Society substantially won on the JR and the Government was directed to reconsider. Negotiations were ongoing when the general election was called. It is, to say the least, disappointing that the new Government has not so far engaged with this and the Law Society is considering its options, including taking the case back to Court. In the meantime, the numbers of duty solicitors continue to decline, in round terms down from 6,900 to 3,900 in the last 10 years.

The new President is a Criminal Defence Lawyer and is all over the issues and will put the case passionately for the profession and, I am sure, direct such legal action as is necessary to get the Government to comply with the JR ruling.

Coming year

The new objectives of our new President, Richard Atkinson are:

1. Justice Matters - A well-functioning democracy depends on the rule of law and access to justice.
2. Pride in the Profession.
3. Celebrating 200 Years of the Law Society in 2025.

I am sure that we can all get behind these objectives.

Please do not hesitate to contact me in the coming year if there are matters that I might be able to raise in Council.

ANDREW BISHOP

REPORT OF THE CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Since my last report the Society has run 16 webinars and 1 face to face course on residential and commercial property, civil litigation, compliance, marketing, social media, climate change and private client topics, including covering the important changes in the Leasehold & Freehold Reform Act 2024 and the new intermediate track in civil litigation cases. We are conscious that our training programme rarely includes topics specifically for family and criminal lawyers and little for private client lawyers, but we are up against strong competition from other professional organisations providing training such as the FLBA, STEP and the Criminal Law Solicitors' Association to name a few. That is not to say we are not open to suggestions that members might have for training in these areas, particularly if the need is not being met elsewhere and we encourage you to contact us if this is the case. We are always more than happy to respond to members' ideas for topics and speakers and include them in the programme so please don't hesitate to get in touch.

In addition to the mainstream webinar programme referred to above, we have had great success this year with our 2 series of lunchtime compliance webinars. Each series comprises 8 one-hour lunchtime sessions held every 2 weeks on some of the most important areas of compliance for law firms, including 2 quarterly updates looking at all the new releases from the SRA and the regulations and guidance together with some of the key news items to learn lessons from. Joanna Morris is an exceptional presenter who provides clear guidance and offers very practical tips about how to keep you on the right track! The pricing for these webinars is extremely competitive at just £30 + VAT per session or £200 + VAT for the whole series and a recording of each webinar is available on request to all those who register. A further series is planned for 2025, starting in March so watch this space!

Apart from another compliance series we already have some interesting webinars lined up for 2025 including 'An Introduction to working with AI', 'How to Deal with Complaints', 'Carbon & Net Zero 101 for the Legal Sector – Why Should you Care?' EDI Training' and the annual updates in Civil Litigation, Anti Money Laundering, Residential and Commercial Property. We will continue to offer firms very competitive quotes for training whole departments or their whole firm so don't forget to ask!

Please continue to share the information we send out on individual sessions so that it reaches a wider audience and keep checking the monthly newsletter and the website to stay up to date with what's going on.

Finally, thanks to all of you who continue to support the Society's training programme and to Groundsure for their support of our property webinars through the Property sponsorship package.

JEANETTE LACY SCOTT

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL & NETWORKING EVENTS COMMITTEE

We held our 2023 AGM in early November upstairs at the Pump House in Brighton, with a convivial group of members staying on to dine together afterwards celebrating another successful year and having lively discussions about plans for the year ahead. Our new President, Manjinder Nagra, had said in her acceptance speech that 'inclusion and diversity' was to be her theme for the year. Little did we know then that this would morph to include dancing along with spectacular Bhangra Dancers 'Rangle Punjab De' (who led in the President's top table of

guests) accompanied by Dholi, in a ballroom exploding with colour at the Society's annual charity ball in June! Based on her love of film, Manjinder's theme was 'Bollywood' and the optional dress code to support the theme was enthusiastically embraced by many of the 240 + attendees, which was indeed a joy to see. In all my years of organizing this event I have never seen such an engagement on the dance floor! It was a truly memorable evening, enhanced by a very moving and thought-provoking speech by our President. The feedback we received afterwards was incredible and uplifting, making organizing events like these so worthwhile.

Sponsorship for the Ball from [1 Crown Office Row](#), [Galloways Accounting](#) and [reviewsolicitors](#) meant not only that we were able to keep ticket prices down as much as possible and still enjoy things like fantastic live music, drinks receptions and the traditional photo booth, but that we could also decorate the Empress Suite at the Grand with vibrant, clashing colours to fit with the theme. We are extremely thankful for their support.

Our Biannual Quizzes in the Palm Court Restaurant on Brighton Pier have been even more popular than ever this year! In both April and October, we had long waiting lists of firms desperate to have a chance to take home the coveted trophy! But there can only be one winning team each time. In April, 'Californian Dream' from Old Bailey Solicitors had sufficient combined wit and wisdom to ward off their 134 competitors while in October, 'Hope's Eternal Spring', one of the teams from 1 Crown Office Row, took the winning spot and with it the trophy! Winners and losers all enjoyed fabulous fish and chips, a fabulous atmosphere and a beautiful sunset on both occasions. We are so grateful to [1 Crown Office Row](#) for sponsoring these events so generously.

The social events this year have raised over £3600 for the President's chosen charity, [The BME Black and Minority Young People's Project](#), a youth project for young people of colour, aged 11-25, who live, study or work in Brighton and Hove, East and West Sussex.

JEANETTE LACY SCOTT

SUSSEX JUNIOR LAWYERS DIVISION

It has been a busy year for the Sussex Junior Lawyers' Division behind the scenes, with a lot of time and effort spent modernising the JLD. My thanks to current and outgoing Committee members for all their hard work and dedication in achieving this goal.

This year marks a significant milestone in the history of the JLD, as we have now drafted and adopted (what I believe may be) our first Constitution. This foundational document will serve as the bedrock for the structure and governance of the JLD moving forward, providing a clear framework of our function and ensuring we are well-organised and effective in representing our membership. This marks an important step in modernising the JLD and codifying our objectives.

Part of this modernising effort has involved streamlining our processes to ensure the JLD is more responsive, as well as providing greater accessibility for our members. Our new website is almost ready to go live at www.sussexjld.co.uk and we have lots planned for informative articles and showcases. We can also be found on the usual social media channels @_sussexjld

Our social events have also allowed our members to network with their peers. We've received great feedback from participants and look forward to implementing this into the JLD roadmap.

As always, none of this would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our committee members. I would again like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to both current and outgoing Committee members for their contributions. Your commitment has been invaluable, and your efforts have made a lasting impact on the JLD.

We look forward to building on this year's successes and continuing to serve the junior lawyers of Sussex in the year ahead.

LAWRENCE CORR

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY GOLF SOCIETY

It is nearly a hundred years since The Sussex Law Society Golf Society ("SLSGS") was formed by a group of solicitors practising in Brighton. At that time Worthing and Eastbourne solicitors had their own golf societies and

they competed with each other. In time, the popularity of SLSGS advanced northwards and many solicitors practising in Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill Hassocks and surrounding towns also joined. We held annual competitions with Kent and Hampshire Law Societies. Judges and barristers practising who appeared at the Lewes and Chichester Assizes and Quarter Sessions were often invited to participate in our matches and all had an enjoyable time. In its heyday, the SLSGS boasted upwards of 60 to 70 member firms in Sussex.

Cassels Cup

In 1931, Mr. Recorder James Cassels, sitting at the Lewes Assizes proposed that SLSGS arrange a match for ALL the users of the Court i.e. barristers, barristers' clerks, solicitors and their managing clerks, policemen, prison governor and officers, probation workers and all other staff employed in the courts. He donated a cup called the Cassels Cup.

The event was a great success. Apart from a lull during WW2, the SLSGS has held an annual competition in honour of Recorder Cassels and the names of many prominent practitioners are engraved on this historic prize.

Other annual competitions held by SLSGS are no less important.

The Necessity Bowl

In 1951, solicitor David Bunker of Bunker & Co of Brighton arranged a SLSGS match and donated a prize known as The Necessity Bowl – with the far-sighted caption “Necessity Knows No Law”. This is a wonderful trophy and names of many prominent solicitors - past and present - are engraved on this popular cup.

Other competitions

Until a few years ago, we used to hold an inter society competition involving Law Societies from Sussex, Kent and Hampshire and the prize was a cup known as “The Perkins Cup” donated by James Perkins, the senior partner of Mayo & Perkins of Eastbourne. In recent years it has become harder for some of the other societies to raise a team, with declining younger members and travel becoming harder for the older members.

The SLSGS decided to replace The Perkins Cup with a new cup called “The Mea Culpa Cup” but have not arranged this competition for some time for lack of support.

Our captain – Michael Harris – holds a match annually at Seaford Head. It is very popular and a great day out.

We used to hold at least one match against the Banks when some eager diehards of the banking profession (mostly retired) loved to compete with us. Similarly, there is often a challenge from the Estate Agents and we enjoyed the thought of beating them! Regrettably these matches have been discontinued as bank managers have ceased exist and estate agents are just too busy!!

It is a sad reflection of our times that in recent years the younger members of the profession find it difficult to take time to participate in our matches. Perhaps it has become so much harder for lawyers to make a living and to support a high mortgage and raise a family. I hope that they will consider it worthwhile to spend a few hours each year to support our historic Society and get some fun from playing golf and enjoying time with other lawyers.

I hope the above inspires the readers of the Sussex Law Society Annual Report to join our Golf Society and to participate in our very friendly matches, whatever the standard of your golf.

Sadly, for health reasons I have had to retire as Secretary.

Our new Secretary in 2025 is Bob Mayfield.

His email: bobmayfield111@googlemail.com

PAUL SAGOO

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY
HELD ON THURSDAY, 9TH NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6.00 PM
UPSTAIRS AT THE PUMP HOUSE, 46 MARKET STREET, BRIGHTON, BN1 1HH**

Present: The President, and 13 members.

1. Apologies were received from 5 members whose names were read at the meeting.
2. The minutes of the AGM held on 3rd November 2022 were accepted as a true record. Proposed by Ms Tarrant and seconded by Ms Hardaway with all present in favour.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Report of the General Committee for 2022/23 and Annual Accounts for the year ending 31/08/2023

It was proposed that the above report and accounts be accepted. Proposer: Ms E Weir. Seconded by: Ms M Nagra with all present in favour.

5. Election of Officers

Formal elections then took place as follows:

President: **Ms M Nagra** (proposed by Mr O Maxwell-Jones and seconded by Ms Tarrant with all present in favour)

Vice-President: **Mr D Dickson** (proposed by Ms J Hardaway and seconded by Mr L Corr with all present in favour)

Hon. Secretary: **Ms S O'Sullivan** (proposed by Ms E Richards and seconded by Mr D Dickson with all present in favour)

Hon. Treasurer: **Mr O Maxwell-Jones** (proposed by Ms E Weir and seconded by Mr J Bradshaw with all present in favour)

6. Election of General Committee Members:

Ms M Peci (proposed by Mr J King and seconded by Mr O Maxwell-Jones with all present in favour).

Ms J Hardaway (proposed by Ms M Nagra and seconded by Mr P Richards)

Ms E Weir (proposed by Mr A Bishop and seconded by Mr J Bradshaw)

7. President's Address

Ms Nagra firstly thanked Mr Maxwell- Jones for stepping up for a second term as President. She expressed her gratitude to committee members and to Mrs Lacy Scott for their support throughout her time as Vice President. She said it was a complete honour to be elected as the Society's President and she hoped that she could do the post justice and do as good a job as those in the past had done.

Ms Nagra said that she felt it was her duty to take on the role as she wanted to be the change she wanted to see. She had worked in Brighton and Hove for 25 years and, to her knowledge, there had never been a President from an ethnic minority. She said that she wanted to break down barriers and to lead by example in her year of office.

Ms Nagra said that she would be supporting the [The Black & Minority Ethnic Young People's Project](#) throughout the year as his nominated President's charity.

8. Any Other Business

None.