

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2024/25

President:

Mr D Dickson

Vice-President:

Ms A Arnold

Immediate Past President:

Ms M Nagra

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 L Corr

Ms J Hardaway

Ms M Peci

Ms C DeCecco

Mr M Bishop

The following were co-opted onto the Committee:

Mr P W Richards, Ms L Tarrant, Ms E Weir

SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY
REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE FOR 2024/2025

PRESIDENT'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

It has been one of the greatest honours of my career to date to serve as President of the Sussex Law Society (SLS). I have enjoyed each and every day in this role and feel immensely proud to have served the local legal community in this role.

At the commencement of my term, I spoke of my aim to support the training and development of our junior lawyers. I felt that I was well placed to achieve this; having served as a Past President of the Sussex Junior Lawyers Division (SJLD) and being the youngest President of the SLS. I am delighted to see the SJLD thriving and it is wonderful to see their events being so well attended. Whilst celebrating the progress of our junior lawyers, I am acutely aware of the challenges they continue to face. I highlighted at the outset of my term those challenges including recent changes to the training and qualification process, pressures on their costs of living, and an increasingly remote workplace. More recently, the case of Mazur has introduced a great deal of uncertainty for many members of our profession who are still in the early stages of their careers. It is therefore vital that we continue to support our junior lawyers to ensure they feel valued as the future of our profession, and I will continue to champion their cause as the Society's Immediate Past President.

Throughout my term, I have attended several events on behalf of the SLS. Those have included supporting other local law societies in Hampshire, Chichester, Worthing, Eastbourne, Hastings and Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & District. I have also had the pleasure of attending the Judges' Services events in East and West Sussex which are held to mark the start of the 'legal year' and to recognise all those who contribute to the justice system. Finally, I have attended events at our local Universities where I had the opportunity to speak directly to law students about their future careers.

In addition, I was pleased to represent the SLS at our own events; the Spring and Autumn quiz nights and of course the memorable Great Gatsby Ball in June. I was particularly pleased to be joined by my family and my partner at the Ball and to give them an insight into our great profession of which I feel so proud to be a part of. The events were all great fun and really well attended; their success would not be possible without the kind support of our sponsors and to whom I pass on my sincere thanks for their involvement with our Society.

Each of the events were held in support of my chosen charity; Rockinghorse Children's Charity. Rockinghorse is a fantastic local charity who support sick and disabled children across Sussex. They are based at The Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital and The Trevor Mann Baby Unit in Brighton, and across all the specialist children's wards and baby units through Sussex. The reason for my choice of charity was simple: I wanted to thank them for the care and support that they provided to me and my family following my premature birth. Thanks to the generosity of our

members, we were able to raise £4,690.40 for them during my term. I was invited to visit The Royal Alexandra and I saw first hand the incredible work being done; your support really has and will continue to make a difference.

None of the above would have been possible without the support of the wonderful Committee of the SLS. I thank each and every one of them for giving up their time to support our Society and for sharing their experience and wisdom. I would also like to say an additional 'thank you' to our new Operations Manager, Alice Wylie. Alice has been with us for the past 12 months now and has been a wonderful successor to Jeanette Lacy-Scott who previously worked with the Society for over 30 years.

Finally, I wish to pass on my thanks to all of our members. Whether you have read our monthly newsletters, signed up for our training and development webinars, attended our events or followed the work of the Society on our website or via our social media pages; all of us on the Committee are here to represent your interests and to ensure that the local legal community is as strong as it can be. I wish my successor well and look forward to supporting their work over the next 12 months.

Daniel Dickson

HONORARY SECRETARY REPORT

The SLS Committee has met via Zoom on a monthly basis in the usual way. Our President hosted an in-person meeting in Brighton and it is always a pleasure to get together for the AGM. We have had superb opportunities to catch up in person with members, sponsors, and guests at the ever-popular quizzes and this year's glamorous annual ball at The Grand in June.

There have been numerous special events this year, which will have been referred to in other reports – including fellow societies' annual dinners, the Junior Lawyers' Division events, the High Sheriff's Judges' Services for both East & West Sussex, and the High Sheriff of West Sussex's summer reception.

We have been delighted to continue a varied CPD offering across our members' key practice areas, throughout the year.

The Law Society welcomed Mark Evans as its 181st President in October 2025, whose themes for his tenure are (a) a profession fit for the future; (b) championing our members; and (c) supporting solicitor wellbeing. In addition, Sarah Rapson has been appointed as the SRA's new Chief Executive, with Paul Philip stepping down after 12 years in the role.

It has been an interesting year from a regulatory perspective, not least with the SRA ramping up its enforcement of anti-money laundering (AML) compliance. Interestingly, the government announced just last month that the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) will be taking over responsibility for this from the SRA – the commentary around this has been lively to say the least.

It remains to be seen how this will impact policies, procedures, and requirements for law firms. SLS is committed to working with our members and the Law Society in navigating this new regulatory landscape.

SLS committee is looking forward to supporting Angela Arnold as President for 2025/26.

I am standing for Honorary Secretary once again in the 2025 AGM. I am proud to be a part of the brilliant work that Sussex Law Society does in nurturing community spirit amongst members and neighboring societies, not to mention raising vital funds for charities with a connection to the area.

I would like to thank my committee colleagues for their dedication and being a pleasure to work with; to thank our sponsors for their generous and vital support; and to thank our members, who are truly at the heart of what SLS do. Here is to another fantastic year ahead.

SARAH O' SULLIVAN

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

I'm pleased to report that the Society achieved a net profit of £12,290 this year, up from £4,915.00 in 2024. This reflects continued financial resilience and member engagement.

Key income streams included:

- Membership subscriptions: £16,804.00;
- Sponsorship income: £13,477; and
- Event and seminar surplus: £8,482.00 (combined).

Expenditure was reduced to £26,473.00, with notable savings in clerical assistance and printing. The introduction of wages (£9,263.00) reflects a shift in staffing structure.

The Society's net assets now stand at £43,490.00, supported by a healthy bank balance of £52,283.00 and low liabilities.

These results reflect the continued value members place on the Society's work and the efforts of those who contribute to its success. 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 MEMBERS REPORT

Reporting period: November 2024 – October 2025

Overview

Across the reporting year Council met formally in December, March, July and October, with additional special meetings (May – DVP hustings and rule of law; July – further SRA assurance session).

This year was also dominated by Bicentenary events during 2025 and heightened scrutiny of the SRA following Axiom Ince/SSB issues. The implementation of a revised TA6 form occupied Council at the beginning of the period and more latterly the Mazur decision.

Presidential & officer cycle

- **President** at start of reporting year: **Richard Atkinson** (criminal defence practitioner)
 - significant external engagement work (Asia, Brussels, bilateral work with Scotland/NII/Ireland)
 - lobbying on judicial representation of solicitors
- **New 2025 officer team appointed October AGM**
 - President - **Mark Evans**
 - Vice President – **Brett Dixon**
 - Deputy Vice President – **Dana Denis-Smith**
- major theme for the 2025–26 presidential year – **solicitor wellbeing / mental health**

Key policy / representational work considered by Council

Civil legal aid – support for MoJ proposals (January consultation) but Council stressed this was a partial step – further investment needed across domestic abuse / social care advice.

Criminal courts review (Leveson) – Council opposed creation of a new court structure to address backlog. Advocated: diversion where appropriate, data sharing, effective remote hearings, structured listings.

Rule of Law – Council session 7 May – full Council devoted to rule-of-law threats, domestic and international. Clear focus on TLS’ international advocacy role (e.g. Turkey – imprisoned lawyers).

Client money / SRA client account consultation – TLS strongly opposed abolition of client accounts. Council pressed instead for improved SRA risk monitoring and re-instatement of annual accountant’s reports.

TA6 reforms – following significant pushback from conveyancers, mandatory use of 5th edition TA6 paused; consultation run via 2CV; new two-form solution now adopted:

- TA6 6th edition mandatory from March 2026
- optional MI form

SRA assurance – section 28 Legal Services Act 2007

This became the most constitutionally significant governance issue of the year.

Following the Axiom Ince failures and LSB criticism, Council concluded in July that the SRA had **not given sufficient evidence** to enable Council to be **sufficiently assured** under s.28.

On 22 July 2025 TLS formally notified the SRA of this outcome.

This is the first time Council has issued a formal non-assurance finding since the Legal Services Act of 2007.

Council has requested continuing disclosure of all SRA reporting to the LSB on improvements to its oversight, especially of accumulator firms.

Bicentenary

2025 was TLS' 200th year. Numerous regional and international events were planned and delivered, including one in Brighton.

Internal governance / AGM

AGM (Chancery Lane, 8 October) centred on the trigger threshold for SGMs.

- Council motion to raise SGM threshold to 0.5% of membership (about 1,000 members) – **lost narrowly**
- President exercised prerogative to put matter to full membership ballot – members will be asked to vote

Attendance & participation

- I have been in attendance at all full Council meetings and special sessions
- vote cast for Sussex in DVP election and on other matters
- I am a member of the Scrutiny and Performance Review Committee, a committee that ensures, on behalf of Council, that sub committees of Council, for example the membership committee, exercise their delegated powers in accordance with the constitution.
- I delivered the SPRC presentation to Council in October in the Chair's absence

In summary – it has been a year dominated by bicentenary preparations, substantial constitutional work around SRA assurance under LSA 2007 and continuing engagement with access to justice issues (civil & criminal).

ANDREW BISHOP,

LAW SOCIETY

REPORT OF THE CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Since I took over as Operations Manager in February 2025, The Sussex Law Society have run 29 webinars, 1 face to face seminar and 3 Managing Partner Round Table discussions. These courses have covered residential and commercial conveyancing, civil litigation, family, private client, compliance, LinkedIn, Climate Change, AI, DNA testing and much more. The society generally has a lot of property and compliance courses throughout the year but we are making an effort to cover all areas of law and staying up to date and relevant with reactive topics such as Standish Vs Standish, monthly AI updates and soon to be a Mazur update.

Earlier in the year a survey was distributed to all members to ask for suggestions of topics and some of these have since been booked and well attended. Suggestions from our recent feedback form have also been booked in for 2026.

As well as our online webinars, we recently held an in person half day conveyancing seminar at The Amex Stadium sponsored by X-Press Legal services. This saw 30 SLS members from a variety of firms come together to listen to Stephen Desmond and AI speaker Geoff Davies followed by networking and lunch. It was a hugely successful event and we already have dates booked in for further property and private client courses in 2026.

We will once again be hosting the fantastic Compliance speaker Jo Morris who will run her 8-part series in the new year to keep everyone up to date on everything from AML, SRA updates and much more. There courses are always competitively priced and discounts are always available for multiple bookings, don't forget to ask!

As a committee, we are pleased to have established our Managing Partners Round Table discussions this year. So far we have covered topics such as AI, Insurance and Compliance. The feedback we have received so far has been fantastic and we hope more of our firms managing partners will sign up to knowledge share.

In addition to our CPD courses, we have also established a scholarship programme with The Law Training Centre who plans to give one Sussex Law Society member £2000 towards their Notary Training course. Details can be found on our website.

Thank you to our Property sponsor Groundsure and our Private Client sponsors, Clive Emson Auctioneers for their continued support of our education programme. Thank you also to our regular speakers and of course, everyone who attends our courses, asks questions and listens.

ALICE WYLIE

REPORT OF THE SCIOAL & NETWORKING EVENTS COMMITTEE

Former Operations Manager Jeanette Lacy Scott held the SLS AGM along with the committee and society members in November 2024 at The Grand Central Pub in Brighton. Daniel Dickson of Dean Wilson LLP was sworn in as 'the youngest President of the SLS' since its inception in 1860. Mr Dickson's hope for the year was to promote a relationship between the SLS and the Sussex Juniors Lawyers Division as well as continue his ongoing work with Sussex Universities Law Students. Mr. Dickson was also keen to raise funds and awareness for Rockinghorse Children's Charity, a cause close to his heart and one he has written and spoken about.

The society's annual ball was a sellout hit with over 270 of Sussex's firms, solicitors and colleagues coming together for a 'Great Gatsby' themed evening. The night saw everyone embrace the theme fully with sequins and feathers galore! The dancefloor was filled with vintage tunes, and the casino tables were full of attendees gambling with their coveted 'Dan Dollars!'. A highlight for many was the 360 photobooth with many funny videos resulting from the night. A massive thank you to our loyal sponsors 1 Crown Office Row and new sponsors X-Press Legal

Services for sponsoring the event. Without their support, evenings such as these would not be possible.

We also held our usual Spring and Autumn quizzes as the Palace Pier's Palm Court Restaurant, sponsored by 1 Crown Office Row. Both events were sellout with over 8 teams on the wait list for Autumn's evening. Autumn's evening sold out in a record 8 days so please keep your eyes peeled for the announcement of the next Spring dates; it's never one to miss. There is always delicious fish and chips, socialising and competitive spirit and we hope to run 3 events next year rather than 2 given how popular they are. Congratulations to DMH Stallard and Bate & Albon for your victories this year!

Before the year ends, we have a collaborative social event with the Sussex Junior Lawyers Division at Brighton's Painting Pottery Cafe to get into the festive spirit by painting Christmas baubles. Thank you to X-Press Legal Service who will be providing beer, wine and soft drinks for the event.

Social events this year have raised £4,690.40 for the President's chosen charity, Rockinghorse Children's Charity who fund and deliver life-saving equipment, specialist projects and enhanced services for sick babies, children and young people throughout Sussex. The charity have been blown away by the amount our society has been able to raise so thank you to everyone who has bought raffle tickets, donated prizes and bought fun money for the annual ball's casino, your contribution will make a massive difference.

ALICE WYLIE

SUSSEX JUNIOR LAWYERS DIVISION

It has been a busy yet rewarding year for the Sussex Junior Lawyers Division. Our focus has been on building a strong and supportive community of junior lawyers across Sussex, and we are proud of the progress we have made.

We have organised a wide variety of events to bring our members together and support their professional development. These have included pub quizzes, socials, employability workshops, and cross-industry networking events. We have also partnered with businesses in the local community to expand our members' networks. We continue working on developing further partnerships to support our mission.

We have launched a monthly newsletter to keep our members informed and engaged, and we host recurring monthly events that offer consistent opportunities for connection and growth. Our monthly Parkrun meetups have become a popular fixture, promoting wellbeing and informal networking.

Behind the scenes, we have implemented new systems to improve organisation and efficiency. We have redefined the structure of our committee before the upcoming AGM to ensure we are well-equipped to meet the needs of our growing membership and to deliver our initiatives effectively.

Our mentorship scheme has been a success. It has provided mentees with valuable insight into the legal profession and has offered mentors the opportunity to develop their leadership and coaching skills. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are proud of the impact the programme has made. Together with the mentorship scheme, this forms a key part of our long-term vision to support, guide, and empower junior legal professionals from university through to qualification.

We have also strengthened our relationships with both the University of Brighton and the University of Sussex, and we have recruited student representatives to help us better support aspiring lawyers at the earliest stages of their careers. These connections have helped us broaden our reach, ensure that our initiatives are inclusive and accessible, and futureproof the committee by raising awareness among the next generation of junior lawyers. Together with the mentorship scheme, this forms a key part of our long-term vision to support, guide, and empower junior legal professionals from university through to qualification and beyond. We have seen a significant increase in interest from members who wish to join the committee, which is a testament to the strength and appeal of our community. At the same time, we are saying goodbye to a few committee members who are stepping down. Their contributions have been appreciated, and they will be missed.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all committee members, past and present, for their dedication and hard work. We are also grateful to the wider junior legal community in Sussex for their continued involvement and support.

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

OLGA WIERZCHOWSKA, VICE PRESIDENT

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY
HELD ON THURSDAY, 7TH NOVEMBER 2024 AT 6.00 PM
THE GRAND CENTRAL, 29-30 SURREY STREET, BRIGHTON, BN1 3PA**

Present: The President, and 15 members.

1. Apologies were received from 9 members whose names were read at the meeting.
2. The minutes of the AGM held on 9th November, 2023 were accepted as a true record.
Proposed by Ms E Weir and seconded by Ms S O’Sullivan with all present in favour.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Report of the General Committee for 2023/24 and Annual Accounts for the year ending 31/08/2024

It was proposed that the above report and accounts be accepted. Proposer: Mr R Tall.
Seconded by: Mr P Drake with all present in favour.

5. Outgoing President’s Address

Ms Nagra began by giving thanks to her “brilliant and supportive” committee members. She said that she had been quite apprehensive taking on the role, but it had turned into something she hadn’t expected which had been really enjoyable. The main focus for her Presidency had been diversity and representation in Sussex and she had shared her personal journey to highlight some of the obstacles she had faced in her career. This generated a lot of interest and as a result others were encouraged to share their stories. She had also focused on raising the Society’s profile which she hoped would be built on going forward.

Ms Nagra said that Mr Maxwell-Jones had arranged for Past President Pin Badges to be made as a small token of appreciation for all those who had served as the Society’s Presidents. It was agreed that a pin would be presented to the outgoing President by the year’s new President at all future AGMs.

Ms Nagra concluded by saying that this was Mrs Lacy Scott’s last AGM as she would be leaving the Society in February 2025 and she wished her a happy retirement. She welcomed her successor Ms Wylie on board.

6. Election of Officers

Formal elections then took place as follows:

- President:** **Mr D Dickson** (proposed by Ms Nagra and seconded by Mr Bradshaw with all present in favour)
- Vice-President:** **Ms A Arnold** (proposed by Mr M Wright and seconded by Mr I Best with all present in favour)
- Hon. Secretary:** **Ms S O’Sullivan** (proposed by Mr D Dickson and seconded by Ms J Hardaway with all present in favour)
- Hon. Treasurer:** **Mr O Maxwell-Jones** (proposed by Ms E Weir and seconded by Ms C Rents with all present in favour)

7. Election of General Committee Members:

Mr M Bishop (proposed by Ms C Rents and seconded by Mr R Hayler with all present in favour).

Ms C DeCecco (proposed by Ms G Tisshaw and seconded by Ms V Eunson-Hickey)

8. President’s Address

Mr Dickson thanked Ms Nagra for a fantastic year and for all she had done for the Society.

He said that he had recently attended the Past President’s Dinner and was the youngest President since the Society was founded in 1860. His focus for the year would therefore be on young solicitors and supporting the work of the Sussex Junior Lawyers Division with Mr Corr the Sussex JLD’s President.

His chosen charity for the year was Rockinghorse.

9. Any Other Business

None.