OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2025/26

President:

Ms A Arnold

Acting Vice-President:

Ms S Mouhim

Immediate Past President:

Mr D Dickson

Honorary Treasurer:

Mr O Maxwell-Jones

Honorary Secretary:

Ms S O'Sullivan

Council Member:

Mr A Bishop

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 2025/2026

PRESIDENT'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

As my year as President of Sussex Law Society draws to a close, I reflect on my work to fulfil my objectives and commitment to promoting the Society and supporting the profession through mentoring and leadership, with the strong support of a great committee.

My priority has been to meet our members' needs through a forward-looking, dynamic Society. Introducing the trainee spotlight has helped encourage those who may shape the future of our committee, profession, and beyond.

Closer collaboration with the Sussex Junior Lawyers Division (SJLD) was a deliberate priority. Together, we developed our Mentoring Scheme, which will continue beyond my tenure. I take this opportunity to thank the SJLD on their efforts as they are the committee of the future.

The increase in sponsorship and membership requests has been overwhelming. This support helps the Society deliver community initiatives through quiz nights, padel board and snooker events, bringing us together through friendly competition. Giving back to the community we serve has been central to these events, reflecting an admirable generosity.

The annual summer Ball celebrated our diversity and my heritage, giving me the opportunity to share the richness of my culture. I am grateful for the warm reception from all attendees, including civic leaders, judges and representatives from law enforcement.

We took part in Pride for the first time and supported charities that raise awareness of people whose voices often go unheard. Rockinghorse Children's Charity, Clock Tower Sanctuary and Southern Hospice Group support people with different needs in our community. It was important to me that each group was recognised and supported through donations.

These activities demonstrated our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion across both ethnic and social backgrounds, affirming that inclusion is central to the Society's history and future.

To the committee that have supported me through this journey, thank you for your support and contributions in supporting my ideas and bringing this together as we have now launched a new website, which embodies all we do in one place.

A special thanks goes to Alice Wylie, who has been able to pivot (sometimes at short notice), and she is key to supporting and bringing all our events together and going above and beyond.

Finally, I wish to thank all the members who have supported our Society and put forward contributions through webinars, suggested event ideas and I wish my successor great success and our new committee the best years to come.

Angela Arnold

HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

The SLS Committee has continued to hold monthly online meetings, and we are looking forward to members coming together for this year's AGM.

There have been many (often sold-out) events which give our members, sponsors, stakeholders, and professional friends the opportunity to connect, network, learn, and support local charities.

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

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

Brett Dixon became the 182nd President of the Law Society this month, and the key themes for the year ahead are (a) modernisation of civil justice; (b) adoption of AI and legal technology; and (c) improving access to joining the profession.

There have been too many legal developments to explore here, and it has been another interesting year in the regulatory sphere. Just some of the headlines include:

- The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) is now revising its hotly-contested position on separating the COLP and COFA compliance roles within law firms after lobbying from individuals and groups.

- The SME & Boutique Law Firm Alliance was formed as an independent collective aiming to represent smaller and boutique law firms in relation to regulatory and policy decisions.

- News is still awaited on the take-over of anti-money laundering (AML) compliance by Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

SLS remains committed to keeping our members informed and maintaining our strong link to The Law Society to support members in this ever-evolving area.

After four years on the committee and two years as Honorary Secretary, I am standing as Vice President in the upcoming AGM to support the President for the year ahead.

No matter the outcome of the vote, I am proud to contribute to the superb work that Sussex Law Society does in providing learning and resources to our members; to putting on events that bring the local legal and professional community together; and raising funds for charities that look after people here in Sussex, and who need support more than ever.

I would like to thank:

- the committee for another year of great work;
- our members, for whom that work is for; and
- our sponsors for their generous and vital support, which enables SLS to support our members and our wider community.

Here is to the year ahead being a fantastic one!

Sarah O'Sullivan
Honorary Secretary

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to report that the Society remains in a strong and stable financial position as at 31 August 2026, despite recording a small deficit of £363 for the year. Net assets stand at £44,324,

compared with £44,687 in the previous year, and the Society continues to hold healthy cash balances of £52,987.

Total income for the year was £30,900. Whilst sponsorship income and membership subscriptions were lower than in the previous year, this was substantially offset by a strong performance from the Society's seminar programme, which generated a surplus of £7,608. Society events broadly broke even during the year, with a modest net loss of £359.

Expenditure increased in certain areas as the Society continued to invest in the support and development of its activities. Higher administration and clerical support costs, together with investment in website development, advertising, insurance and training, contributed to the reduction in the annual surplus achieved in previous years. These costs reflect the Committee's commitment to maintaining and improving the services provided to members.

The balance sheet remains robust. The Society's cash reserves increased slightly during the year, and overall reserves remain well above those held two years ago. This provides a solid financial foundation from which the Society can continue to deliver educational programmes, networking opportunities, and support for the legal profession across Sussex.

In summary, the Society remains financially secure, continues to hold substantial reserves, has maintained strong cash balances, and has delivered its programme during the year with only a modest reduction in accumulated funds.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank our members, sponsors, seminar speakers, and supporters for their continued commitment to the Society. Their support enables us to maintain a resilient financial position while continuing to invest in activities that benefit our members throughout the Society's region.

COUNCIL MEMBERS REPORT

It has been a busy and sometimes challenging year at the Law Society, with major issues affecting the profession, from regulation and the future of legal education to artificial intelligence, access to justice and the wellbeing of solicitors.

As your Council Member, my role is to represent Sussex at national level, contribute to Law Society policy and ensure that members have opportunities to make their voices heard.

Representing Sussex and shaping policy

I have attended Council meetings at Chancery Lane, participated in the Society's strategic planning and represented Sussex at Local Law Societies meetings.

At February's Strategic Planning Event, I contributed to discussions on justice and the rule of law, and on ensuring that Law Society membership delivers genuine value. Council's wider priorities include supporting firms with technology, promoting growth, improving access to justice and strengthening professional wellbeing.

I have been prominent in contributing to the Societies' opposition to restrictions on jury trial. The abandonment of the Bench (intermediate) Court is a partial victory but there is more work to be done as the Government Bill still proposes the removal of a Defendant's right to elect jury trial in either way matters.

I have participated in Council's scrutiny of the SRA and the Law Society's own governance and finances, including presenting the Scrutiny and Performance Review Committee's report in the Chair's absence at the October 2025 Council meeting.

Standing up for solicitors
Regulation has been a recurring concern, particularly the increasing costs and administrative burdens facing smaller firms.

A significant example was the SRA's proposals restricting firm owners from undertaking COLP and COFA compliance roles. Following strong representations and lobbying by the Law Society, the SRA paused implementation to reconsider its approach. This demonstrated the importance of the Society challenging its regulator on behalf of practitioners.

Council also scrutinised practising certificate fees, regulatory failures highlighted by the collapse of SSB Group, and proposals to transfer anti-money-laundering supervision to the FCA.

The Law Society is also firmly opposed to the proposal to take a portion of interest received on client accounts. This proposal would undermine the profitability of many firms.

The future of the profession
The Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) featured prominently. Council examined concerns about examination costs, pass rates, accessibility, professional ethics and social mobility. The Law Society successfully lobbied to retain government funding for solicitor apprenticeships aged 16–21 and continued pressing the SRA for greater transparency and improvements to the SQE. Amendments to the exams have recently been announced giving candidates additional time per answer and partially blocking subjects together for each of the two sessions.

Artificial intelligence was another major subject. At our May meeting, I contributed to discussions on the opportunities and risks of AI, including accuracy, confidentiality, legal privilege and professional responsibility. The Law Society is developing updated guidance to help firms navigate this rapidly changing technology.

Justice, wellbeing and governance
Access to justice and the rule of law remain central priorities, particularly amid concerns about court delays, legal aid and proposals affecting jury trials.

Council also examined the pressures on solicitors' wellbeing. A Law Society survey found that 38% of respondents had experienced severe or extreme work-related stress. Supporting healthier working environments is now a strategic priority.

There were important governance developments too. Following debate about the cost of Special General Meetings, members voted to increase the threshold required to requisition one from 100 members to 0.5% of membership.

Keeping Sussex involved
Through my monthly reports, I have encouraged members to participate in Council elections, consultations and the Law Society's *Get Involved* programme. I also represented Sussex at national meetings of local law societies.
On a lighter note, I joined the Law Society team in September's Bar v Bench charity run, helping support an event which raised over £25,000 for the London Legal Support Trust. We narrowly lost to the Bar!

It remains a privilege to represent Sussex. I shall continue to ensure that the concerns of practising solicitors are heard nationally. Please do contact me with any issues you would like raised at Council.

Andrew Bishop,
Council member for Sussex

REPORT OF THE CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Since our last AGM November 2025, the Sussex Law Society have run 30 webinars and 2 face to face seminars. These courses have covered residential and commercial conveyancing, civil litigation, family, private client, compliance, business development, personal development, EDI, AI 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 The Renter's Rights ACT, Inheritance Tax, COLP and COFA updates.

As well as our online webinars, we recently held an in-person half day Residential conveyancing seminar at East Sussex National Golf Club sponsored by X-Press Legal services. This saw 20 SLS members from a variety of firms come together to listen to Stephen Desmond and speaker James Warren followed by networking and lunch. In the spring, we also hosted a residential and commercial conveyancing course at The AMEX Stadium, Brighton sponsored by X-Press Legal services which had 40 guests attend. Both were hugely successful events and we already have dates booked in for further seminars for 2027.

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, so don't forget to ask!

Last year we established our Managing Partners Round Table discussions. While we haven't run any this year, we do have an in person managing partners lunch booked for November with managing directors from some of Sussex's biggest firms due to attend.

In addition to our CPD courses, we have established a scholarship programme with The Law Training Centre who arranged to give one Sussex Law Society member £2,000 towards their Notary Training course; this programme ran in Jan/ Feb of 2026.

Thank you to our Property sponsor Groundsure and our Private Client sponsor, Clive Emson Auctioneers for their continued support of our education programme as well as our seminar sponsors, X-Press Legal Services. Thank you also to our regular speakers and of course, everyone who attends our courses, asks questions and engages.

Alice Wylie

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL & NETWORKING EVENTS COMMITTEE

The SLS 2025-2026 AGM was held on 6th November at The Pump House, central Brighton. Ms Angela Arnold was sworn is as the next SLS President commenting that her themes for the year were "Sustainability, Accessibility and Legacy"

With this in mind, this year Ms Arnold and Ms Wylie have been working closely with the Sussex Junior Lawyers Division to establish a joint Mentor Scheme for Sussex. Together, we successfully matched 24 budding lawyers with 24 of our members including established solicitors, head of departments, directors and managing partners. A report of the Mentor Scheme has been created

from the feedback provided from this year's cohort. We celebrated the end of the scheme with a drinks social at The Walrus, central Brighton. We look forward to matching more pairs in 2027.

The Society's annual ball was a hit with over 280 of Sussex's firms, solicitors and colleagues coming together for a 'Legacy of Colour' celebration. President Angela Arnold is the first black President in the history of Sussex Law Society, so she was keen to reflect her Jamaican heritage in the evening. The night saw Ray Lewis, former lead singer of The Drifters, fill the dancefloor following a 3 course Caribbean-inspired menu. A highlight for many was Ms Arnold's inspirational speech on community and inclusivity. A massive thank you to our loyal sponsors: 1 Crown Office Row and X-Press Legal Services; as well as new sponsors for this year, Sussex Surveyors, 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 50 guests on the wait list for Autumn's evening. Spring's evening sold out in a record 90 minutes 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. Congratulations to 1 Crown Office Row and Elite Law Solicitors for your victories this year!

In a hope to be inclusive we have also held other types of events such as July's Padel Tournament sponsored by Extech Cloud and X-Press Legal Services as well as November's upcoming Pool Tournament sponsored by Clive Emson Auctioneer. We also participated in Brighton's Pride this year proudly holding signs showing the legal progress made to support LGBTQ+ Communities. We also held a winter wine and cheese challenge evening sponsored by Clive Emson Auctioneers and have plans for a joint social with the Sussex Junior Lawyers Division for a cocktail/mocktail masterclass ahead of the Christmas break.

Social events this year have raised **£3,832** for the President's chosen charities: Southern Hospice Group, Rockinghorse Children's Charity and The Clock Tower Sanctuary.

Thank you to everyone who has bought tickets, donated money to the charities and attended our events. We are proud to have such an engaged and active community of lawyers and professionals here in Sussex.

Alice Wylie

SUSSEX JUNIOR LAWYERS DIVISION

It has been another busy year for the Sussex Junior Lawyers Division. Our focus has been on building on the foundations that we made last year to create a strong and supportive community for the junior lawyers across Sussex.

We have organised a variety of events to bring our members together and support their professional development. These have included pub quizzes, socials, employability workshops, skills-based workshops, and cross-industry networking events.

We have continued our popular monthly newsletter to keep our members informed and engaged.

Behind the scenes, we have made some big changes to our membership site in order to help us track membership engagement, as well as providing a platform for our members to access to upcoming events, announcements, resources, and membership perks. We have also redefined the structure of our committee before the upcoming AGM to help future-proof the Division, as well as ensure that we remain well-equipped to meet the needs of our growing membership and to deliver our initiatives effectively.

We have run our mentorship scheme for the second year but this time in collaboration with the Sussex Law Society, which has been a great 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 really positive, and we are proud of the impact the programme and hopefully the lifelong connections that have been made.

We have also strengthened our relationships with both the University of Brighton and the University of Sussex, and we have recruited student representatives and graduate representatives to help us to this. We recognise the importance of bridging the gap for our aspiring lawyers at the earliest stages of their careers and we aim to help facilitate this.

We have some exciting plans for the upcoming year to help achieve our goals for the Division, but it is important to reflect back on the year and to say goodbye and thank you to a few of the committee members who are stepping down. Without their contributions the Division would not be where we are at today.

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, feedback, 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.

Lauren Waller
President of Sussex Junior Lawyers Division

MINUTES FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SUSSEX LAW SOCIETY
6pm on Thursday, 6th November, 2025
The Pump House, 46 Market St, Brighton and Hove, Brighton BN1 1HH

1. **Apologies**
   Ms Tarrant
   Mr Corr
   Ms Peci
   Mr M Bishop
   Mr Richards
   Ms Cherevinchenko

2. **Minutes of AGM on 7th November 2024**

3. **Matters Arising**
   None

4. **Annual Report of the General Committee for 2024/25 & Draft Accounts for year ending 31/08/2025.**
   It was proposed that the above report and accounts be accepted by all.

5. **Outgoing President's address**
   Mr Dickson began by giving thanks to the Society for having him as the 2024/2025 President calling it the 'greatest honour of my career to date'. Mr. Dickson said that last year when he was sworn in he made it clear that one of his aims for the year was to nurture the next generation of lawyers by continuing his work with local universities and his support of the Sussex Junior Lawyers Division (SJLD). To have so many members of the SJLD in attendance at the AGM and to see the SJLD grow in the last 12 months has been brilliant.

   Mr Dickson said that it was a busy year during his presidency attending numerous local law society annual balls, Judges Service events, our twice yearly quiz and of course, the highlight being the 2025 SLS Great Gatsby Summer Ball.

   Mr Dickson reminded attendees that his chosen charity this year was Rockinghorse Children's Charity, a cause very close to his heart given his own connection to them at birth. He was incredibly proud to report that the society has raised £4,969.40 for the charity during his term, an incredibly achievement made possible by all our members.

   Finally, Mr Dickson wanted to thank Operations Manager, Ms Wylie, the wonderful committee for their unwavering support, and finally, all the members.

   Ms Arnold presented Mr Dickson with a 'Past President's Pin' and thanked him for his year in office.

6. **Election of Officers:**
   The following have been nominated for election:

   President: **Ms A Arnold** (Proposed by Mr Daniel Dickson and seconded by Ms Sarah O'Sullivan with all present in favour).

Hon. Secretary: **Ms S O'Sullivan** (Proposed by Ms Angela Arnold and seconded by Mr Oliver Maxwell-Jones with all present in favour).

Hon Treasurer: **Mr Oliver Maxwell-Jones** (Proposed by Mr Daniel Dickson and seconded by Ms Manjinder Nagra with all present in favour).

7. **Election of General Committee Member**
   Ms Sabina Cherevichenko (Proposed by Ms Manjinder Nagra and seconded by Ms Angela Arnold with all present in favour).

8. **President's Address**
   Ms Arnold began by thanking all those who attended for their support in her year ahead. Her speech covered the 3 main areas she would be focusing her presidency on.

   First was Sustainability: Ms Arnold hopes to continue on the work that Mr Dickson and others before him have done in nurturing the next generation of lawyers by working closely with the universities.

   Secondly was accessibility; Ms Arnold hopes for 'Students to be stewards of Justice' and that often the law industry has been seen as elitist and difficult to break into if you are not from a specific background. Ms Arnold hopes to work with students to make sure the profession is accessible to everyone.

   Finally, Ms Arnold talked about Legacy. Presently there is not a Vice President in place but the reason being, Ms Arnold wants to carefully select a person who will take the role seriously, has the passion to want to make a difference and understands the importance of carrying on the SLS. Ms Arnold will spend time carefully selecting this individual and will report back when the appropriate candidate has been found.

   Ms Arnold concluded her speech by welcoming members to call on her anytime with issues, ideas and feedback. She is hoping to make a difference during her tenure and wants to work directly with members to make sure the national Law Society hears our voices and feels our impact. Ms Arnold is not looking for "yes people – that is not what justice is about." Ms Arnold thanked attendees for accepting her as the new SLS president and gladly accepted the chain of office.

9. **Any Other Business**