

**Minutes of CLLS Training Committee Meeting  
Wednesday 6 December 2023 – 16:00 – 18:00  
at Norton Rose Fulbright and by Teams**

**Present (Committee members):**

Patrick McCann (Chair) ( <b>PM</b> )	Kathryn Smith ( <b>KS</b> )
Charlotte Wanendeya (vice Chair) ( <b>CW</b> )	Nigel Spencer ( <b>NS</b> )
Colin Shaw (vice Chair) ( <b>CS</b> )	Rosie Warren-Cafferty ( <b>RWC</b> )
Grace Best ( <b>GB</b> )	Rachel Wevill ( <b>RW</b> )
Peter Carrick ( <b>PC</b> )	Kirsty Wilkins ( <b>KW</b> )
Victoria Cromwell ( <b>VC</b> )	
Lindsay Gerrand ( <b>LG</b> )	Camilla Brignall (clerk to the committee) ( <b>CB</b> )
James Harvey ( <b>JH</b> )	
Joanna Hughes ( <b>JHu</b> )	
Greg Lascelles ( <b>GL</b> )	
Louisa Mendes da Costa ( <b>LMdC</b> )	
Charlie Moore ( <b>CM</b> )	

**Apologies:** Dominic Sedghi (**DS**) Richard Album (RA), Katie Dyer (KD)

**Guest:** Sarah Clover (CLLS) (SC), Julie Swan (SRA) (**JS**), Colin Passmore (CLLS) (CP), Chris Walsh (the Law Society) (CWa)

The chairman opened the meeting.

**1. Minutes of 28 September 2023**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

**2. Introduction to today's meeting – Patrick McCann**

PM introduced the meeting, thanking everyone who has joined. For this meeting, we are aiming to reflect on the last year and build on our links with Law Society and the SRA. We have had a great year (it was noted that CP gave a shout out to the Committee in the CLLS magazine, so we must be doing good stuff!). PM stated that he was proud of the work the Committee has done.

**3. Welcome new Committee members**

Thank you to the members who have joined, we are sad to say goodbye to our old members! PM introduced each new member: CB, CM, NS, VC and KS.

**4. Comments from Colin Passmore**

CP gave a few words on what is occupying the CLLS' mind. The LSB is focussed on the lack of black partners in the profession/lack of diversity so the CLLS is trying to show them what initiatives they are taking. Every senior managing partner knows that diversity is a challenge. When we know how we are going to approach the LSB on this topic, Colin will ask Patrick to come back to the Committee for ideas. Colin stated that the CLLS is hugely grateful for what the Committee does and recognises its impact.

**5. Update from the SRA – Julie Swan**

LMdC thanked Julie Swan (JS) for joining us. JS thanked the Committee for inviting her to the City Century event in Manchester.

For discussion today was the booking system failures for SQE1 which JS agreed had not gone smoothly. She stated that booking on SQE1 for the Jan 2024 assessments had been a sorry experience for many candidates. Whilst we should celebrate that there were many more candidates than expected, there were 2 glitches relating to vouchers and eligibility which created a queue. The candidates got frustrated and took to Kaplan's phone line (the emails queued up too).

As far as the SRA know, all candidates ultimately got a place for the assessment (although not necessarily at their first-choice venue). JS acknowledged that this booking experience cannot be repeated. She stated that Kaplan's current focus is on the next SQE2 booking window, for which they are expecting a large no. of candidates (due to the number of SQE1 entries) but that there were some changes proposed (which could not be revealed yet). JS stated that when the SRA knew what they were, they would reach out to the Committee to help explain to candidates how it might work.

The next SQE1 booking window is in April, so there is a bit of time to work through the issues on that. SQE1 bookings and SQE2 bookings are quite different (the mechanics are different) so a solution for one won't necessarily work for another. Accordingly, once the SQE2 booking window has been dealt with, the focus will switch to SQE1.

JS confirmed that there had also been misunderstandings with the booking arrangements for reasonable adjustments candidates. Kaplan manage the process in that they find a place for such candidates (due to the characteristics of particular assessment centres). Candidates were told they did not need to book a seat but because Kaplan hadn't confirmed all candidates' centres some joined the queue to attempt to book a seat (adding to the traffic).

Kaplan has issued additional communication to reasonable adjustments candidates for the SQE2 booking window (candidates were reminded again that Kaplan are sorting their sit). JS said she couldn't guarantee that every candidate would get a space in the Centre they would prefer (they have finite capacity) but for January SQE1 there are assessments on multiple days and at multiple times of day so there is increased capacity – but still not guaranteeing space.

JS noted that candidates can switch centres where spaces become available (due to withdrawals).

LMdC asked JS whether it would be fair to say that she is happy that efforts are being made to improve? JS answered yes, serious efforts are being made.

The Committee is happy to help with any necessary messaging.

The failure at parts of the Chiswick assessment centre was also discussed. JS agreed that it had been very disappointing. The Centre is 3 floors but only 1 floor was available for the assessments. JS said she cannot promise that there won't be glitches in the future, but the SRA don't want to see it and Kaplan are taking efforts to ensure the risk is minimised. They do this by risk assessing centres and taking some off-line and having a presence on site at others during exams. The response to candidates at Chiswick was v swift in terms of offering them an alternative, making a goodwill payment etc (lessons learnt from Hammersmith). Obviously the SRA's preference is for these things not to happen.

LMdC asked JS, what Kaplan have asked Pearson to do re their equipment? JS stated that the SRA know that there are discussions ongoing between Kaplan and Pearson and that where there are serious concern about the Centres, they are being withdrawn. There is a balance to be had between having local centres (which might not be so well-equipped) which candidates can easily access and just using large centres in large cities.

In relation to the issue with the marking of the April SQE2 assessments, JS stated that the error should have been identified through standard quality assurance arrangements but this one slipped through the net. A cautious and transparent approach to the error was adopted and it was one batch of scripts that had been affected. It was known that the impact of the error was likely to have been very small but a conservative view was adopted and so all potentially affected scripts were reviewed and, ultimately, one candidate went from a fail to a pass. Lessons were learnt and there are comprehensive quality assurance arrangements in place – especially when marking is being done by

humans. The error should not have happened but lessons have been learnt to make sure it doesn't happen again.

## **6. Update from the CLLS – Colin Passmore (CP)**

PM introduced this item. CP took over as chair in January 2023 and as a main committee it has been terrific to have him on board. CP has been asking people to do things (including Sarah Clover (SC) being a bridge between the main committee and sub-committees).

CP: SC was asked to be the bridge so that the main committee have a good understanding of what is going on but also to think about how we disseminate the work of the committees amongst the profession. Social media is great, but what more we can do? CP also wants to bring more young people into the Law Society and CLLS – how can we get people interested in training? Especially lawyers in the 52 member firms? The youngsters are an outward looking generation, there is enthusiasm for getting involved. There is a lot going on and it has been vibrant and dynamic.

PM stated that working with CP is an absolute delight, he is very empowering. PM will be offering all our services all of the time!

JH asked: do younger people feel like they need to be “invited” to contribute? Perhaps we can think about mass invitation? SC: CP has sent up a sub-committee to think about inviting and engaging.

PM – talking about CLLS hosting a lively hall event for City Century

## **7. Review of the Year 2023 – Charlotte Wanendeya, Colin Shaw, Patrick McCann and Camilla Brignall**

CW, CS, PM and CB shared some highlights of the work of the Committee over the past 12 months, including a recap of the work of the committee in influencing the market when it comes to SQE, the City Century initiative, a reminder of the workshops it has run, the success of SWSQF, changes to the Committee over the year and the impact of our LinkedIn presence. The committee LinkedIn page can be found [here](#).

## **8. Member Reflections**

Each member of the committee was asked to reflect on 2023 and the work of the Committee. Those reflections were captured in [this](#) video

## **9. Looking to 2024**

PM shared the vision for 2024 (which is “repeat on acid” crank up to all or 12!) That will involve all of us doing a little bit more in a way which is fast and achievable. PM asked “what is the voice you want to put out there?”:

- We will still have 4 committee meetings – PM would love it if everyone came to all of them – please ring-fence the time. We will have the four workshops. GB and KS are being lined up to help with the Spring one, Gen AI in June and Partner development in the winter.
- SWSQF – will tip over to £1m and we will try and get more funding.
- Essay prize (will continue to judge) wants SAs to get involved.
- City Century – we want to expand from 50 firms and get to 70/75. We are pivoting away from “project set-up” to “user experience”. UCAS are talking to us about CC. PM really wants to focus on SAs being as “well educated” on the profession to those coming through the more traditional route (in terms of insight etc – the 10 x 10 series is an example of the education available).
- LinkedIn: Would like to post more on! Would like to have something most weeks.

## **10. Thought Leadership pieces for 2024**

Each member of the team is to produce an idea for a thought leadership piece. CS and CW ran through some of the ideas that had been generated already.

#### **11. Learning in Law update – Rosie Warren–Cafferty**

RW met with Learning in Law to try and explore whether there are areas that we can collaborate more easily. Looking for synergies between the two committees – exploratory first step. Their annual conference is a big focus for Learning in Law. The aim is to set a date for RW, GB and Amy Pilmer (Learning in Law) to share plans for 2024 and discuss opportunities. The conference is set for Thursday 25 April.

#### **12. Support for socially mobile SQE candidates through the provision of a fund**

CS referred to a proposal to create a SQE bursary scheme to help fund socially mobile candidates through the SQE. This would be through an increase to the PC renewal fee. It is proposed a letter will be sent to the SRA and LSB.

Draft letter to be sent to the committee members for consideration as to whether they can sign.

#### **13. Update on SWSQF and call to action – Camilla Brignall**

CB asked the Committee to consider whether they could “sign-up” for the SWSQF interviews.

#### **14. Chris Walsh of the Law Society**

CWa (head of L&D at Law Society) cover their education and training offer. His focus is on the post-qualification stage – all firm sizes, all practice areas, all levels.

CWa stated that they have already transformed how the Law Society “does” education. It is fully digital; they have an amazing LMS (a link for which will be sent to us). It contains two “buckets” of content:

1. For all members an embedded curriculum – personal/professional development, wellbeing, risk and ethics. Mainly on post-SQE have a whole load of free to access info on entry to the profession.
2. Accreditations – closest thing society has to “qualifications” – bespoke online exam solution.

There is also bite-size CPD content available from which you get a certificate. The biggest launch in 2023 was micro-credentials - a more complicated blended course. The longer-term objective is to have “stackable” qualifications. There is also something in the offing relating to CPD – a more formalised system to return?

They have a Dean for the first time who is helping to implement strategy and growth of the platform, they are keen to collaborate and support, they get stuff done now.

CWa said he was happy to offer a walk-through of the platform. They do everything inhouse.

Kirsty agreed to act as liaison with the Law Society in this regard.

#### **15. AOB**

Patrick ran through an update to the SWSQF funding and the implication for the funding of hours and showed a video detailing the highlights of the year.

#### **16. Confirmation of 2024 meetings**

The next meeting will take place in-person on 7 March at BPP Portsoken House.

#### **17. Close**

The chairman closed the meeting.