

Minutes of CLLS Training Committee Meeting
Thursday 28 September 2023 – 12:30 – 14:00
by Teams

Present (Committee members):

Patrick McCann (Chair) (PM)	Ben Perry (BP)
Richard Album (RA)	Laura Scarlett (LS)
Peter Carrick (PC)	Colin Shaw (vice-chair) (CS)
Katie Dyer (KD)	Rosie Warren-Cafferty (RWC)
Lindsay Gerrand (LG)	Charlotte Wanendeya (vice-chair) (CW)
James Harvey (JH)	Rachel Wevill (RW)
Joanna Hughes (JHu)	
Louisa Mendes da Costa (LMdC)	Camilla Brignall (clerk to the committee) (CB)
Frances Moore (FM)	

Apologies: Greg Lascelles (**GL**), Dominic Sedghi (**DS**), Catherine Moss (**CM**), Kirsty Wilkins (**KW**)

Guest: Sarah de Gay (CLLS President) (**SdG**), Christina Perry (Queen Mary University of London) (**CP**), Nigel Spencer (Queen Mary University of London) (**NS**), Peter Young (NRF) (**PY**), Victoria Cromwell (Barbri), Jonny Hurst (BPP) (**JH**); Chrissy Diggings

The chairman opened the meeting.

1. Minutes of 23 June 2023

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. Ambitions for the CLLS and perception of the Training Committee – Sarah de Gay

SdG gave a background to the set-up of the CLLS and its connection to The City of London Solicitors Company ('CLSC'). The fact that the master of the CLSC is also the president of the CLLS keeps the bond between the two organisations close.

SdG stated that she has been in role for 3 months but has already been told she is v active! The role of president of CLLS is less obviously a "thing" (as there is also a chair and CEO) but Colin Passmore (chair of CLLS) and SdG are cheerleaders for each other, bound by promoting the rule of law and getting young people in the profession interested in it.

SdG sees her purpose/that of the CLSC as: connecting members with each other; connecting members with the civic city; charitable giving; connecting the profession with the rule of law (nb. the "Food for Thought" events which consider interesting issues of the day. The November 2023 event will take place at Kingsley Napley in November and will look at "The Challenges of Bullying: What can Law Firms learn from the Raab Report?").

SdG confessed an obsession with the rule of law and stated that women like "purpose" with their events (not just pleasure related events). A livery company should be diverse and attract diverse membership.

SdG made some observations on the committee, stating it is the jewel in the crown of the committees. The committee has two amazing initiatives in SWSQF and City Century. SdG also loves the small things we do – like the reading list. It is a really good example of energy and never wasting a good idea. The Committee is brilliant at using social media - don't just do something, let the world know that you are doing it! The other technical committees don't share what they are doing so effectively, and it is important to show value to law firm members. If there is a protocol which could be shared

with other committees that would be great. It would be good for the committee to meet with Ian Miller (a partner at Kingsley Napley) to discuss how we could work with his committee (CLLS Professional Rules and Regulations Committee).

The CLSC supports a group of cadets from south London (careers event) and they want the CLSC to create a book group – can we support with this? Also career possibilities – can we be involved with an event which tells them about apprentices?

SdG's highlights of her role so far – attending the careers event for the cadets and also attending the City Century event at A&O.

3. How “workplace experience” can accelerate the “speed to capability” and skills development of early careers lawyers – Nigel Spencer and Christina Perry

NS and CP from Queen Mary University presented on their research. Slides to be circulated to the committee afterwards for reference.

4. Social Mobility and the SQE – Jonny Hurst

JH introduced himself and stated that, over the last 5 years, he had had hundreds of conversations, with every type of stakeholder, which had informed his conclusions on social mobility. JH presented some social mobility statistics in the context of SQE1 pass rates.

Essentially, socially mobile candidates are getting out performed by 5-10%. The biggest barrier is around cost (by next year SQE fees will be £5,000ish (if you pass first time). This is before you pay a penny for a prep course. SQE assessment fees are putting a massive barrier in front of socially mobile candidates. If £30 were levied on PC renewal fees (creating a £5 million fund), bursaries could be offered for 1000 students. JH stated that there needed to be an influential group behind this proposal. Louisa happy to help from a CLLS perspective.

5. Qualifying using equivalent means – Peter Young

PY (a capital markets partner at Norton Rose) wanted to talk to the committee about alternative ways to enter the profession.

His firm had a socially mobile paralegal who spoke to them about her route to qualification. The SQE was not an appropriate route for this candidate, for various reasons, so she decided to attempt to qualify by using the “qualification using equivalent means” route.

PY briefly ran through the process (which took about 19 months (nb only 13-15 people qualify using this route per month)). In this case, the candidate had not done any litigation work (but had done the BVC and BPP litigation course). In response to the application the SRA responded to the application by saying that the litigation experience was not adequate and that the candidate needed to show “practical application of the subject”. This would seem to apply a higher standard to candidates qualifying through this route than the standard applied to trainees. Ultimately, the SRA allowed the candidate to revise their application to incorporate litigation experience obtained within the transactional work they had undertaken. It turned out to be a constructive process where the Reader allowed the candidate to make changes to their application. However, it is worth noting that the SRA is maintaining a position that the litigation assessment certificate not sufficient evidence of litigation experience.

6. SQE2 Results and SRA follow-up

Noted for the record that PM, CW and CS met with Julie Swan and PM met with Aileen Armstrong. It was also noted that the latest report and analysis on SQE results had been published. The committee has published a linkedIn post.

7. Workshops

- **Law:work:Learning (31 Oct)** – LG confirmed the next workshop on 31 October at Watson Farley. LG shared outline for day: on the job learning - what it is, how it is done, how effective it is.
- **Technical/legal training (March 2024)** – LS/RA update. RA had a brief catchup with CS and CW, they are thinking 18 March and were going to meet on the following Monday to discuss initial ideas.

8. Follow-up from speaking events

- **Hook Tangaza (Legal Education conference)**: BP reported back on the all-day conference held at Linklaters. Half of the delegates were from firms, half from law schools (LPC providers). BP chaired a panel with a local authority lawyer and a family law lawyer. BP reported that one of the topics of discussion at the conference was the movement of the “gate” into entry into the profession. In essence, under the LPC there was a gate at the training contract entry point (obtaining a training contract was the barrier to entry), because of how QWE could be obtained, the danger is that (through lack of oversight over QWE (in terms of quality)), that gate is going to get moved to the time of qualification (so people will qualify but won’t have sufficient experience to take on an NQ role).
- **Westminster Policy Forum**: PM “next steps for legal education and training” – spoke about City Century and other things. Useful to be seen as thought leaders.
- **KCL (panel on UK admission and access to the legal profession)**: PM spoke at this university law school conference on SQE, SWSQF and City Century.
- **University of Exeter/Queen Mary**: the session was good – quite wide ranging – quite “out there” comments – need to have rigor and responsibility around messaging.

9. SWSQF Update

PM: There are essentially three cohorts. The March 22 cohort who started in April, April 23 cohort and the 2024 cohort:

- **Cohort 1 Progress**: Victoria Cromwell shared a presentation updating on the first two cohorts, including details of our first qualified solicitor.
- **Cohort 2 update**: PM gave an update on funding.
- **Cohort 3 update**: CD gave an update on the 2024 application schedule. There will be a new website for the 2024 application schedule. Will be looking for volunteers for assessors and interviewers. KD, RW, RWC and LG have volunteered.
- **Cohort 4 update**: PM mentioned we need a succession plan.

10. Solicitor Apprenticeship Initiative – City Century

PM ran through a presentation on the City Century initiative. 51 firms have signed up, there is investment of £250k, firms marketing the initiative (1k followers on linked in and 400 followers on Tik Tok). Have created over 100 jobs in the City annually.

11. CLLS Training Committee LinkedIn Page

CB gave a brief update in DS absence.

12. Committee member updates

PM mentioned Ben has resigned and CM has resigned. It may be that one or two others will resign also. PM will forward a proposal to authorise 3 new members, ideally to include a legal practitioner and someone who can take on projects in numbers. The committee is really looking for members who can commit to attending at least three of the four meetings a year.

13. #Chairshare update from Chair/Vice-Chair meeting (Sept)

CW and CS already meeting with PM to plan ahead and complete year planner for 2023 and 2024

14. Year Planner 2023 and 2024

CW/CS ran through the year planner for 2023 and the shape of it. They are looking at thought leadership pieces and workshops for next year. Some of the proposed topics have been captured and will be circulated. Items in green have been covered/are timetabled, items in orange are “in progress”. One of the topics to flag is around firm/business culture and how L&D can help navigate the shift in culture. CW/CS would be keen for thoughts/comments on this.

15. AOB

CLLS main committee wants a main committee meeting appended to the training committee – we are going to have Sarah Clover of Clyde & Co.

16. Confirmation of next meeting

The next meeting will take place in-person on 6 December at NRF.

17. Close

The chairman closed the meeting.