

SOUTH WESTMINSTER LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE CIO

Registered Charity No: 1180716

Report and Accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

## SOUTH WESTMINSTER LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE CIO

### REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their report and the accounts of South Westminster Legal Advice Centre CIO ("the CIO") for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

#### **Status of the CIO**

CIO stands for "Charitable Incorporated Organisation", a form of charitable body governed by the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations 2012 (SI No 3012 of 2012).

Having taken over the goodwill and activities of the precursor charitable trust of the same name (which had operated for 20 years from 1998) at the beginning of 2019, 2020 is the second full year of operations for South Westminster Legal Advice Centre CIO.

#### **Principal activities**

The purposes are set out in the Constitution of the CIO, but may be summarised as the provision of free legal advice to people on low incomes.

#### **Results for the period**

During the period, the trust's total income was £22,096 (2019: £14,183) and its expenditure was £19,577 (2019: £17,0450). The small surplus of £2,519 (2019: deficit £2,857) has been carried to the General Reserve. Towards the end of the period, the precursor charitable trust was wound up and its remaining assets (being those not already transferred to the CIO) comprising £27,743 were passed to the CIO as planned. The events of 2020 have revealed the necessity of maintaining a funding cushion and so £25,000 of this sum has been placed in Emergency Reserves.

#### **Notable Events during the year**

There have been a number of major events occurring during the period which have impacted on the operations of the CIO.

The first of these was that the freehold owner of the building at 246 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1 sold it for re-development, and so, reluctantly, after some twenty years there, the CIO vacated that property in the latter days of March 2020. We were fortunate in securing alternative premises at London Scottish House, 95 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2DX although the intervention of the Covid-19 pandemic meant that we have not used these save for storage.

Second, we took advantage of the move to "go paper-free" by digitising all our records and moving to a case management system.

Third, there has been the Covid-19 pandemic, and the initial lockdown requirement meant that the CIO ceased to operate on a face-to-face basis. As the pandemic continued, and thanks to the superb work of some of the Trustees (especially Elaine Vignoli) and volunteers, we adjusted our working practices so as increasingly to deal with clients electronically: our digitisation and case management system has enabled advice to be given by our volunteers from locations other than the Centre itself, whilst keeping proper case notes and with access to all documents by pdf. Whilst the CIO is keen to re-open for face-to-face consultations, the safety of our volunteers and clients is paramount.

Fourth, considerable work was done during the year to create a website for the CIO: <https://www.swlac.org>

Fifth, we were thrilled to be nominated for, and to have won the prestigious LawWorks Pro Bono Award 2020 for "Best Digital or Virtual Pro Bono Activity." This is a recognition of the significant development in our service delivery during the year.

### **Volunteers**

The charity could not have functioned without our dedicated volunteers, all of whom generously give of their own time and energy to advise those less fortunate than themselves. Our clients, and we, are hugely grateful to them.

### **Trustees**

The names of the persons who were Trustees during the period were Richard Walford; Robert Walters; Elaine Vignoli; David Warner; Chris White and James macLachlan.

### **Patrons and Supporters**

The CIO is extremely grateful to its patrons, Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury (former President of the Supreme Court) and Lord Briggs of Westbourne (Justice of the Supreme Court), as well as to its loyal friends and supporters. It is encouraging to know that there is such strong support for this important work

### **Trustees Responsibilities**

The Trustees are required to prepare in respect of each financial year of the charity, financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently,
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements,
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation,
- comply with the charity's governing document,
- comply with the Financial Standard for Smaller Entities (FRSSE),
- comply with the Charities Act 2011.

The trustees are responsible for keeping records that disclose, with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the CIO's Constitution.

### **Risk management**

The Trustees have a duty to identify and review risks to which the CIO is exposed and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### **Public benefit**

The CIO had due regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission on public benefit, and believes that its work is for the public benefit.

On behalf of the Board:

Richard Walford  
Chairman

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021



**Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of the South Westminster Legal Advice Centre CIO**

I report on the accounts of the South Westminster Legal Advice Centre for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020 which are set out on the following pages.

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and you consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to: examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act; to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act; and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair" view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention: (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements: to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Philip G. Turner  
54 York Mansions,  
Prince of Wales Drive,  
London SW11 4BP

19<sup>th</sup> May, 2021

**South Westminster Legal Advice Centre CIO**  
**Income & expenditure account for the year ended 31st December, 2020**

2019		£	£
	<b>Income</b>		
	Donations received:		
-	Westminster Amalgamated Charities	5,000	
-	Clyde and Co	5,000	
-	Comcast/NBCUniversal	2,418	
-	PCC St Stephens & St.John's	600	
3,000	Farrers	-	
1,000	LSLA	-	
3,536	London Legal Support Trust	198	
4,447	Others	7,680	
			20,896
2,200	Min Quan Legal - Contribution to shared overheads		1,200
14,183	<b>Total income for the period</b>		22,096
	<b>Expenditure</b>		
7,500	Rent		2,930
2,177	Business rates		555
320	Water utility		26
1,330	Light, heat & power		340
786	Telephones & postage		141
293	Insurance - Contents		300
2,013	- Prof Indemnity		2,013
1,891	Cleaning		-
523	Printing and Stationery		-
177	Subscriptions & licences		182
30	Sundries		243
-	Website development/maintenance		3,469
-	Moving and Reorganisation Expenses		4,356
-	Provision for contingent liability for accomodation		5,022
17,040	<b>Total expenditure for period</b>		19,577
(2,857)	<b>(Deficit)/Surplus income over expenditure for the period</b>		2,519
-	Transfer of reserves upon winding-up of previous operating trust, South Westminster Legal Advice Centre		27,743
(2,857)			30,262
	<b>Carried to General Reserves:</b>		
-	- Emergency Reserve Fund		25,000
(2,857)	- General Reserve Fund		5,262
(2,857)			30,262

**South Westminster Legal Advice Centre CIO**  
**Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 2020**

	£	£
31.12.19		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
1,264 Debtors and prepayments	888	
6,771 Balance at Bank	31,539	
	<u>32,427</u>	
<u>8,035</u>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
(5,105) Creditors and provisions	5,022	
	<u></u>	
2,930 <b>Net Current Assets</b>		27,405
<u>(5,787) <b>Loans from Trustees</b></u>		<u>-</u>
(2,857)		27,405
		<u><u></u></u>
Represented by:		
<b>General Reserves</b>		
- <b>Emergency Reserve Fund</b>		
Transfer from reserves received upon merger of operations with the previous operating trust, South Westminster Legal Advice Centre		25,000
- <b>General Reserve Fund</b>		
- Surplus (deficit in) reserves brought forward	(2,857)	
(2,857) Surplus/(Deficit) for the year to 31.12.2020	2,519	
- Transfer from reserves received upon merger of operations with the previous operating trust, South Westminster Legal Advice Centre	2,743	
General Reserve Fund carried forward	<u></u>	2,405
<u>(2,857)</u>		<u><u>27,405</u></u>

The Income and expenditure account and Balance sheet of the South Westminster Legal Advice Centre CIO have been prepared in accordance with its records and reflect the position at 31st December, 2020

Robert Walters  
Hon. Treasurer