

INDUSTRIAL LAW SOCIETY

www.industriallawsociety.org.uk

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CHAIR'S REPORT 2020 / 2021

1. Vice-Presidents

It is with very great sadness that we reported the death of another of the Society's Vice-Presidents, Stephen Levinson, who passed away on Wednesday 13 January, unexpectedly and suddenly.

Stephen was a hugely valued member of the ILS and of the wider labour law community, having been Chair of the Society from 1996 to 1999 as well as a founder member of the Employment Law Committee of the Law Society and a former Treasurer of the Employment Lawyers' Association. At meetings and conferences, his contributions were always insightful, engaging and aimed at stimulating important debate – and often with very dry humour.

Most of all, he will be remembered as a kind and generous man, encouraging junior members in their careers. He will be much missed.

2. Officers and Committee

The Society's Officers and Committee members are on a two-year tenure since being elected in 2019. The following individuals have served as members of the Executive Committee since election in 2019.

Chair: Sarah Fraser Butlin

Vice-Chairs: Robert Lewis and Charles Wynn-Evans

Treasurer: Nike Balogun

Secretary: Rachel Wedderspoon

Ordinary Members:

Anna Beale, Shubha Banerjee, Iain Birrell, Susan Harris, Andrew James, Omar Khalil, Dr John McMullen, Louise Rea, Rakesh Patel, Madeline Stanley, Anita Vadgama and Emma Zarb

Ex-officio regional chairs during 2019 to 2020 have been: Connie Cliff (Birmingham), Joel Smith (Leeds), Professor Tonia Novitz and Michael Ford QC (Bristol), Max Winthrop (Newcastle), Clive Day (Nottingham), and Hayley Johnson, Josephine van Lierop and David Martyn (Scotland).

Members co-opted onto the Committee in 2019 were: Declan O'Dempsey and Michael Reed.

Ex-officio members and co-optees are usually considered by the in-coming Executive Committee at its first meeting and are selected in order to ensure broad representation on the Committee across industry, legal practitioners including the judiciary and academia.

The Chair would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Committee members for their contributions over the last 12 months.

2. Membership

Members will be aware that the Society's Committee have been engaged in driving attendance as well as membership for many years which has proved increasingly difficult as we have seen a lot of consolidation across the sector, amongst other things. However, during the pandemic membership in fact increased by almost 4%.

There is still more work to be done to re-establish previous levels of both Corporate and Individual membership, and this continues to be one of our main focuses.

3. Principal activities

Evening Meetings/webinars

The Society's 2020/2021 Evening Meeting Programme was suspended in March 2020 due to Covid-19 and London and regional sessions were replaced by highly successful webinars during the pandemic which were available at the time to both members and non-members of the Society for free. The Society has been extremely fortunate to have secured speakers of consistent high quality, too numerous to mention here.

The Society's AGM which had been scheduled for April 2020 was postponed until 29 October 2020 and held as an EGM instead. The post EGM lecture was addressed by Dr Philippa Collins on the subject of ***Working from home, the Right to Privacy and the Protection of Human Rights at Work.***

For our Christmas 2020 event the Society's Committee opted to get members together socially on zoom rather than to host another lecture. The Pub Quiz event was great fun, thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and, as you will see from the Treasurer's Report, raised £470 for MIND.

I would like to pay special thanks not only to the Society's speakers but also to those who have chaired sessions and to all those who organised our regional programme at the beginning of 2020, namely Dr John McMullen, Iain Birrell and Joel Smith (Leeds); Professor Tonia Novitz and Michael Ford QC (Bristol), Connie Cliff (Birmingham), Max Winthrop (Newcastle), Clive Day (Nottingham) and Rachel Wedderspoon (Manchester)

Season of Conference webinars: September 2020

A virtual 'Season of Conference' webinars was spread over a week in September 2020 and replaced the Society's in-person Annual Conference.

The Season of Conference webinars was highly successful with over just over 150 participants booking. It opened on Thursday 10 September with Lord Justice Underhill (Chaired by Sir Patrick Elias) speaking on the subject of ***The Tenth Birthday of the Equality Act: Anything to Celebrate?***

Thereafter Professor ACL Davies, Dean of the Oxford Law Faculty and Professor of Law and Public Policy spoke on ***Stress at work: a critique of the law***; David Reade QC, Littleton Chambers and Lord Hendy QC, Old Square Chambers on ***Recognition for collective bargaining in a post COVID world: David Reade and John Hendy in conversation***; and Professor Abi Adams-Prassl, Oxford Department of Economics, and Professor Jeremias Adams-Prassl, Oxford Faculty of Law on ***COVID-19: Three Challenges for Labour Market Regulation***.

The Conference webinars concluded on 23 September with ***An evening with Mohsin Zaidi, writer of A Dutiful Boy*** which was chaired by Mrs Justice Eady DBE.

The contributions were inspiring and our thanks go to all our speakers. Speakers devote a huge amount of time, without payment, to preparing and delivering sessions for the Society and I would like to take this opportunity of recording our thanks to them.

4. Plans for 2021/2022

The Society is hopeful that in-person meetings will recommence later this year but this will, of course, be dependent on future Government guidelines.

The decision to cancel the Society's Summer Party/BBQ this June has been made. The Society anticipates that it will be a virtual 'in conversation' session in its place. Date and details to be circulated soon.

The Society is also currently in the process of arranging a joint memorial event with ELA for Stephen Levinson as well as planning this year's Annual Conference. If lockdown restrictions are lifted the Society will go ahead with the Conference at Keble College in Oxford on **Friday 10 September and Saturday 11 September 2021**.

So far confirmed speakers for the Annual Conference are:

Mary Stacey on ***Civil Restraint Orders and strike outs***; and

Panel session on *The Future of Work*: **Sarah O'Connor**, columnist, reporter and associate editor at the Financial Times; **Nick Denys**, Councillor, Hillingdon, London; and **Rehana Azam**, National Secretary, GMB.

David Reade QC, Littleton Chambers and **Professor Alan Bogg**, University of Bristol on ***Consultation on collective redundancy and TUPE***.

We are considering how we might go forwards with regional and London meetings in the autumn.

5. Web-site

The Society's web-site is in the process of being updated and we anticipate that our modernised site will be up and running at the end of April/beginning of May.

6. Thanks

The thanks of the Society, and of the Chair personally, must be recorded to all those who have given their time to contribute to the ILS events as speakers, organisers or chairs as well as to the Society's members who have supported us throughout what has been an incredibly difficult year.

In closing I would also like to record particular thanks to Charles Wynn-Evans who is stepping down as Vice-Chair of the Society. Charles joined the Society's Committee in April 2011 and he has been a Vice-Chair since 2015. His tireless help and commitment have been incredibly invaluable to me as Chair of the Society as well as to recent former Chairs.

Sarah Fraser Butlin
Chair

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Treasurer's Report 2020

This year's report is presented once again accounting for the activities of the Society on a "Receipts and Payments" basis.

The Society made a surplus of £13,139 for 2020 in spite of huge uncertainty surrounding the pandemic.

Subscription Income

When it became evident that the Society would not be able to host its Annual Conference or further in-person sessions for the remainder of the year, the Society decided to reduce subscription fees at the beginning of June to maintain and build on its membership base.

Unsurprisingly Individual and Corporate subscription income fell by some 4% and 5% respectively. However, due to the one-off strategy to reduce subscription fees, I am pleased to report that membership in fact rose nearly 4% in 2020.

Sales of the Journal

Sales of the Journal were extremely strong in 2020 with £11,456 being received from OUP in respect of profit share scheme.

Conferences & Evening Meetings

At the beginning of the pandemic the duration of social distancing and lockdown was unknown.

Deposits of some £6,400 for venue hire were paid in January 2020 prior to the outbreak of Covid-19. £1,200 is being held on account by The Law Society for resumption of in-person meetings in London; £2,200 is being held on account by Goodenough College for the Society's Summer Party in 2022; and £3,000 is being held on account for the Annual Conference at Keble College which we hope will take place in September 2021.

Due to the cancellation of events from March onwards, expenditure for evening meeting venue hire dramatically decreased by some £14,216 with receipts for them also dramatically declining to £150.

A virtual 'Season of Conference' webinars was spread over a week in September and replaced the Society's in-person Annual Conference. The virtual Conference was highly successful not only in drawing in new members but in generating a surplus income of some £4,545 even after the deposit of £3,000 for the conference in 2021 is taken into account.

When it became apparent in June that the pandemic was far from over the Society established lunch-time and evening webinars. Members and non-members of the Society were able to participate in these webinars until the end of 2020 for free and no income has therefore been generated in relation to them.

The Society's Executive Committee were keen to get the Society's membership together, albeit virtually, for an end of year Christmas Pub Quiz which was great fun and feedback was that our members thoroughly enjoyed it. £470 was raised for charity and donated to MIND although you will see from liabilities that the donation didn't clear in 2020.

General Income & Expenditure

There was a reduction in venue hire; printing; postage and stationery; and secretarial expenses due to Covid-19. The reduction of £441 in insurance premiums from 2019 was due to change of broker.

An increase of £285 for Telephone/email/broadband and zoom is attributable to the monthly fee incurred for setting up a zoom account to enable the Society to host webinars.

The increase in Affiliation and accreditation fees relates to liabilities brought forward from 2019.

Bank charges increased by 7.5% reflecting the Society's ever-increasing use of online banking. £50 of the increase related to a one-off fee for a multi-payments facility which the Society adopted through a Company Credit Card in July 2020.

Miscellaneous expenses in 2020 include £183.98 for E-Set anti-virus software (three-year contract) and £79.20 for domain and email EM Client licence.

Liabilities include NI & Tax payments of £503; a donation of £470 to MIND; and £225 for payroll services. All these liabilities were in fact paid by company credit card in December but not debited from the Society's account until January 2021.

General

2020 has been an incredibly difficult year for so many people. The Society is extremely grateful for the amazing support it has received from members who have embraced and participated in the zoom sessions. Because of your support the Society's finances remain in an extremely strong position with cash at the bank of some £80,806 as of 31 December 2020.

The Society is aware of a lack of financial return on its cash balances but with interest rates continuing to run at unprecedented low levels it was felt that the lost interest is inevitable at present notwithstanding the alternative being to tie up the funds for 60 days or more.

Because of your support the Society will be able to continue to reach out and forge links with new members and re-establish links with previously lapsed members where possible going forwards and pursue our aims of encouraging and engaging with everyone interested in employment law and industrial relations.

Nike Balogun
Treasurer, ILS