



**Present**

**In-Person:** Erin Sawyer (**ES**); Edward Thompson (**ECT**); Stuart Henry (**SH**); Coralie McKeivor (**CM**); Rachel Fisher (**RF**); Ben Holt (**BH**); Helen Read (**HER**); Ben Hanham (**BHa**); Michael Gupwell (**MG**); Gaby Laurin (**GL**); Salma Maqsood (**SM**); Roisin O'Dubhlaoidh (**ROD**); Clair Ponting (**CLP**) (admin only); Huw Ponting (**HP**); Leon Smith (**LRS**); Mo Toqeer (**MT**); Laura Warren (**LW**) (Wards); James Woodburn (**JW**); Nilesh Mashru (on behalf of Accountants Milsted Langdon)

**Virtually:** Ryan Jenkins, Joanne Campbell

**Apologies:** Rachel Lobley, Huw Ponting, Jo Campbell, Eleanor MacCannell, Janis Purdy, Roisin O'Dubhlaoidh

**Proxies:** 20 forms:

	<b>In favour of:</b>
Thomas Adamson, DAC Beachcroft	ECT or ES
Ryan Williams, Simmons & Simmons	ECT or ES
Jo Campbell, VWV	ECT or ES
Justyn McIlhinney, Temple Bright	ECT or ES
Megan Hill, DAC Beachcroft	LRS
Charles Bending, DAC Beachcroft	ECT or ES
Caroline Cherry, DAC Beachcroft	ECT or ES
Giles Tagg, DAC Beachcroft	ECT or ES
Jonathan Quirk, DAC Beachcroft	ECT or ES
Nicholas Hillyard, DAC Beachcroft	ECT or ES
Kai Von der Pahlen, DAC Beachcroft	ECT or ES
Alessandro Morgan-Gianni, DAC Beachcroft	ECT or ES
Jamie Russell, DAC Beachcroft	ECT or ES
Mark Holloway, Bevan Brittan	ECT or ES
Sarah Bolt, Freeths	ECT or ES
Rachel Bennett, Wards	MG
Theo V, Wards	MG
Ella Saunders, Wards	MG
Ian Williamson, Wards	MG
Maxine Twynam, Wards	MG

**1. Welcome, Introductions and Receiving Apologies**

ES opened the meeting at 6.05pm, slightly delayed due to an IT glitch and thanked all for coming to our 153rd AGM. With the number of people in attendance (and holding proxies for the others) the meeting was quorate, and could proceed.

Apologies as above.

**2. Minutes of the 152nd Annual General Meeting held on 16th November 2022**

The draft minutes having been posted along with the notice of this AGM. No comments arising from these:

Proposed: ECT                      Seconded: CM              Voted: ALL CARRIED

Motion carried and minutes adopted.

**3. Proposed Amendments to the Articles of Association of the Bristol Law Society (see below)**

The Amendments to the Articles of Association has been circulated with the Notice of the AGM. It has also been circulated to the Directors.



**NOTICE OF BRISTOL LAW SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION AMENDING ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION**

THAT the proposed amendments to the Articles of Association of Bristol Law Society as set out in the draft Articles of Association attached to this resolution be adopted as the Articles of Association of the Company in substitution for, and for the exclusion of, the Company's existing Articles of Association.



BLS - Articles of Association (2023).p

Does anyone have any comments to make on this?

No comments made.

Proposed: CM                      Seconded: ECT              Voted: ALL CARRIED



BLS - Articles of Association (dated 2

**4. Report of the Council (including Co-Presidents' and Honorary Secretary's Reports)**

President's Report

ES reading out report. Thank you to HER and CLP for their support, it is hugely appreciated.

A copy of the Co-Presidents' Report as delivered on the evening is below at Appendix 1. The Co-Presidents' report was not circulated in advance.

### **ROUND OF APPLAUSE**

#### Honorary Secretary's Report

A copy of the Report of the Honorary Secretary is below at Appendix 2. The Honorary Secretary's report was not circulated in advance. There were no questions regarding this report.

### **ROUND OF APPLAUSE**

#### **5. Honorary Treasurer's Report**

A copy of the Report of the Honorary Treasurer is below at Appendix 3. The Honorary Treasurer's Report was not circulated in advance. There were no questions regarding this report.

Nilesh Mashru of Milsted Langdon gave a brief report of the Accounts, explaining that due to the income stream around the property, it is likely that BLS will pay corporation tax this year but Milsted Langdon will look to see if there is any mitigation possible. NM offered to take questions from the floor - none posed.

### **ROUND OF APPLAUSE**

#### **6. Appointment of Milsted Langdon LLP as the Society's Accountants**

Nilesh Mashru from Milsted Langdon was in attendance at the meeting. Milsted Langdon were pleased to accept the appointment as Accountants to the Society and are looking forward to working with the Society for the next 12 months.

Proposed: ECT

Seconded: RF

Voted: All CARRIED

ES formally thanked NM and Milsted Langdon for their efforts. NM on behalf of ML said they were very proud to be working with BLS.

#### **7. The Election of:**

CM, as Honorary Secretary, taking over the meeting for the election formalities. Due to the change in the Articles of Association, there will be no future Ordinary Members and therefore moving straight to the Executive Appointments.

- Honorary Secretary  
**Ben Hanham, TLT**

Proposed: CM

Seconded: BH

Voted: All CARRIED

- Honorary Treasurer  
**Rachel Fisher, Stowe Family Law**  
Proposed: CM                      Seconded: RF                      Voted: All CARRIED
- Junior Vice-President  
**Salma Maqsood, Barcan+Kirby**  
Proposed: CM                      Seconded: SM                      Voted: All CARRIED
- Senior Vice President  
**Coralie McKeivor, Freeths**  
Proposed: CM                      Seconded: ES                      Voted: ALL CARRIED
- President  
**Stuart Henry, Taylor Rose MW**  
Proposed: CM                      Seconded: SH                      Voted: All CARRIED

**8. The Investiture of the new President of the Society**

ECT and ES placing the Presidential chain of office over SH's head and inviting the new President to continue the meeting starting with a speech attached below at Appendix 4.

***ROUND OF APPLAUSE***

**9. Any Other Business**

SH asking if there was any other business.

None arising.

Meeting closed at 6.30pm

**BRISTOL LAW SOCIETY 152ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER  
2022 AT 6PM AT THE OFFICE OF BURGESS SALMON, ONE GLASS WHARF, BRISTOL, BS2  
0ZX AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM**

**REPORTS**

**OF**

**REPORT OF THE CO-PRESIDENTS, ERIN SAWYER AND EDWARD THOMPSON  
(Appendix 1)**

**HONORARY SECRETARY, CORALIE McKEIVOR (Appendix 2)**

**HONORARY TREASURER, RACHEL FISHER (Appendix 3)**

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT, STUART HENRY (Appendix 4)**

**BRISTOL LAW SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023**  
**CO-PRESIDENTS' REPORT**

Delivered by Erin Sawyer:

This past year has been a busy one for us all in the Society and especially for the presidential team.

When we said we'd be busy, we've obviously had the new website launch in January, which took a huge amount of work and time, and it looks fantastic and it's working really well.

We're looking at a new way that our corporate members will be able to access historically webinars to replace YouTube. It will be a platform just for BLS. Every corporate member would be able to access and not members won't be able to access it, so it becomes something else that we can offer the membership. We are also looking at a new CRM package, which we hope will revolutionise the way we interact with Council and do a great deal to reduce Helen and Clair's stress levels.

Sadly, we lost 4 Past Presidents this year. Richard Harris, Jack Lyes, John Westcott MBE and, first female president, Nancy Nagle.

The Bristol Pro Bono Group has been refreshed, which helps to plug such an important gap from many in our city. Please, do make sure all of your firms get involved in the group whether that is as paralegal, solicitors, FLEEx, partners or barristers, Rachel Wood and Laura Jones, the co-chairs of the Bristol Pro Bono Group are not with us tonight but do get in touch with them directly to get more involved.

Irwin Mitchell and several of Bristol's Chambers, have come together to launch the Southwest LIPS and the Southwest Appeals scheme supporting unrepresented litigants in the business and property courts and for appeals.

Collaboration, as always, has been at the forefront our Presidency this year and even in our second term, we have this huge sense of pride that being able to tell other local law societies and professions how our members and member firms collaborate and share to make the Bristol legal community even better. For example, firms work together to organise work experience (WELCN) for as many students as possible, come together in CE matters, EDI and Climate.

We continue to live in tumultuous times when division and hatred often seem to be the norm rather than unity and understanding but we see the fantastic work being undertaken, particularly in equality and diversity, not at least in the nominations we received this year. Whilst we may not always be able to control everything in our world, let's all commit again to ensuring that we do our utmost to ensure that the local legal sector is the most inclusive it can be, where people can be their authentic selves and we welcome and champion diversity now and for future generations.

The importance of the community that we work, live and thrive in is not just about those in this room now, but for the future of the Bristol legal profession, the ongoing engagement of you, our Members, will allow Bristol Law Society to continue to support Bristol and remain at the cutting edge of the legal profession and putting the Bristol legal profession at the forefront.

We are also acutely aware of the increasing attacks on our profession, whether that be from government press or even our regulator. We will push back on this narrative in the appropriate professional manner. Speaking of representation, we wouldn't be here and be able to represent you all if we were not so ably supported by our council members. Thank you to all of you for your hard work and giving up your free time. Thank you too to all of our incredible members, now numbering well over 7500, for your continued support in all forms. Without you, we would not be able to work to address issues relevant to our local legal profession.

And even more thanks must go to Helen and Clair for all of your hard work and devotion personally to the society.







We had the battle of the bands, which was a fantastic event. It raised over £2,500 for the Charity of the Year, which were very pleased about and we will be re-running it again next year.

I just want to thank all of you for all again for your support and allowing us to do this job in the way that we've done it. At times, it was a bit of a flying by the seat of our pants as we tried to balance everything but we couldn't have done it without all of your support. So thank you,




**Edward Thompson and Erin Sawyer**  
**Co-Presidents 2021-23**  
**21 November 2023**

## **PRESIDENTIAL REPORT 2022/23** **DECEMBER 2022-NOVEMBER 2023**





### **Key BLS Business Projects**

-  New Website launched in January 2023 developed by Conscious Solutions
-  Review of BLS Corporate governance and setting up of committees
-  Looking at new event platform to host recorded webinar content (currently on BLS YouTube channel)
-  Emphasis in 2023 on junior lawyers who have been dis-proportionately affected by the pandemic
-  Back to F2F conferences and more in person networking events- social and business
-  Looking into new CRM package



### **Council Meetings**

-  10 council meetings (5 in person, 5 online)
-  Exec meetings
-  16 May: BLS Future Exec Roles Meeting





### **Obituaries**

-  Nancy Nagle, 11 February 2023 aged 89, first woman president in 1995/96
-  John Westcott MBE, 21 April 2023, president 1981/82
-  William John 'Jack' Lyes, 8 August 2023, president 1980/81
-  Richard Twining Harris, 10 August 2023, aged 82 President 2000/01





### **Consultations**

-  Submitted Joint V PYSROC letter and press coverage surrounding it
-  Currently reviewing implications of Axiom Ince

### **Webinars and Events**

-  18 webinars
-  16 in-person events incl 3 conferences
-  Annual Awards Dinner 2 November sell out of 430, 30% increase in nominations.
-  2 Managing Partner forum online and 1 in-person drinks reception with Lubna Shuja speaking.

### **Professional Dinners attended**

-  19 January: 91 Ways, High Sheriff and High Court Judges Dinner at VWV (ES, ECT, SH and BH)
-  18 May: Leeds Law Society Annual Legal Dinner (ES)
-  8 June: Manchester Law Society Annual Legal Dinner (ECT)
-  9 June: Bristol Junior Lawyers Division Annual Ball (SH)
-  14 June: Evening with Liverpool Law Society post Joint V (ECT)





22 June: DASLS Legal Awards Dinner (ECT)

9 November: Liverpool Law Society Annual Legal Dinner (ES)

### **Recent Press Coverage**

[Bristol's lawyers-turned-rockers on song as the Legal Battle of the Bands makes a welcome comeback | Bristol Business News \(bristol-business.net\)](#)

[Bristol Business News photo gallery: Legal Battle of the Bands | Bristol Business News \(bristol-business.net\)](#)

**Honorary Secretary Report to AGM - 21 November 2023**

**Resignations**

Ordinary Member's resignations during 2022/2023

The following people resigned during the year:

- Eve Emery (Simmons and Simmons) March 2023.

Ordinary Member's resignations for AGM

In preparation for the new governance structure of Bristol Law Society the ordinary council members have formally submitted their resignations for this AGM:

1. Sarah Bolt (Freeths)
2. Joanne Campbell (VWV)
3. Michael Gupwell (Wards)
4. Benjamin Hanham (TLT)
5. Megan Jefferies and Robert James (Thrings)
6. Salma Maqsood (Barcan+Kirby)
7. Sarah Marchant (Burgess Salmon)
8. Fiona O'Kane (Wombles Bond Dickinson)
9. Huw Ponting (Enable Law (part of Foot Anstey))
10. Leon Smith (DAC Beachcroft)
11. Mo Toqeer (Osborne Clarke)
12. Ryan Williams (Simmons & Simmons)
13. James Woodburn (DAC Beachcroft)

We thank them all for their contributions over the years.

**Nominations for 2023/24**

Nominations for Executive Officers

President: Stuart Henry (Taylor Rose)

Senior Vice President: Coralie McKeivor (Freeths LLP)

Junior Vice President: Salma Maqsood (Barcan+Kirby)

Honorary Treasurer: Rachel Fisher (Stowe Family Law)

Honorary Secretary: Benjamin Hanham (TLT LLP)

Immediate Past Presidents: Erin Sawyer (Irwin Mitchell) and Edward Thompson (Temple Bright)

**Membership**

Corporate Members:

3PB

Albion Chambers

Ashfords

Barcan+Kirby

Beale & Co

Bevan Brittan

Burgess Salmon

Clarke Willmott

CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang

DAC Beachcroft  
The Family Law Practice  
Knights (formerly Meade King)  
Foot Anstey (including Enable Law)  
Freeths LLP  
Guildhall Chambers  
Irwin Mitchell Solicitors  
Lyons Davidson  
Marc White & Co  
Michelmores  
No5 Barristers Chambers  
Osborne Clarke  
Paragon Costs Solutions  
Queen Square Chambers  
RWK Goodman  
Shakespeare Martineau  
Simmons & Simmons  
St John's Chambers  
Thrings  
TLT Solicitors  
Unity Street Chambers  
VWV  
Wards Solicitors  
Womble Bond Dickinson

New Corporate Members for 2022/23:

AMD Solicitors  
Kennedys Law  
Old Square Chambers  
Stone King  
Temple Bright

In addition to our corporate members, I am pleased to report that this year we have been joined by **13** Full members, **0** Associate Member and **52** student members.

**Coralie McKeivor**  
**Honorary Secretary**  
**21 November 2023**

**HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2023**

**Executive Summary**

1. The financial year end for Bristol Law Society is 30 November. The published accounts are for the year to 30 November 2022. Copies have been circulated.

**2021/22**

**Budget**

2. We continued to work through the challenges arising from Covid with staff working from home. We held a successful annual awards dinner and we received rental income for the property.

**Actuals**

3. The Society made a pre-tax loss of £1,096 as stated in the accounts.
4. Income was £183,138 as against £190,186 in the preceding year.
5. Income profile for 21/22 includes subscriptions income, rental income from the property and the income for the annual dinner which of course always comes with substantial costs of sales figures.
6. The Bounceback Loan remains untouched in our #2 account.
7. Expenditure is made up of £47,088 cost of sales (increased slightly from the previous year) and administrative expenses of £131,183 (increased from £71,588 in the previous year).
8. The bulk of the difference relates to the unwinding of depreciation in 2021 (relating to the property - a £35,135 charge) due to reclassifying the property as investment, increase in travel costs after Covid restrictions eased, wage and salary increases in line with inflation and increased professional costs relating to the property lease and John Moriarty's work.

**Conclusions**

9. We made an operating profit of £4,867 and a pre-tax loss overall of £1,096.
10. We closed the year with £75,182 cash (including the Bounceback Loan).
11. We remain in a very strong position with regards to the balance sheet with substantial equity in the property and rental income from the property.
12. A varied and successful programme of seminars were offered, and sponsorship income increased on the previous year.
13. Our Events and Membership Executive, Chief Executive and then Chairman continued to support a substantial programme which offered benefits and good

value to members. Thanks are due to John Moriarty, Helen and Clair who worked extremely hard with their usual spirit and commitment.

### **2022/23 Preview**

14. We are projecting profit on the year in part due to rental income from the property.
15. BLS continued to pay off the mortgage on the property.
16. We ended the year with substantial cash at bank including a sum in #2 Account which included full amount received under the Bounceback Loan.
17. The annual dinner was successful and profitable.
18. We have launched a new website.

### **2023/24 Key Objectives**

19. The property continues to be let on a 10 year lease with a 5 year break clause.
20. Next year's budget will project a profit.
21. Consideration is being given to the possibility of utilising the rental income to reduce our liabilities (namely the mortgage).
22. We continue to review our conference programme with both in-person and virtual events.
23. We will look towards obtaining a CRM system to ensure that we remain productive.

### **Investment/Property**

#### **As per previous reports:**

24. We have converted most of our historic cash reserves into equity in property.
25. The estimated value of the property is £385,000 with outstanding mortgage of £133,000 as at November 2022.
26. Our mortgage continues to decrease by £6-7k per year with repayments of approximately £12k per year.
27. Going forwards the lease on the property will continue to provide income and cover expenses associated with No 12 and consideration is being given to what scope we have to reduce liabilities (BBL and mortgage) in the coming years.

**Rachel Fisher**  
**Honorary Treasurer**  
**21 November 2023**

**BRISTOL LAW SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023**  
**INCOMING PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

I'm told it is traditional for the incoming President to make a short speech and warned it may be included within the minutes of the AGM. The note I received had the word 'short' underlined, which you'll all be pleased to know did not escape my notice, and I have followed the age old advice to follow the 3B's - 'be brief, be sincere, and then be quiet'.

I'm very proud and privileged to be the first CILEx qualified President of Bristol Law Society in its over 250 year long history. I believe it signifies a milestone change in our constitution to reflect the modern and diverse legal profession that we have in the City today. I hope that other non-solicitor legal professionals will be encouraged to play an active role in the Society, and the local legal community, as a result of that change.

While I may be the individual representation of that change, that would not be possible without the complete support and the work put in by the Executive and Solicitors of BLS, who rightly champion that change as much as their non-solicitor counterparts, and so I want to thank the BLS team and membership for their support and encouragement.

I take over from Co-Presidents Erin and Edd, who have also introduced changes that reflect the modern Legal Profession in being the first to share the Presidents' role in order to balance their young families with the demands of the role.

Indeed, their new arrivals began a trend for those in the Vice President's roles to find themselves expecting ... One that I seem to have carried on in both years I have spent as VP, with the arrival of my daughter Scarlett in October 2022 followed by my son Otis, 9 weeks ago. I'm not sure what is about the VP role that makes you so attractive to your partner, but I recommend the role as productive to anyone planning a family!

Joking aside, I think those examples really do highlight the level of support and encouragement that you receive from the entire BLS team, and I would not have felt comfortable taking on the role if that was not the case. Both our Chief Executive Helen, and Clair our Events & Membership Executive and PA to the Presidents, have been a great support to me leading up to this year and will continue to be in the year ahead. Edd and Erin have likewise supported by progress and under their stewardship BLS has been a continued success, and I thank them for the personal support and encouragement as well as for their hard work and dedication over the past 2 years on behalf of the BLS membership.

We would usually have me pin them some medals but I'm told they are in the post and we'll be doing that in January. While we don't have any such gift to hand, please do accept our thanks from all at the BLS exec.

For the year ahead, I hope to put a focus on Social Mobility, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which will be reflected in my choice of Charity and initiatives for the year ahead, details to be announced in December. While there have been improvements in the profession, we are still far from providing a level playing field - not only for those who want to enter the profession, but also for those who wish to excel within it.

This doesn't merely extend to the obvious criteria of race, sex and visible disability. There are still difficulties caused by those invisible dividing factors of family economic status, access to the right standards of education, neurodiversity and invisible disabilities.

I hope during the course of the coming year, we can encourage or inspire some improvement in this area through our work. By educating firms, senior leaders, peers and colleagues on both the needs of those individuals and the benefits that they can contribute to a firm and its clients through their lived experiences; that we may encourage a younger generation to believe that they can enter the profession, no matter the circumstances of their upbringing; and that the current generation of lawyers feel inspired to embrace and respect each other's individuality and create safe and fulfilling places to work, where the peak of career achievements are open to all who aspire to obtain them.

That's all from me, doubtless you'll have plenty of opportunities this year to hear me talk more. But for now I shall close by thanking the BLS members for their confidence in voting me in, and by promising to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the role to the best of my ability in the year ahead.