

Minutes of the Bar Council meeting held on Saturday 20 July 2013 at the Bar Council offices

Present:

Maura McGowan QC Chairman

Nicholas Lavender QC Vice Chairman

Stephen Collier Treasurer

Rt. Hon. Dominic Grieve QC MP Attorney General

57 further members of Bar Council attended.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Oliver Heald QC MP, Mr Keir Starmer QC, Julia Beer, Ayesha Bhutta, Phillip Blatchly, Michael Bowsher QC, Gregory Bull QC, Ivor Collett, Tamsin Cox, Nicholas Cusworth QC, Gemma de Cordova, Tim Devlin, Malcolm Frost, James George, Felicity Gerry, Suzanne Goddard QC, Amina Graham, Peter Grieves-Smith, Susan Grocott QC, Max Hardy, Adam Hiddleston, Barnaby Hone, Michael Kent QC, Lorinda Long, Alistair MacDonald QC, Eleanor Mawrey, Kevin McGinty CBE, Christina Michalos, Sarah Morgan, Stephen Murch, David Nicholls, Lucinda Orr, Robert Rhodes QC, Bernard Richmond QC, Mark Thomas and Nicholas Worsley.

The following did not attend and did not send apologies: Lesley Bates, Ruth Cabeza, Alex Carington, Alex Carlile QC, Glenn Carrasco, Alexandra Healy QC, Edward Henry, Nigel Lithman QC, Fiona McCreath, Sailesh Mehta, Benjamin Myers, Regina Naughton, Winston Roddick QC, Muhammad Saley, Nigel Sangster QC, Geoffrey Tattersall QC and Michael Turner QC.

2. Approval of the minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the June 2013 Bar Council meeting were approved. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

3. Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting, noting that it was a relatively good turnout despite it being a difficult time of the year for conflicting arrangements. However, apologies have not been received by all of those who are not in attendance today. It is now common practice to send letters to those whose attendance falls below the standard set in the Constitution. As elected or appointed members, good attendance is very important. If members do not come to meetings to tell the Council what their constituency thinks, then it is a waste of time. On the odd

occasion when it is not possible to attend, apologies must be sent and consideration given to sending an alternate where appropriate.

The Chairman welcomed Stephen Crowne, the new Chief Executive, who joined just after the last Bar Council meeting. He is already making sterling efforts to bring the Bar Council up to speed. Stephen has issued an invitation to all departments to reduce their spending so that we do not have to look for an increase in practising certificate fee, despite other threats to funding, such as the reduction of the subvention issue. Since the last meeting, the Bar Council has returned leases on half the floors in this building and staff are showing remarkable willingness to make the accommodation project work despite having less than 50% of the current floor space in the future.

The Chairman asked all Bar Council members who are in touch with or have any contact with staff that they are simply trying to do their jobs. They are working in the interests of the Bar and should not bear the brunt of anybody's frustrations.

The Chairman welcomed the Attorney General, who is always supportive of the Bar.

The Chairman said that in relation to the current legal aid consultation, the Bar Council has always consistently and actively engaged with the Ministry of Justice; their definition of 'engagement' may, however, differ. To them, it means the Bar saying that it will take cuts. What the Bar Council is in fact doing is going to them with active proposals to make efficiency savings; experts have been engaged to assist the Bar Council with these proposals in order to ensure that they are workable and bankable. There has been active involvement from the senior judiciary as well, who are supporting suggestions for efficiencies e.g. limiting the number of hearings in any given case.

The Law Society put together a paper which deals with an alternative to price competitive tendering; it deals entirely with their own issues. The aim is to make them - the solicitors - more efficient and capable of withstanding cuts and drops in volume of work. The Chairman wholeheartedly supports what the Law Society is doing on behalf of the solicitors. If they can re-order the duty solicitors' scheme for example, then it is better for them and for the Bar. The Bar Council will continue to do all that it can to protect the interests of the public and the Bar.

Members will have read in the press of a number of cases, including a well-publicised grooming trial, where there has been criticism of the manner in which a vulnerable victim or witness has been cross-examined. There are tales of young, vulnerable girls being in the witness box for twelve days, facing aggressive cross-examination. These stories do not sit well with the public. These instances need to be investigated, explained and understood as appropriate.

There has been a call for training; this already exists for the prosecution and the judiciary, who have to be 'ticketed' before they can take on cases involving sexual offences. Inevitably this must happen for those who defend. It is important that the Bar puts itself forward and gets ahead of the development of any training regime; this is an opportunity to shape the nature of it. The Chairman is working with the BSB, Advocacy Training Council (ATC) and senior judiciary to see if there is a way to prevent the ordeal that people are going through and to avoid the most appalling publicity. Lawyers are never popular and this makes advocates look as if what they are doing is inimical to justice.

The Chairman turned to her [written statement](#) and asked for Bar Council approval for Bar Mutual Indemnity Fund (BMIF) to appoint Jasbir Dhillon QC and Colin Wynter QC as directors. This was approved.

Bar Council also approved the appointment of Chris Convey as a trustee of the Bar Council Scholarship Trust.

The Chairman gave an account of the first joint Council of the Bar Councils of Ireland and Northern Ireland, the first in over 90 years, which was held last month. It was well-attended by key figures both at the Bar and the judiciary and was a phenomenal sign of good things to come. They will always be two Bar Councils, but to see them work so closely together to look at what is coming at them (the South in particular is facing significant regulatory issues), was an honour. The Chairman was delighted to have been present.

On the Bar Council's behalf, the Chairman expressed congratulations to Lord Justice Thomas, who has been appointed as the new Lord Chief Justice. He is a remarkable friend to the Bar. He is a powerful personality with the ear of senior officials at the Ministry of Justice. The valedictory for current Lord Chief Justice is on 30 July and the Chairman has been asked to speak; Lord Judge too has been a great friend and worked very hard for the Bar.

Questions on the Chairman's statement

John Cooper QC (JCQC) said that the South Eastern Circuit is liaising with Inner Temple on a number of initiatives to take forward training relating to vulnerable victims and witnesses. It is right to emphasise that the Bar is dealing with and addressing this issue. The Chairman said that she is aware of a number of initiatives - the CBA is of course already working in this area, the Western Circuit is working with the CPS on it too - but it is important that all this work is co-ordinated and collaborative.

David Wurtzel (DW) said that the idea of ticketing was raised as far back as April

2011 but has never been properly discussed; it is good that it is back at the forefront. The emphasis must be not on a course where advocates sit and listen; they must get on their feet to learn.

JCQC added that he met only yesterday with Inner Temple about designing a course specifically with practical participation. The Chairman said that the ATC seems to be the right place to co-ordinate this.

The Chairman asked that the agenda be taken out of order to allow Guy Fetherstonhaugh QC to address the Council about the Legal Education and Training Review (LETR) as he was unable to stay for the duration of the meeting.

4. Legal Education and Training Review

Guy Fetherstonhaugh QC (GFQC), Chairman of the Training for the Bar Committee, presented this item.

The LETR has been a two-year process. It was set up by the three main legal regulators to undertake the first review of legal education in about 40 years. Three discussion papers invited comments and a great deal of time was spent responding. The report has now been issued six months late; there were worries that it would put a massive bombshell under legal education and training as David Edmonds of the LSB had suggested that legal training is not fit for purpose but it is in fact very complimentary. Derek Wood QC had produced three reports about the way barristers train. The process was fit for purpose after all.

There are 26 recommendations in the LETR report for lawyers and legal trainers. Many are generality; one is to set up an overarching body to co-ordinate legal education and training. There is nothing for the Bar Council to do at the moment. It is for the regulators to consider and produce, perhaps, a consultation paper.

There were no questions.

5. BSB report

Baroness Deech QC (Hon) (RDQC) spoke on behalf of the BSB, with reference to [the report](#) which was circulated ahead of the meeting.

In relation to the LETR, RDQC wished to add a note to what GFQC had said; it is fully expected that the LSB will issue directives to the regulators as to what should be done as a result of the report. The BSB, however, believe that as the recommendations were made to the regulators and not the LSB, these are decisions for the regulators to make. The LSB may well have been expecting more criticism of the legal education system.

RDQC said that the BSB is making progress with the new Handbook, which should be approved very soon. Otherwise, they are waiting to hear the LSB's verdict on QASA and are absorbing the recommendations arising out of the LETR.

Questions for the BSB

Andrew Walker QC (AWQC) expressed concern that the BSB's communications plan in relation to the new Handbook does not say how Heads of Chambers and practitioners will be informed of the changes and how they will affect them. He does not want it to come as a surprise as did the amendments to contractual terms.

Amanda Thompson (AT) said that once approval is received from the LSB, communications will be sent to practitioners and a series of roadshows will be launched.

Nigel Lickley QC (NLIQC) said that he is eagerly awaiting the final details on QASA. Can he assume that the plea only advocate (POA) and Silk issues will have been addressed? RDQC said that POAs are included in the scheme as submitted; it is not in the BSB's power to stop them practising although the BSB has criticised the practice. The BSB is working with the SRA in order to ensure that once QASA is launched, the public know what they are getting. If there are legal aid cuts as currently proposed, funding will be weighted to an early guilty plea - it is essential that members of the public should be made aware that their lawyer may only be equipped to represent them to the plea stage; what is more, they may have a financial incentive to advise them to plead guilty.

NLIQC wished to reiterate that there is still widespread opposition to QASA. RDQC said that she was very well aware of that but the Bar has to remember that the BSB are not lone agents in the construction and implementation of this. POAs have carried out their practice for a long while without previous concerns being expressed, so it is hard to argue against their inclusion in the scheme.

NLIQC asked if RDQC could respond with regard to Silks. RD said that she found it very hard to argue against including Silks of longer standing in the scheme. The BSB is working with QCA to find a way to find a future, more acceptable method of accreditation. RD advised rolling out the scheme and using the review after two years to right any wrongs. The public is forming an unfounded bad impression of barristers; accreditation can only do good.

Stephen Leslie QC (LSQC) issued a warning about leaving amendments to a review; by then it may well be too late to change anything. The fear of most people is that after two years it will be fixed. Therefore, the Bar should try to negotiate as far as possible now.

RDQC disagreed that once a scheme is implemented it cannot be changed; for

example, a much more popular form of CPD is on its way. With QASA, a two-year review is built into it; staff are working on the terms of it now.

RDQC reminded Bar Council of the review of legal services regulation recently launched by the Ministry of Justice; if there are concerns about the system then this is the opportunity to express that view to Government. If everyone does, then things might change. Responses are due in at the beginning of September.

RDQC stressed that the BSB is trying to hold on to the separate regulatory framework of the Bar.

JCQC challenged RDQC's assertion about the public perception of the Bar. A lot of what he has heard is positive; the public do not have an antipathy to the profession, especially when they are properly informed. RDQC said that the publicity has not been good on Twitter and various blogs. It relates to the treatment of vulnerable litigants. JCQC reiterated that he did not believe this to be the case.

The Chairman said that whatever flaws there are in the current regulatory arrangements, the Bar must maintain its separate status from the solicitors' profession. In her view, the Bar does not want to be regulated by a body monopolised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

6. Treasurer's update

Stephen Collier (SC) said that he would make his Treasurer's Report short and then move to consider the accounts for 2012-13. He proposed at the end of this to hand over to Michael Jeans (MJ), Chairman of the new Audit Committee, to talk about the annual accounts from an audit perspective.

PCF consultation

The consultation was launched a week after the last Bar Council meeting; there have been nearly 3,000 responses so far. It closes at the end of July. Reminders have been sent out and members are asked to encourage their constituents to complete the survey. SC apologised for the data protection breach in the last email reminder (wherein email addresses of recipients were disclosed). The Bar Council has reported itself to the Information Commissioner for this error.

Pensions

SC has now heard from Bluefin, which is not prepared to contribute to the costs incurred as a result of their advice in relation to the pension scheme. The Bar Council is now collating all the documents with a view to taking formal advice. In related news, the pensions' investment strategy has been signed off with the trustees.

Premises

As the Chairman mentioned, the Bar Council has now surrendered a number of the leases, effective from March 2014. A staff committee is now in full control of the project with active Finance Committee overview. Although it will be necessary to dig into the reserves, the resources available are sufficient to withstand the funding demands that the initiative will make. However, there will be a need to review the level of reserves as work begins on the 2014/15 budget.

Questions for the Treasurer

Tim Fancourt QC (TFQC) asked whether the landlord has accepted validity of break notice? SC replied that he had, including the lease which covers two floors but the intention is to only surrender one.

Melissa Coutino (MC) said that only last week she was talking to someone about the PCF survey and they had not heard of it; there are still people who know nothing about it. SC said that the Bar Council is doing what it can to push up the response rate as it is very important that the results are representative.

Annual accounts

SC said that he hoped that members did not feel that there were any surprises in the accounts as he has tried to keep everyone up to date with the issues all year. He is happy to take questions; he may not know the answers but Brian Buck, Head of Finance, is in attendance and he does!

The theme in the Chairman's preamble to the accounts is 'taking control'. The Bar Council is trying to be more forward-looking. There are three big issues: pensions, the PCF and premises. What the accounts do not talk about is governance; good governance done well is not noticed. Done badly, it is a real impediment to progress. Over the last few months, governance has been strengthened and levels of scrutiny have increased. SC hopes it has not been noticed! The arrival of a new Chief Executive is a breath of fresh air and a great platform for the future.

The accounts paint an interesting view; if you start on page 21, it appears that there was a deficit. If you start on page 22 it appears that there was an overall gain. Both are correct statements of fact but the difference is explained by, and the accounts are dominated by, recognition of the impact made by the resolution of the pension issues.

The balance sheets for the whole of the Bar Council show a positive position in terms of net assets and reserves. The reserves are the buffer that protects the organisation on month-to-month service delivery; about 3 months' worth of expenditure. They are in reasonable shape.

The last pensions evaluation was undertaken in 2009, at which point there was a

£6m deficit. There was a current exposure of about £2.7m at the 2012 valuation and the Bar Council and the trustees have reached a settlement that this will be funded at £41k per month. Although this is greater than the £30k that was being paid, it is much less than £100+k which the organisation would have had to pay from January 2014. There is now hope of funding the scheme through the normal course instead of levying the profession.

SC said that over the last five years, overall Bar Council expenditure had gone up by 50% but the Bar has remained static in terms of numbers. There is a clear message that the organisation has to look at its cost base. There are other efficiencies which can be made in addition to premises and pensions, and this is one of the challenges for Stephen Crowne, the new Chief Executive. He is already having a real impact.

7. Draft financial statements: for approval

Michael Jeans (MJ) thanked all members of staff, SC, Oliver Delany and Brian Buck for the welcome they have given him and how cooperative they have been.

The Terms of Reference and membership of the Audit Committee can be found on pages 15-17 in financial statements; they do not have to be included but it is current best practice.

MJ wished to make five points:

- The financial statements have been audited by external auditors, who report that everything is properly shown;
- The Audit Committee spent a long time reviewing these statements and questioning the auditors and staff. They too were entirely satisfied;
- The Audit Committee met separately with external auditors without the Treasurer or staff in order to allow a frank discussion. Again, they reported no problems; the audit process went smoothly;
- The external auditors produced a management letter, which is sent at end of audit, raising any issues that need to be raised. They raised nothing, not even anything minor;
- MJ is now required to ask Bar Council to approve the statements.

MJ said that he hoped that the Audit Committee has discharged its responsibilities to Bar Council's satisfaction.

The external auditors' contract ended after the last round and the Audit Committee must now make another appointment. They have commenced a tendering exercise which is due to conclude in early 2014, in time for the next audit. Appointment will be subject to Bar Council's approval. Up to five firms have been invited to tender, including the current auditors.

Bar Council will recall that the Audit Committee's terms of reference created a problem with meetings being quorate. Those members nominated by BSB or BC have to attend for it to be quorate, but it is not always possible for them to attend meetings and not always easy to appoint an alternate at late notice. MJ will produce a short paper for the next available Bar Council meeting to allow quorum to be present with greater ease. It is not satisfactory position at the moment.

Bar Council will also recall that permission was given to MJ to appoint two members of the committee at short notice as it was not possible to do so quickly whilst abiding by the Nolan Principles. It is now possible to do so and a recruitment process will run in September.

SC proposed, and Bar Council approved, the draft financial statements.

SC reported that this was Brian Buck's last meeting as Head of Finance after 15 years. SC wished to thank Brian personally, on behalf of Bar Council and all former Treasurers for all his endeavours. Brian has introduced a huge number of changes for which he should be congratulated. SC thanked him for his calm, collected and good humoured way of working.

Bar Council thanked Brian Buck by way of a round of applause.

The Chairman added to this her thanks to SC, whose work is unpaid yet tireless. Justifying accounts to Bar Council has never been easy; she is unsure whether it is better now that they all understand what has been discussed? SC has had to deal with some very difficult legacies, which he has done with considerable skill and charm. The Bar Council owes him an enormous debt of gratitude.

8. Legal aid consultation communications strategy

Toby Craig (TC), Head of Communications, referred to Annex A. The Communications Team are often asked what they are doing to get the Bar's message 'out there', so he wanted to report back on what has been achieved during the period of consultation on legal aid.

Annex A is a round-up of key pieces of coverage from the lead-up to the consultation and the present day but it is important to explain that this represents phase one; the team is getting ready for phase two. There is more yet to come.

The summary does not represent simply what was generated by issuing press releases; a lot of work was also undertaken to find dynamic hooks upon which to get the press and public interested. Key relationships with journalists have been critical, as has presenting strong arguments and emphasising that opposition to the cuts is

about justice, not money.

It has helped enormously that the profession has shown a united front. The Bar Council's voice has been a constant presence, with a number of representatives going on the record on the Bar's behalf. The Chairman has undertaken a great deal of the press work, but mention should also go to Hannah Kinch, who has done an outstanding job explaining the life of a young barrister.

The Bar Council has been very pleased with the coverage arising out of the ComRes poll, 'Legal Aid Question Time' and the Chairman's appearance on Any Questions.

There has been a very positive response on social media; the profession has engaged in ways TC has never seen before.

TC stressed that this round-up is not designed for anybody to take any credit. It is to congratulate those who promoted the Bar's response to this consultation. The number of people who have signed the petitions shows that this is not just the profession looking to protect itself.

The Chairman gave her thanks to TC and the Communications Team. She has been encouraged by the joint working in a time of adversity; for example, the Bar Council is now closer to the Law Society than it has been in many years. It is good to maintain - where appropriate - that relationship. During this difficult time, each subdivision of the profession has moved in the same direction; there may have been disagreements but a united front has been maintained.

There were no questions.

9. Law Reform Committee: for report

Stephen Worthington QC (SWQC), Chairman of the Law Reform Committee, attended to speak to this item. The main function of the committee is to respond to consultation papers from government departments and others. The philosophy is that the committee is making recommendations in the public interest and it shies away from political issues; he has found that this stance has been very successful. The committee is seen to be non-partisan and trusted. For example, if the committee is unable to respond to a consultation within the given deadline, it is always given an extension because it is held in such high esteem.

There is a great deal of breadth and depth within the membership. It is usually possible to produce a response from within the committee. Sometimes responses are submitted jointly with an SBA. Where there is not relevant expertise within the committee, it can always find people from outside who are happy to muck in without getting anything for it; that says a lot about the character of the Bar.

In last 12 months, the committee has responded to 32 consultations.

The highlight of the year is the Law Reform lecture. Held at Inner Temple, usually 200-250 members of Bar and Judiciary attend. SWQC encouraged all Bar Council members to come to that this year; Lord Judge, a terrific orator, will be giving the address and as he will have retired by then will hopefully not be restrained in expressing his views. He will be talking about law reform in relation to vulnerable witnesses. The lecture will be followed by the prize giving for the Law Reform essay competition.

The committee has a good relationship with the Law Commission. In the recent triennial review there was a suggestion of removing the Commission's autonomy. This was considered with some dismay as their independence is critical. SWQC, the Chairman and Michael Todd QC all wrote to Government to oppose the proposal. Lobbying has been successful and it was announced this week that the Commission's independence will be maintained. Sir David Lloyd Jones is coming to the Law Reform Committee's next meeting to discuss the Law Commission's 12th programme of law reform topics.

There were no questions.

10. Employed Barristers' Committee: for report

Melissa Coutino (MC) and Amanda-Jane Field, Co-Chairs of the Employed Barristers' Committee, presented this item. The numbers at the practising Bar have remained static but the employed part has not grown disproportionately; in fact, it has shrunk slightly. The EBC has 25 members to date with an enormous breadth of expertise.

The EB conference at the beginning of the year managed to cover a wide range of topics.

At the start of this year, questions arose whether Bar is at a disadvantage owing to competency-based applications. There appears to be an appetite for the committee to assist those who may want to move from self-employed practice to employed practice or to do more employed work. Proposals will be worked up but there will be mentoring in the future.

The committee is working on the next edition of its newsletter; it has been re-designed and will be available online. It will raise issues of particular interest and gather support for the committee's projects. They hope to use this medium more often in the future to communicate with the self-employed Bar.

There will be two seminars in the autumn which will offer CPD; the committee intends to use these as a means to encourage more engagement with employed Bar and the Bar Council. It is a good way for members to gain contacts within the profession.

The committee is also working to prepare its session at the Bar Conference in November. The focus will be on barristers practising in a dual capacity; the committee has been informed that there are 161 barristers practising in this way. It is hoped that some of them will speak about their experiences.

Two projects have come about in collaboration with the Legal Services Committee. The first is the mentoring service for those looking for assistance with QC applications and seeking Judicial appointment. The service is for the whole Bar. A further strand to assist those looking to move from self-employed to employed practice is underway. Thanks were given to Richard Salter QC (RSQC) and the Legal Services Committee for all their assistance. The committee is also grateful for support from the Equality and Diversity Committee.

The Bar Nursery at Smithfield House was launched in April; the feedback has been very positive. Again, thanks are due to the Legal Services Committee.

The committee hopes that these projects are the first of many where EBC will work with other committees and focus on similarities instead of differences.

11. Young Barristers' Committee: for report

Hannah Kinch (HK), Chairman of the Young Barristers' Committee, spoke to this item. The committee's agenda has been dominated by the legal aid consultation; HK thanked the committee for all the hard work they put into the response. They covered every aspect of the consultation and expertise was drawn from many different practice areas.

The committee was keen to make sure that they put in a well-argued, focussed response. One of the most irritating things about the proposals is the claim that the junior end of the Bar will benefit from them. This is untrue but the committee did not want to be seen to be simply jumping up and down and shouting; it was important that the response was rational and the argument against the proposals given in detail. HK hopes that it sent a loud message that the young Bar will not be used as a justification for the cuts. The committee eagerly awaits the second consultation in September.

HK also wished to thank the Bar Council Communications Team; the committee were very keen to get their point across to the public and that can be very difficult but because of their efforts the committee could take advantage of opportunities in

the press.

A personal highlight for HK was going on Circuit visits with the Chairman. HK thanked the Circuit Leaders and the young barristers for their hospitality. HK found it extremely helpful to get out to the Circuits and hear what the concerns are. The next YBC meeting will be on 6 September in Leeds.

HK was also invited to speak at the Commonwealth Law Conference in Cape Town on the subject of: "Junior lawyers: an inconvenient truth". It sounded ominous! It was good that she had not realised that she was being watched by Lord Judge, or she would have even more nervous. It was a fantastic conference and really valuable to hear shared experiences from across the Commonwealth; many problems are shared.

The YBC conference is on 5 October at the Hotel Russell in London. The committee is very grateful for sponsorship already received; if any SBAs have not yet responded to her request for financial assistance, it is not too late to make a contribution! The committee are trying to keep costs as low as possible so that as many people as possible can attend.

There will be a dinner on the evening before the conference to mark ten years of the conference. It is very easy to get bogged down in the misery and forget the positive aspects of being in the profession and the collegiality involved. The dinner is designed to put the miserable aspects to one side just for one night. The committee is grateful to COMBAR, ChBA and TECBAR for sponsorship. Tickets will be on sale soon and will be subsidised.

HK thanked the members of the Bar Council executive who have supported them. Emma Brickell, who was a great support, recently left and Jess Campbell stepped in to help; it was a particularly challenging time for her as she was a key part in preparing the Bar Council's response to the legal aid consultation. She has done a fantastic job. Natalie Darby has now taken over and is already doing marvellously.

Charlie Cory-Wright QC (CCWQC), Chair of PIBA, said that they are working on an initiative to try to make sure that practitioners most affected by the funding changes (e.g. LASPO) are aware of the changes and supported through them. This is mostly the young Bar. There must be an imaginative way to look at how people work together to get through the early years. Any joined up thinking as to how this can operate is welcome.

The Chairman thanked HK for her enthusiasm and good humour. With reference to the Commonwealth Law Conference, HK's conduct was commented upon by Lord Judge as a credit to the Bar of England and Wales.

12. Any other business

The Chairman welcomed Robin Allen QC, who takes over from Kim Hollis QC as Chairman of the Equality and Diversity Committee, and Sam Mercer who has taken over from Pam Bhalla as Equality and Diversity Adviser.

With reference to the review of regulation of legal services, the Chairman encouraged everybody to respond but, if there are any comments that should be taken into consideration, practitioners and chambers are encouraged to channel them through their Circuit, SBA or the Bar Council.

The Chairman also welcomed Andrew Langdon QC, who will become Leader of the Western Circuit in the autumn and Tony Cross QC, who becomes Vice-Chairman of the CBA in September.

The Chairman stressed that the PCF consultation is incredibly important. No-one has the right to moan about the way the fee is levied if they cannot be bothered to fill in the survey. The Chairman noted that neither the Chairman nor the Vice-Chairman of the CBA were at the meeting but asked any other CBA committee members present to ask that their constituency is reminded of the review.

The Social Mobility placement week has been a tremendous success; the enthusiasm shown by the students was incredible. It is a tragedy that if they all decided to come to the Bar, that would be a quarter or a third of an entire year's intake. They may not choose to go down that route, but showing them what it is like on the inside gives them the encouragement to understand that there is no bar on them joining a profession. The Chairman gave her personal thanks to Taryn Lee QC and Oliver Williams, who worked tirelessly to set this up. It is one of the things that the Bar Council does of which the Chairman is most proud.

The same applies to the National Bar Mock Trial Competition. It is staggering to see how much interest and enthusiasm there is. For those SBAs and Circuits which have helped by way of donation - thank you. If any SBA or Circuit no longer makes a contribution, she urges them to reconsider their position as this activity is so worthwhile.

The AGM is the next occasion on which the Council meets. The Chairman understands the reasons for low attendance today - such as holidays and weddings. However, can there please be a decent turnout at the AGM. On the last occasion, there was only one non-member of Bar Council present. The Chairman encouraged attendance and even putting forward a motion!

In the meantime, everyone is encouraged to continue sending in their emails about

matters of concern or interest, including the legal aid consultation, LASPO and regulation.

13. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 10.00 on Saturday, 21 September 2013 in the Bar Council offices, followed by the AGM at 11.00.