



Chair's Report to the City of London Law Society's Annual General Meeting

23rd June 2021

Despite everything, this year has been busy. I regret that, because of Covid restrictions, I have not been able to meet with the Senior Partners of our member firms but we have maintained communications through emails and the periodic newsletter. I do hope the newsletter reaches individual members and is helpful in publicising the work of the Society.

Our excellent Committees have been particularly busy. In his briefing of me for this meeting, Kevin Hart has listed multiple submissions to consultations and calls for evidence from Government, Regulators and other public bodies from 15 of our Committees. Details are in the newsletters and I cannot sensibly list all of those submissions. However, the topics for submissions included: audit reform, the National Security and Investment Bill, corporate reporting and climate-related disclosure, the Economic Crime Levy, data transfer, the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill, the review of Administrative Law, crypto-assets and transfer pricing. In addition, the Training Committee has continued to work with the SRA on its new Handbook and the introduction of SQE. The Land Law Committee has increased the number of its much-used precedents and the Construction Law Committee is preparing its next popular three day training course in November. A welcome development is the increased joint working of our Committees with those of the National Law Society.

Indeed increased working with the Law Society has been a feature of the year. We meet regularly and we have worked together to respond to Government on their proposals on the Economic Crime Levy and their calls for evidence on the effects of Covid and Brexit. The Law Society has also worked with our member firms on managing the effects of Covid and on access for lawyers to the EU Member States after Brexit. This cooperation is most welcome.

As is that with the SRA. I have already referred to the work of our Training Committee with the SRA. David and I meet regularly with them and the Society and the SRA hold twice annual symposiums for members. The two most recent events focussed on the SQE and on mental health.

There have been a number of new initiatives and contacts. The Law Commission sought our views on what might be in their next report to Government. The inaugural Gray's Inn/CLLS Lecture was delivered by Ali Malek QC, the Master Treasurer of the Inn, on the role of the Inn in the City post-Brexit. I am particularly pleased with developments in the field of social mobility. The number of our member firms that support City Solicitors Horizons' work with disadvantaged students increased with their next round of funding. In addition, 15 member firms have participated in the first phase of a joint project, Levelling up Law, with the Social Mobility Pledge aimed at improving access to the law for disadvantaged students from non-Russell Group Universities. It is hoped that the initiative will provide a template for other sectors and that more firms will join future phases of the project.

Finally, some thank yous. Thank you to Katy and the team at Project Associates for their work in publicising the work of the Society and its Committees. My heartfelt thanks to Denise Llewellyn, Linzi James, Liz Thomas, Kevin Hart, David Hobart, Tony King and our President and Master of the Company, Robert Bell for their hard work in difficult times and their various roles in organising me and keeping me out of trouble.

**EDWARD SPARROW
CHAIR
CITY OF LONDON LAW SOCIETY**