

## **Issue: January 2016**

### **Happy New Year!**

Out with the old, in with the new....

A belated happy new year to all. We are all hoping for some stability and good news in 2016 and everyone on the CLSA committee is working hard on behalf of the entire profession.

Can we firstly thank both Bill Waddington and Robin Murray for their sterling efforts over the past 3 years. Without a doubt, the most challenging and stressful of times. JRs won and lost, numerous consultations, conferences and countless meetings meant they both gave up their own time voluntarily in an effort to promote and protect all who practise criminal law.

We welcome Zoe Gascoyne the new Chair and Sarah Grace, her Vice Chair. They have taken their roles in turbulent times, but have succeeded in getting the voice of the CLSA heard. Since starting there have been regular meetings with the LAA, the MOJ, and the CBA. They have already worked hard on the advocacy consultation and are overseeing groups working on a reform to the LGFS, their early tenure has been anything but quiet!

The CLSA is working with the MOJ to promote Solicitors and their role. There has been concern in relation to attempts by the Bar Council to undermine the role of HCAs. This was directly addressed by the Chair in a meeting she requested with the MoJ and the Criminal Bar Association during which she expressed concern about transparency. The MoJ has yet to respond to the consultation and we understand the responses are still being considered.

### **Two Tier**

There have been many comments made by our members in relation to the CLSA position and the on-going Judicial Review. The CLSA is not party to the Judicial Review, some of

our members were awarded contracts, some were not. The Judicial Review is being brought by a group of individual firms who are challenging the marking of their own tenders. We cannot and should not be involved in this particular action. The CLSA maintain that the two tier process is flawed and that it will damage access to justice. We continue to engage with the MoJ and LAA and maintain that there are alternative ways of reforming the system and making savings. The CLSA also maintain that the profession should not have been made subject to the second 8.75% cut and continue to make representations in relation to the on-going impact of such cuts.

Above all we will continue to fight for the survival of as many of the profession as we possibly can and that will never change whether your firm is a potential duty contract holder or not.

### **What's New?**

We are looking at what benefits we can provide for our members. We are all working criminal practitioners and so are acutely aware of the practical difficulties of the profession. We are working on proposals to enable members to signpost and provide support within the group for answers to questions on matters of law, procedure and costs. We are considering how we can assist our members finding agents at short notice and are in the process of building up a database. Please bear with us, it won't happen overnight, but it is a work in progress. We are listening to our members and will endeavour to improve communication. We appreciate all feedback and take our members views seriously.

## **Students**

We cannot ignore the need of the younger, aspiring entrants to the profession, and have begun to contact universities and colleges to help those with an eye on the future of the profession, to have access to mentors, possible work experience and to signpost where possible.

## **Consultations**

The consultation on the Criminal Procedure Rules ends on 26th February, we are working on the response to the consultation and will have a template and suggestions ready within 14 days. Please remember that this affects you all and the more voices that are heard, the more impact we will make. We appreciate that time is precious and will provide whatever assistance that we can.

## **Membership**

The CLSA is now recognised as a leading representative body for the profession. It is essential that we are fully supported by as many of the profession at such a critical time which means increasing our members. We are about to introduce a discounted firm membership which will benefit both new and existing members. Please look out for this and help us by ensuring that your colleagues locally are aware of the same. The stronger the CLSA membership, the better our ability to provide the most effective representation on behalf of the profession.

## **Meet the Committee**

The CLSA want to be as effective as possible in representing their members. In order to achieve this it is important for members to get to know the committee and to have the ability to contact them directly should the need arise. In each newsletter we will introduce two members. Our first introductions are from the Chair and Vice Chair.

## **Chair - Zoe Gascoyne**

Zoe was appointed Chair in October 2015. She is a partner at Quinn Melville in Liverpool, which is a specialist crime and serious fraud practice. Zoe attends court on a very regular basis and is only too aware of the pressures faced by criminal lawyers. She is the current Chief Assessor for The Law Society and previously spent nine years marking for Datalaw.

Zoe is married with three children; a seven year old and four year old twins and it goes without saying that she has no spare time!

Zoe can be contacted at

[zgascoyne@quinn-melville.co.uk](mailto:zgascoyne@quinn-melville.co.uk)

## **Vice Chair - Sarah Grace**

Sarah is a small firm owner based in Cardiff. She is a member of the Council of The Cardiff & District Law Society and recently appointed Defence Representative for the South Wales LIT.

Sarah joined the CLSA and its committee because she wanted to be heard on issues affecting access to justice and the way that we operate within the CJS.

Sarah is honoured to succeed the role of Vice Chair from Robin Murray and looks forward to building on our hard-won position of strength.

Sarah can be contacted at

[sgrace@morganscriminallaw.co.uk](mailto:sgrace@morganscriminallaw.co.uk)

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