**Information paper on the three resolutions to amend the Society’s Constitution at the Annual General Meeting 2021**

The current constitution of the Law Society can be seen [here](https://www.lawscot.org.uk/about-us/strategy-reports-plans/constitution/).

Any changes to the constitution must be approved by a two-thirds majority of members voting at a general meeting of the Society.

The approved three areas of reform to the constitution.

1. *Creating gender neutral terms*

The current constitution contains several gender-specific terms, for example referring to members and the President as ‘he’ or ‘him’ and directions to contact Council members at ‘his place of business’ etc.

In line with our ongoing work on inclusion, equality and diversity, it is proposed that these terms be replaced with the gender-neutral terms; ‘they’, ‘their’ etc.

1. *Continuity of office bearer duties in exceptional circumstances*

The Vice-President assumes the responsibilities of the President in the event of the President being granted a leave of absence. However, there is no provision if, for whatever reason, both the President and Vice-President are not available to undertake their duties. While the chances of such a situation arising are unlikely, the impact of COVID-19 has underlined how such a situation could arise.

It is therefore proposed that a new clause be inserted into the constitution. This is based on the premise that the Past President, as defined in Section 15(10), should undertake the necessary responsibilities. If the Past President is not able or not willing to undertake these responsibilities, then the Council would be invited to select another member to assume the President’s responsibilities for a defined period before the serving President returns from their leave of absence.

1. Representation on Council for members in Northern Ireland

There is an anomaly in the constitution whereby Scottish solicitors in Northern Ireland are not represented by an elected constituency member on Council. These interests are considered to be covered by the co-opted Council member representing ‘international’ solicitors.

There are currently six Law Society members in Northern Ireland. It is proposed that the constitution be changed so these members and any future Scottish solicitors in Northern Ireland are covered by expanding the ‘England and Wales’ constituency.