

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 2021

Minute (draft) of the Annual General Meeting of the Law Society of Scotland held via telephone and video conference on 27 May 2021 at 17:30

Present: Amanda Millar (President), Ken Dalling (Vice President), Gillian Alexander, George Allen, Colin Anderson, Alison Atack, Michael Ballantyne, Mike Blair, Joseph Boyd, Andrew Bradley, Iain Burke, Sue Carter, Michael Clancy, Johnston Clark, Ken Dalling, Jane Dickers, Murray Etherington, Patricia Ferguson, Shaun George, Myrto Gkika, Paul Gostelow, Colin Graham, Gwen Haggerty, Andrew Hinstridge, Muhammad Ibraheem, David Johnston, James Keegan, Michael Kuszniir, Kirsty Laing, Anne Macdonald, Elaine MacGlone, Ryan McCuaig, Zoe McDonnell, Rod McKenzie, Fiona McKinnon, Morag McLintock, Jackie McRae, Fiona Menzies, John Mulholland, Peter Murray, Beatrice Nicholas, Peter Nicholson, James Reid, John Skipper, Jim Stephenson, Sheekha Saha, Andrew Stevenson, Elspeth Talbot, Marjorie Townsend, Gordon Watson, Graham Watson, Alan Watt, Sheila Webster, Derrick Williamson, Debbie Wilson-McCuish, Rachel Wood.

In attendance: Lorna Jack (Chief Executive), David Cullen (Registrar), and from time to time other members of the Society's Executive. Alastair Rae from BDO, Auditors (for part of the meeting).

1.	<p><b><u>Welcome</u></b></p> <p>The President welcomed everyone to the 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Law Society of Scotland (the "Society").</p>
2.	<p><b><u>HONORARY MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOCIETY – PRESENTATION TO COLIN CAMERON</u></b></p> <p>The meeting opened with the presentation to retired solicitor Colin Cameron of honorary life membership of the Society, for his commitment to the people of Malawi over more than 60 years.</p> <p>As he admitted in his thanks, Colin did not set out for the then colony of Nyasaland, on qualifying as solicitor in 1957, from any altruistic motive, but for the sole purpose of a salary with which he could afford to marry his wife, Alison. Travelling via South Africa, he had his eyes opened to apartheid, and against his expectations found Nyasaland to be little different in practice. However, he and Alison became involved with the local people, to the extent that he played a key role in negotiating the country's independence in 1964. He became the only European in the first Malawian cabinet, only to resign months later when Prime Minister Banda reintroduced detention without trial.</p> <p>Eventually returning to Scotland, he established his own legal practice in Irvine, retiring in 2003, but always retained close links with Malawi, and on a change of Government in 1994 was invited to become Honorary Consul</p>

	<p>to Scotland, serving until 2009. On the Scotland-Malawi partnership, which he was instrumental in creating, he said: “I feel that other similar countries could do well to follow that same model.”</p> <p>Paying tribute, the President described Colin Cameron as “a true ambassador for the profession, showing the impact and influence a Scottish solicitor can have on a global stage”.</p> <p>As this was the first time we had recognised an Honorary member virtually, Alison kindly presented the quaich and scroll.</p>
3.	<p><b><u>Approval of the Minutes from the General Meetings held in 2020</u></b></p> <p>The Meeting considered and approved the Minute of the AGM held last year.</p>
4.	<p><b><u>The President’s Address</u></b></p> <p>Reviewing the year, President Amanda Millar said it had been spent facing up to the challenge of COVID. She had put her name forward to become the first visibly LGBT President, but it was clear what would dominate by the time she took office. She had also wanted to stand up for the profession, the consumer and for the rule of law and access to justice – all of which had remained true, though as respects the last two she had not expected to have to fight for them “quite so close to home, quite so regularly”.</p> <p>Support for members had been required at “never before seen levels” (Lorna Jack told the meeting that enquiries to Professional Practice more than doubled to 28,500), as everyone tried to adjust to new rules and ways of working. The expertise of the Society’s staff, volunteers and committees had never been more important, and they had outdone themselves in their contribution.</p> <p>Solicitors also had to find time to take care of themselves and look after their own wellbeing, otherwise they would not be able to take care of their clients.</p> <p>In a “sink or swim” scenario, the President was incredibly proud of how the profession had swum in very difficult circumstances. Our principles had been tested but retaining them remained a fundamental part of our civil society, and they could not be sacrificed on grounds of expediency.</p>
5.	<p><b><u>Adoption of Reports</u></b></p> <p>The Meeting considered and approved the reports from The Treasurer, the Client Protection/Guarantee Fund Convener, the Audit Committee Convener, the Lawscot Foundation Board of Trustees and Convener of</p>

	the Scottish Solicitors' Benevolent Fund (SSBF) for the period 1 November 2019 to 31 October 2020.
6.	<p><b><u>Chief Executive's Report</u></b></p> <p>Chief executive Lorna Jack recorded how the Society had remained focused on "leading legal excellence" despite the disruption: its priority had been to emphasise the importance of the legal profession, and what members had needed from the Society to continue to support their clients. However, it had still taken forward the bulk of its original operating plan and completed more than half of the set goals.</p> <p>It could now carry out remote inspections of practices, CPD had switched to a comprehensive online programme of training, and online member engagement had attracted more people from across the country and beyond.</p> <p>And despite all the difficulties for the profession, membership had still grown, to over 12,300 solicitors at the year end, along with now more than 2,600 student associates.</p>
7.	<p><b><u>Resolution number 1 – approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Society and the Client Protection Fund for 2019/20.</u></b></p> <p>The Meeting noted and approved Resolution Number 1 on "The approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Society and the Client Protection Fund for 2019/20."</p> <p>The accounts for 2019-20, adopted by the meeting, showed the Society making a surplus of £410,000 – a year when it was funded by the higher fee but had its activities curtailed for more than half the year. The 20% fee cut was made through budgeting for a loss of £1.5 million in 2020-21.</p>
8.	<p><b><u>Resolution number 2 - Appointment of BDO as the Auditors to the Society and Client Protection/Guarantee Fund for 2020/21</u></b></p> <p>The Meeting noted and approved Resolution Number 2 on "The appointment of the Auditors to the Society and the Client Protection Fund for 2020/21."</p>
9.	<p><b><u>Resolution number 3 – Practising Certificate fee of £517.50 for 2021/22.</u></b></p> <p>The Meeting noted and approved Resolution Number 3 on "That, as from 1 November 2021, the Annual Subscription payable by each member of the Society holding a Practising Certificate will be £517.50.</p> <p>Scottish solicitors will pay a practising certificate fee of £517.50 in 2021-22, 10% less than the pre-pandemic cost in 2019-20.</p>

	<p>The reduction follows the 20% cut for the 2020/21 practice year and was set to provide some continuing support during the recovery phase from COVID-19.</p>
10.	<p><b><u>Amendments to the Constitution – resolutions numbers 4, 5 and 6</u></b></p> <p>Following a presentation by Sheila Webster the meeting unanimously approved three constitutional resolutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacing male-gendered references to solicitors with gender-neutral terms:</li> <li>• Extending the England &amp; Wales Council constituency to include Scottish solicitors working in Northern Ireland; and</li> <li>• Allowing presidential duties to be carried out by the Past President or another member appointed by Council, should the President and Vice President both be temporarily unavailable.</li> </ul>
11.	<p><b><u>Practice rules amendments – for information</u></b></p> <p>The President presented draft practice rules for information including rules to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend the signature requirements for accounts and AML certificates,</li> <li>• The timing of the latter, all in line with current practice,</li> <li>• Provide for charges for AML reinspections or reinvestigations where Council considers these necessary.</li> </ul> <p>These draft practice rules attracted no comments and will be taken forward by the Regulatory Committee.</p>
12.	<p><b><u>Conclusion of the Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The President thanked all members who had attended. The President also thanked everyone at the Society who had made the holding of this Meeting possible.</p> <p>There being no other business, the Meeting ended at 19:20pm</p>