**Report of the trustees of the Law Society of Scotland Education Foundation (“The Lawscot Foundation”) SCIO Registered Scottish charity number SC046547**

**Annual General Meeting – 2020**

The Law Society of Scotland established the Lawscot Foundation as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) in 2016 and donated an initial £261,000 arising from the proceeds of the sale of Legal Post. The aim of the Foundation is to support students from less advantaged backgrounds through their route to qualification by provision of an annual £2500 bursary for each of the five years of study and a mentoring relationship with a solicitor.

The Foundation has a board of ten trustees who determine its strategy, decide which applicants should be supported, and oversee fundraising. Twenty-five students are currently being supported across three years of study. Over the first three years of operation, a total of 169 applications have been received; due to the level of funds available, trustees have been unable to support 144 of them.

Fundraising in the last financial year totalled £82,500. The fundraising target for the current year is £80,000. Of that target only £15,000 is guaranteed from firms which have committed to make contributions over a number of years. While other firms and organisations have donated more than once in previous years there is no formal ongoing commitment in place. Additionally, a few individuals are making monthly donations, totalling £1,500 per annum.

Covid 19 has had and continues to have a major impact on fundraising for the Lawscot Foundation. Two major annual fundraising events were held before lockdown commenced - the Christmas Baublefest campaign and the Law Society’s annual dinner – but other fundraising events, the Battle of the Bands, all of the Kiltwalk events and quiz nights have been cancelled and the bake sale day that was a significant fundraiser last year is unlikely to be able to go ahead. In addition, the value of the Foundation’s investments has dropped by 14%.Although new fundraising initiatives are being pursued to compensate for cancelled events, they are unlikely to attract the same level of fundraising.

The consequences of reduced fundraising are that trustees will have some very difficult decisions to make when considering new applicants this year. We already know that the 25 students currently being sponsored are experiencing increased financial pressures through loss of student jobs, with some reporting that they are unable to meet the cost of their rent over the coming months. This is happening in a year when students from less advantaged backgrounds will be disproportionately affected by loss of jobs, housing difficulties and the potential of university teaching being delivered by online provision which will require laptops, reliable wifi connections, a quiet space to study and access to study materials which would normally be available in university libraries. The support of the Foundation to assist students with the ability and determination to access a career in law but who would be prevented from doing so by their financial circumstances is more important than ever.