

OPEN UNIVERSITY LAW SOCIETY



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Society Committee

Sunday 29th September 2024

MINUTES

The minutes of the 3rd meeting of the 2024/25 Society Committee held online on Sunday 29th September 2024.

Present:

Patricia Thomson	Chair
Mark Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle	Treasurer
William Brazier	Secretary
Ryan Greene	Vice-chair

Agenda:

Ms Thomson convened the meeting to discuss and debrief on various matters pertaining to the society's recent activities.

Welcome

Patricia Thomson, Committee Chair, welcomed everyone to the 2024/25 Society Committee's 3rd meeting.

During the welcome, Mr Brazier stated that he was just about to begin his third-year studies during conversation with the other committee members, to which Mr Greene

offered unsolicited advice to the effect of committing plagiarism. This advice was challenged by each of the committee members. Upon this challenge, Mr Greene did state that he had never used such a method.

Housekeeping

N/A.

Absent

N/A.

Minutes of the last meeting

N/A.

Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

N/A.

Report

Ms Thomson

Ms Thomson informed the society that the bank card for the PayPal payments account has been located. This means that Ms Thomson will no longer have to pay for society costs out of her own budget and repay herself from the society accounts.

The society's Zoom subscription has been renewed on a more cost-effective plan. Before, the subscription allowed for 100 people per meeting, and a webinar of up to 500. However, the renewed subscription can hold 100 people per meeting, without the webinar feature. It was felt this was no longer needed. The total cost for this is now £160 per year.

Ms Thomson held a mooting workshop online. Out of the 120 people who signed up, only 40 participated. Additionally, Ms Thomson held a mooting competition in Nottingham. Out of the 70 people who signed up, only 20 attended. 8 people went through to the second round.

A Ms Francine Ryan at the OU Law School is currently developing a software that allows for 'mock trials' to be held online. The society will trial this during a moot competition later in October.

In relation to the Inner Temple tour, Ms Thomson informed the society that out of the 23 members who signed up, 9 attended.

Also, the Royal Courts of Justice tour is coming up, with two cancellations thus far.

Ms Thomson pressed the importance for the External competition teams needing to be put forward by the end of October.

Ms Thomson would like to host a second moot competition in London, due to its central location, and reduced travel expenses. A former chair of the society would be happy to judge this moot. The price for the venue of this competition, would be the price incurred by the society.

The need for moots was outlined, as they are the purpose of a law society. It was suggested by Ms Thomson, that if the moots cannot be arranged accordingly then the society may need a moot coordinator.

The next moot workshop to be hosted by Ms Thomson will be next Sunday, with the first round of the competition a week after that, and each subsequent round a week after that, with this likely ending in the middle of November. It will potentially cost £200 for this, however the society, at this time, cannot comment on the cost for the judge.

Ms Thomson explained that in the next newsletter sent via email, information will be provided on external events, namely an upcoming pupillage fair, and a guest speaker series being held by the University of Law in October. A Barrister, namely a Mr Daniel Mander, an Open University alumnus who has recently secured tenancy with the '36 Group', will also be giving a talk to the society on securing pupillage.

Mr Greene

Mr Greene explained that his moot workshop is planned to start on 16th October. It was further explained that his planned moot competition may be pushed back to the new year, so as to avoid any clashes with Ms Thomson's planned moot.

Additionally, Mr Greene explained that the date he had intended for the competition's location, namely at Grey's Inn, is no longer available.

It was also suggested that the preference would be for a workshop to be held prior to any competition. Zoom would be the ideal platform to host such a workshop.

It was also brought to the attention of the society that Mr Greene may be experiencing a possible issue with his society email, as he has not been receiving anything from students and members alike.

Mr Greene agreed that if Ms Thomson's planned moot concluded in November, that his intended moot can possibly go ahead in early December. It was explained that this competition will comprise of five sessions this year, five sessions next year, and three round competitions.

On a concluding note, Mr Greene explained that, for his moot workshop, he has all of the required materials; and he will be teaching what he was taught during his advocacy training.

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

Agreed that Ms Thomson's London workshop was a good idea due to its travel location.

Actions

N/A.

Finance

The Committee authorize the following payments:

- The National Justice Museum accommodation in the amount of £598.80 from the society deposit account.
- The Royal Courts of Justice tour in the amount of £260. It was agreed by the committee that the easiest way to make this payment would be for Ms Thomson to make the initially payment out of her own private budget, to then be reimbursed by the society accounts.
- The amount of £305.51 as a reimbursement to Ms Thomson for travel, accommodation and ink for the moot held in Nottingham.

- The expenses for the Judge at the Nottingham moot in the amount of £203.04.
- The Subscription for Zoom in the amount of £155. 88.

The University of Law have raised a purchase order for their sponsor to the society. Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle raised this with the central OU accounts who advised that he would be able to complete this transaction in his role as treasurer. As such this sponsor will be paid into the society's deposit account.

The former chair of the society has, in error, made a payment for the Wix's domain. This was made in addition to the society's payment for a domain, as there are two domains, with one for the email accounts and the other for the website. This payment will be reimbursed by the society. The PayPal card details will be amended accordingly to prevent future issues such as this.

It was also raised that a member had accidentally duplicated their subscription to the society payment, as there is an issue where the three-year plan membership will send an expiration email at the end of the year, leading to a member renewing their membership. However, the expiration email is unnecessary as the subscription automatically renews on the three-year plan. The payment for this member has been amended.

Refunds

- Two tickets for the Royal Courts of Justice tour.
- Membership to the society for a member in Northern Ireland who was unable to access in person events due to their geographical location.

Proposed changes to the society byelaws and society guidelines

N/A.

Any other business

N/A.

Date of next meeting

N/A.

Signed:

William Brazier, Secretary.