

OPEN UNIVERSITY LAW SOCIETY



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Society Committee

Saturday 8th February 2025

MINUTES

The minutes of the 6th meeting of the 2024/25 Society Committee held online on
Saturday 8th February 2025.

Present:

Patricia Thomson

Chair

Mark Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

Treasurer

William Brazier

Secretary/ Acting Vice-chair

Agenda:

N/A.

Welcome:

Patricia Thomson, Committee Chair, welcomed everyone to the 2024/25 Society Committee's 6th meeting.

Housekeeping:

N/A.

Absent:

Christopher Paul Matejak

Vice-Chair

Minutes of the last meeting:

N/A.

Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda:

Ms Thomson

Ms Thomson opened with the unavailability of the Vice-Chair Mr Christopher Paul Matejak, and whilst it is beyond the scope of these minutes to discuss this, it was unanimously agreed that Mr William Brazier would act as the Committees Vice-Chair with immediate effect and until further notice under section 9(a) of the Open University Law Society (OULS) Constitution. Mr Brazier will be provided with the login information for the Vice-Chair email account.

Additionally, it was agreed that management of the OULS Facebook page would move from Ms Thomson to Mr Brazier.

It was explained that the next round of the OULS novice mooting competition would take place tomorrow. Ms Thomson explained that one member had pulled out of this. Additionally, Mr Lindley-Highfield expressed an interest in observing, however Ms Thomson explained that due to the competition being held over a virtual court room he would be unable to attend, however both he and Mr Brazier could attend on future occasions.

It was highlighted that the relationship with the Mistress of Moots has been, overall, very strong. Additionally, the Mistress of Moots was praised for surrendering her Sundays to judge mooting events within the OULS.

Confirmed attendance at the Mooting competition on Thursday 10th April 2025, 17:00 at the Supreme Court, and that the four finalists would be in attendance, alongside the Mistress of Moots.

Ms Thomson confirmed that she has been able to access all of the OULS email accounts.

Confirmed that additional mooting competitions and advocacy workshops were coming.

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

Mr Lindley-Highfield informed the Committee that he had become a student member of Gray's Inn [REDACTED]

Furthermore, Mr Lindley-Highfield has been in contact with an individual who may be willing to judge the OULS essay competition, of whom he shall contact over the weekend.

Mr Lindley-Highfield is to observe the Garry Slapper mooting competition on 2nd March 2025 over zoom.

Confirmed that he would explore being able to attend the Mooting competition on Thursday 10th April 2025, 17:00 at the Supreme Court, dependent upon work commitments.

Stated that there had not been many membership cancellations, however highlighted that this may be due to students naturally leaving the OULS upon conclusion of their studies with the Open University.

Mr Brazier

Confirmed a desire to attend the Mooting competition on Thursday 10th April 2025, 17:00 at the Supreme Court. Clarified that the event would likely require formal attire. Also confirmed that he would attend at 15:45 for the free tour.

Additionally, Mr Brazier will explore options for an award to be provided to the finalists upon the conclusion of the competition.

Mr Brazier confirmed that there had been a lot of recent interest in Open University law students wishing to join the OULS.

Ms Thomson, Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle, and Mr Brazier

Ms Thomson had been in contact with the Open University Debate Club, namely their head Mr Jason Brown. The Debate Club would like to merge with the OULS. The OULS Committee agreed to closer collaborative working at this stage.

Mr Lindley-Highfield discussed appointing a varsity chair, to take a debating team made up of OULS member forward, and Mr Brazier discussed having a speaker for various OULS debates, in the vein of the speaker found at the Cambridge Union.

It was agreed that this collaborative working would suit the members need, for a closer-knit online community.

It was agreed that when the OULS elections occur in June, then the OULS will fully merge with the Open University debating club and the necessary amendments may be made to the OULS Charter.

Report:

N/A.

Actions:

Finance:

Ms Thomson

Received an email from a member seeking a refund to cancel their membership with the OULS. Reportedly, this email was over a year old, and this member last received contact from the OULS mailing's in July 2024.

Ms Thomson shall issue the requested refund.

However, there is reportedly a Facebook group made up on members who believe that the society is still inactive. Mr Lindley-Highfield suggested that the existence of multiple mailing lists could be the cause of this issue, however Ms Thomson clarified that she created a new mailing list, sending emails to all members who have paid £5 in the past one year and one month. The issue will continue to be monitored.

Has been able to connect with Mr Gareth Jones via LinkedIn and shall ask whether he still has access to his Open University email. Additionally, Ms Thomson will explain that the Committee require a signed letter from him to confirm that the PayPal account has moved to a new treasurer, a scan of such a letter will suffice, simply confirming that he is no longer anything to do with the account. Mr Jones had previously sent an email explaining this; however, this was not accepted because it was not hand signed.

Ms Thomson explained that it cost the OULS £88 for all of the email address, it was explained that four of these accounts were dormant and thus would be cancelled to as to save the society £32 a month.

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

Mr Lindley-Highfield also addressed the email sent by Mr Brazier re; a member who had been struggling to pay their membership fee outside of PayPal, explaining that a PayPal account is not required to make a membership payment, however a member is required to input payment details onto PayPal for the purposes of this payment.

Estimates as to the number of finances available in the OULS PayPal were discussed.

It was confirmed that Mr Lindley-Highfield can issue refunds from the OULS PayPal account, however he is unable to cannot cancel OULS memberships.

Furthermore, a dispute was raised on the OULS PayPal account by member on 4th February 2025 requesting a cancellation of their membership. Mr Lindley-Highfield has issued the refund. The dispute was actioned via the issued refund.

Additionally, Mr Lindley-Highfield will forward details for two other members who would like to cancel their memberships to Ms Thomson.

Confirmed no contact with Gareth Jones, who remains elusive.

Mr Lindley-Highfield has been able to access the OULS PayPal email account, however since gaining access is directed to the OULS treasurer email account.

Stated that whilst a membership refund is easy to perform on PayPal, a membership needs to be cancelled on both Wix and PayPal to prevent the Wix notification to be continuing to be sent to members who have left the OULS. Ms Thomson agreed to cancel these memberships through Wix and agreed to change the verification method from a mobile number to an email so as to allow Mr Lindley-Highfield to be able to do this to.

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.