

Devon & Somerset Law Society
Family, Criminal & Dispute Resolution Committee
 Tuesday 3rd February 2026 at 4:00pm via Zoom

1	Apologies & Minutes	Action Point	Actioned/Comments
	a) Attendees: Cara Hough (“CH”), Nicola Hall (“NH”), Liz Kendall (“LK”), Rebecca Milton (“RM”), Demelza Pallant (“DP”), Hannah Pettifer (“HP”), Kelly Baker (“KB”), Emma Cross (“EC”), Daya Mann b) Imran Khodobocus has stepped down from the Committee. c) Apologies received from: Rhia Abukhalil (“RA”), Ian Brown (“IB”), Tony Steiner (“TS”), Tanya Jones (“TJ”), Martin Laver (“ML”)		
	d) Minutes of the last meeting held on 23rd September 2025 were approved, subject to members reviewing the minutes.	KB Send mins out as an attachment for review as the Link in Agenda did not work. Avoid Wed. and Fri. for future meetings	
2	Any Other Business		
	a) Committee Composition for 2026	KB to put an ad in BUZZ & on the group webpage to request family lawyers to join the Committee. LK to approach Connie Shelly at Everys to join Committee. Committee have 14 days if they wish to put themselves forward as Chair or wish to step down from the Committee, otherwise this will be renewed for another year.	Rebecca Milton confirmed she wishes to join
	a) Feedback from the Conference on 22 January at The Courtyard Marriott Kelly fed back on this in the absence of Thomas. Some great feedback so far and hopefully this will become an annual conference. 24 delegates attended.		

	b) All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Legal and Constitutional Affairs - Government policies to tackle violence against women and girls webinar on 09.12.25 – feedback EC was ill and unable to attend, so nothing to feedback. Hopefully, there will be some future events.		CH asked members to let us know if they attend any relevant events or training, please share any useful feedback
	c) Legal Sunday Service & International – 7th June in support of the DASLS International Twin Bars Visit Kelly updated on the international visit and Legal Sunday Service and encourage members to attend the service. Emma is keen to receive more information on this.	KB to keep Emma updated, send website link for Sunday Service & Twin Bars	
3	Matters Arising		
	a) Civil Litigation Practice • Bristol Business & Property Court Users Group (Cara Hough) - Access to Justice – Hearing loops are still not working; it is something we are going to have to live with for a while. - Emma is looking to run some sort of disability awareness event, she will make a note to include this issue - CH highlighted Bristol Court is the local probate Court District Registry and has been recognised for the number of more advanced cases its opening, • Users Groups in Somerset - HP and NH have not been able to attend. • Plymouth and Torquay Civil Court Users’ Group - Nothing to report	EC to keep Committee updated on a possible disability awareness event. HP & NH to liaise re attending the Users Groups	
	b) Family Practice • Family Court User Group - Representative Required now that IK has stepped down. We will wait to see if we get anyone come forward following advert in BUZZ	LK will approach Connie Shelley to join the Committee as she was involved with putting the family conference together. KB will update the website page	
	c) Mediation • Mediation Service Update – Liz Kendall - LK reported they have had four mediations since our last meeting, three of which settled. - Referrals are coming from a mixture of avenues.		

	- The Mediation Panel held their annual training session at The Law School in Exeter last week. Approx 60 second year students attended. - Hopefully taking on another mediator, should know more by the next meeting. - LK briefly explained how the mediation service works for new members to the Committee. - Lk reported on forthcoming changes in mediation. Small Claims parties will be required to attend mediation, in person or by phone by court trained mediators. It is not proved to be very successful. Liz has raised this with the Civil Mediation Council.		
4	Consultations & Procedural Updates		
	a) SRA Consumer Protection Review Update (Martin Laver – not present) https://www.sra.org.uk/home/hot-topics/consumer-protection-review/ - CH updated in Martins absence, this took place last year and it is still ongoing and the SRA are asking for further feedback. DASLS have responded.	ML to update as and when.	
	b) Pro Bono – Martin passed on the following comments: - <i>“Only point I wanted to highlight was the first meeting of the South West Pro Bono Committee I attended last week with HHJ Mitchell and the local/national Pro Bono organisations. This will hopefully a) build on a referral network for matters we cannot assist with because of cost and b) provide useful opportunities for regional firms to provide some support to those pro bono units as part of their CSR.”</i> - Cara advised they are setting up Southwest Pro Bono.	ML to provide contact details or a link should members need assistance.	
	c) MAZUR V CHARLES RUSSELL SPEECHLYS This should be on our radar as its still on going. Both The Law Society and CILEx have issued updates.	CH will forward up to date links for circulation to the committee to KB	SRA Mazur and conducting litigation Solicitors Regulation Authority Mazur: answering your questions The Law Society Mazur v Charles Russell Speechlys: what it means

			for litigators The Law Society LSB publishes interim findings on litigation guidance - The Legal Services Board CILEX Mazur appeal: hearing date confirmed CILEX
5	Future Engagement Events		
	a) Plans for next meeting/event to be discussed. - Carah asked for event ideas and a topic. This would be offered to members as a free event and needs to be in a different location to Barnstable. - Co host with Irwin Mitchel is a possibility. EC thinks her Chambers might be interested. - Stephens Scown may host. - Please feedback topic ideas and if you wish to be involved with the planning back to CH/KB by end of March. Event to avoid the Awards Dinner and Summer holidays	If you are interested to get involved, please email Kelly. NH to look at the possibility to host next event. NH will liaise with CH as she has some ideas	
6	Learning & Development Opportunities		
	a) Kelly asked members to feed back any training ideas		
7	Date, Time and Format of Next Meeting		
	Next full meeting will be on 19 th May 2026 at 4:00pm via ZOOM.		

Key – Colour Coded Actions			
Cara Hough	Tony Steiner	Kelly Baker	Committee Members
Cara Hough, Chair	Nicola Hall, Vice Chair	Rhia Abukhail	Ian Brown
Emma Cross	Thomas Glover	Tanya Jones	Liz Kendall
	Martin Laver	Daya Mann	Rebecca Milton
Karen Osborne	Hannah Pettifer	Catherine Reynolds	Jonathan Ward
		<i>Justices' Clerk Office Vacant</i>	<i>CPS representative - vacant</i>