

Devon & Somerset Law Society
Family, Criminal & Dispute Resolution Committee
Thursday 6 March 2025 at 4:00pm via Zoom

1	Apologies & Minutes	Action Point	Actioned/Comments
	a) Attendees: Cara Hough (“CH”), Liz Kendall (“LK”), Martin Laver (“ML”), Peter Lewis (“PL”), Tanya Jones (“TJ”), Daya Mann (“DM”), Emma Cross (“EC”) and Kelly Baker (“KB”) b) Apologies received from: Rhia Abukhalil (“RA”), Ian Brown (“IB”), Nicola Hall (“NH”), Hannah Pettifer (“HP”), Steven Came (“SC”), Louise Saxton (“LS”), Tony Steiner (“TS”), Rebecca Milton (“RM”), Imran Khodobocus (“IK”) and Thomas Glover (“TG”)		Since the meeting, PL has announced his retirement and has stepped down from the SC
	c) Minutes of the last meeting held on 7 January 2025 The link on the Agenda didn’t work.	KB to re-circulate	Circulated 10.03.25
2	Any Other Business		
	a) Format of meeting moving forward - CH reiterated how the SC historically met 4 times a year in person and later online but the purpose, attendees and nature of the meeting was lost. When CH took over the approach to meetings underwent an overhaul and in future will focus on hosting events in addition to meetings. - Proposal going forward is formal in person meetings twice a year. - These meetings will be split into two, the first half will be the formal part and the second half will be planning of events. This will also allow SC members to attend all or part of the meeting. - The meetings will be time and managed by the Chair to keep them on track and efficient and to 1 hour. - If required, supplemental 30 minute meetings for event planning will be scheduled. - CH would like to allocate roles within the Sub Committee. - ML has agreed to take on the role of Governance, feeding back on the SRA, Court Liaison, The Law Society etc. - LK to take on Mediation and feedback on this topic in general, not just how the relationship/referral from DASLS. - CH will ask IK to do the same for family and ML for civil.	Court Users Group Meeting Minutes to be forwarded to KB for the website KB to add “Judiciary Update as an agenda item CH to speak with IK	

	- CH asked Magdalen Chambers to feed back on what is happening in the Courts and how useful information for members could be disseminated and what a referral service might look like. - Updates to be added to the SC website page and BUZZ	CH to think how to this would look on our website	
	b) Website “Our Committees and Groups” page – Sub Committee details The page has been updated and is ongoing.	Complete	
	c) Letter to Civil, Family and Tribunal Stakeholders in the South West Region The link on the Agenda didn’t work.	KB to re-circulate	Circulated 10.03.25
	d) New Operational Leadership Structure – SW Region The link on the Agenda didn’t work.	KB to re-circulate	Circulated 10.03.25
3	Matters Arising		
	a) Civil Litigation Practice • Bristol Business & Property Court Users Group (Cara Hough) - Have not met since our last meeting. • Users Groups in Somerset • Plymouth and Torquay Civil Court Users’ Group - TJ commented that Magdalen weren’t on the mailing list for the Plymouth Court Users Group. This has been amended. - TJ will attend the Plymouth meeting in April and feed back to ML and get approval to put the minutes on the DASLS website. • County Societies’ Group Civil Litigation Discussion Group (Martin Laver) - ML reported the Exeter Court Users Group meeting met with Jude Walsh but it wasn’t well attended, the circulation list seemed small. - NH attended the Barnstable meeting on 27th February. Nothing really to discuss, a very brief meeting.	ML will contact the Court re the invite list to see if it can be expanded and ensure more notice of the meeting is given. CH to confirm the date of the Plymouth Meeting KB to circulate the minutes & add to SC webpage. All Court User Group Meeting Minutes are to be forwarded to ML	Circulated & Updated 10.03.25
	b) Family Practice • Family Court User Group (Imran Khodabocus) - There was a meeting in January, we don’t believe IK attended. - EC reported there are problems with listings and a backlog. - Issue Resolution hearings are being trialled and can result in a final hearing if all agreed. - They are not listing more contentious hearings until those have taken place. There are some issues and work around these need to take place. - Timescales in Devon is particularly dreadful, taking much longer than 26 weeks.	EC to confirm the date of the next Family User Court meeting	

	- There is a shortage of Judges and a request to avoid intermediaries has been made. - Please continue to raise concerns about Court facilities. • County Societies' Group Family Law Discussion Group (VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED) - LK advised she has recruited someone from Every's to attend the CSG Family Group who has previously been involved with the JLD, Hanahhin Simcox.	TS to email Liz with the details of the CSG Meetings.	TS has advised this group has disbanded.
	c) Mediation • Mediation Service Update – Liz Kendall - A mediation that took place 30th January which didn't settle. The value was around £150,000. Things are pretty quiet at the moment. - CH reiterated she has asked LK to do a wider update on mediation in general.		
4	Consultations & Procedural Updates		
	a) Medical Records Update – meeting with Rhianon Platt, Exeter Hospital TBC – Liz Kendall - Cara keen for this to be removed from the Agenda until such time as a meeting is arranged. Liz suggested we invite her to the North Devon event.	LK to invite Rhiannon Platt to June event KB to remove from next Agenda	
	a) SRA Consumer Protection Review Update – Martin Laver https://www.sra.org.uk/home/hot-topics/consumer-protection-review/ - ML reported there are a few changes going on at the SRA and we need to wait and see what they come back with regarding client account interest. There is significant resistance to this.		
5	Future Engagement Events		
	a) Plans for 24th June 2025 meeting to be discussed - Event hosted by Devon Council Office, Barnstaple focusing on Disclosure including use of AI in disclosure. - St John's Chambers, Magdalen Chambers and i-Lit Support have confirmed. Lexus to confirm attendance - Nicola will be hosting the September Event at Stephens Scown, Exeter. - A planning meeting required to start on this. Topic to be confirmed - CH would like December event to be in Somerset.	KB to do a SAVE THE DAY flyer Event Name required TG to chance Lexus CH & NH to discuss away from meeting Any suggestions for a Somerset venue, forward to CH	Lexus have confirmed they are unable to attend event
6	Learning & Development Opportunities		
	a) <u>02 & 03.06.2025 Leadership & Management Training</u>	KB to check with TS if we can advertise events with Magdalen	TS advised we do not have the capacity to do so
	b) <u>17.07.25 Family Law for support staff & paralegals with Kay Harding</u>		

		KB to link relevant training from our SC page to the training post.	Links added tp SC webpage
7	Date, Time and Format of Next Meeting		
	Virtual meeting early July for a planning meeting TBC Next full meeting will be Tuesday 23 rd September at 4:00pm.	Action points as per the above to enable dates to be agreed and circulated	

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