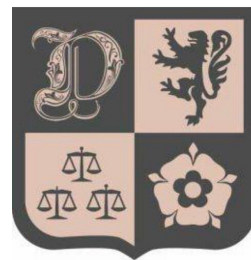


DONCASTER AND DISTRICT LAW SOCIETY



AUTUMN 2019 NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 6 FOR DONCASTER AND DISTRICT LAWYERS

SEPTEMBER: AGM



In September we held AGM at Cast, Doncaster.

Cast was new venue for our society and turned out to be a great choice, with modern and accommodating facilities and a great selection of nibbles for our after meeting lunch. It is likely to be a venue that we use in the future.

The AGM was well attended, with representatives for a number of our member firms, along with David Barraclough from the Yorkshire and Ros Jones CBE (Mayor of Doncaster), as our guest speaker.

Our lady mayor gave an inspiring talk about what it means to be from Doncaster and how proud is to represent this area. Ros talked about the achievements and improvements Doncaster has seen in recent times, along with the big projects coming for the future including building a new Savoy cinema and restaurant complex and building a new library, encasing the old girls school design. The improvement in our education in the area was also touched upon, particularly commenting about how our GCSE results in the area were the best ever this year.

This year's AGM saw the handover of the presidency from Tony Rawlings to Andrea Pashley.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday 20th November: The Great Legal Quiz in aid of the Access to Justice Foundation. 5:45pm at Lockwood's Gin Bar.

Friday 27th March:
Doncaster Law Society's Annual Ball - with a Roaring 20's theme. 7pm at the Hilton Garden Inn Suite.

Friday 20th March: Employment Tribunal User Group in Leeds. Open to all. Any issues you would like to see raised email paul.singh@neu.org.uk

REGISTER YOUR DNA CARDS

We are pleased that all members now have access to their DNA card.

To access discounts, register your card at
<https://www.doncasterroversfc.co.uk/tickets/dna-card/>

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Instagram: [doncasterlawsociety](https://www.instagram.com/doncasterlawsociety)
Twitter: [@doncasterlawsoc](https://twitter.com/doncasterlawsoc)
Facebook: Doncaster Law Society

Tony gave his final presidents report, commenting about how he had loved every minute of being the society's president and encouraged anyone interested to join the committee and see where it goes.

As the baton was handed over to Andrea, she opened by reminiscing about her previous turn as president and looked back at how close the society came to disbanding a short time ago. Andrea is looking forward to working closely with a motivated and enthusiastic committee, in what is sure to be another great year.

The AGM moved on to election of officers. The current officers had all given a short report on the last year, earlier in the AGM and prior to the voting, and it was clear to see how hard everyone had worked in the last year and how much had been achieved.

In particular, it was noted the excellent work that had been undertaken by the membership officers - in ensuring all members had access to some great benefits simply just for being members, the training officer – providing some regular and excellent courses on a range of hard and soft topics and the treasurer for ensuring we maintain a healthy balance and finally have access to online banking! Below is a full list of the officers elected at the AGM for the coming year:

- **President - Andrea Pashley**
- **Vice President – Stephanie Veysey**
- **Junior Vice President – Sarah Thiede**
- **Secretary – Diane Parker**
- **Treasurer – Sarah Naylor**
- **Social Officer - Rachel Harrison**
- **Membership Officer – Janice Oxley / Kristen Craig**
- **Training Officer – Abigail Duffy**
- **Parliamentary Liaison Officer – Tony Rawlings**
- **PR Officer – Rachel Wilkins & Maria Dallas**

During the AGM, we were also introduced to Paul Singh, who is joining as a new member of the committee, following his completion of the term as Sheffield Law Society president. Following the commencement of Paul's new role in Doncaster, the committee has been given the opportunity to create a new role to encourage and attract In-House lawyers, of which there are a number practicing in the area. Following a unanimous agreement, a new committee role was created and Paul Singh was elected as **In-House Liaison Officer**.

The AGM ended with a short thank you from David Barraclough. He thanked Tony for his support over the last year and looked forward to working with Andrea in the future. He also thanked the society for the support in the Sheffield Legal Walk. David commented that Doncaster had a very good society.

The AGM was closed by Andrea and members mingled over a very pleasant lunch, which was vast in amounts – so much so that Andrea encouraged that the Cast staff, and if possible any people that are less fortunate in the area, enjoy what was left over.



NEWS FROM THE LAW SOCIETY

POLICY UPDATE

• **Probate Delays Update - Backlogs are reducing**

The Law Society Policy team met with HMTCS at the new Courts and Tribunals Centre in Birmingham to review delays to the Probate Service. HMTCS are now issuing just short of 7000 grants per week.

There is still a backlog, however HMTCS state they are quickly reducing this with the bulk of applications being processed within 28 days where IHT forms are present. They hope that the service will return to normal levels very soon.

• **Probate Fee Hike - Scrapped following successful Law Society Campaign**

The Lord Chancellor has confirmed that the government's proposals to raise fees charged for a grant of probate have been officially scrapped.

For more details, see the below and the Law Society press release:

<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/stories/probate-fee-hike-scrapped/>

<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/press-releases/u-turn-on-probate-fees-hike-welcomed/>

• **VAT Treatment of Disbursements**

The Law Society has published new guidance for Law Firms that frequently make decisions about whether items such as property search fees may be treated as disbursements for VAT purposes.

Find the guidance here:

<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/advice/articles/vat-treatment-of-disbursements-and-expenses/>

• **New SRA Standards and Regulations - Law Society Guidance Launched**

The Law Society has published a new practice note to help the profession adapt with the radical overhaul of the regulations that govern solicitors.

Read the practice note here:

<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/advice/practice-notes/freelance-solicitors/>

• **Release under Investigation - Research**

The Law Society has published new research showing that tens of thousands of suspects are brought released without bail conditions - leaving suspects and victims in limbo with no updates on their case for an unlimited period of time. Release under investigation (RUI) is being used by police instead of bail - but unlike bail it has no time limit or conditions. There is also evidence that there are people being released under investigation who are potentially a risk to victims of the crime and the public, rather than being put on bail as would be more appropriate.

The Law Society has called on the Government to improve RUI by introducing a range of measures including placing time limits on their usage and ensuring it is no longer used for people who present a potential risk to the public.



YORKSHIRE LAWYER AWARDS

Our new In-house representative, Paul Singh, had the pleasure of helping host the Yorkshire Lawyer Awards on the 10th October at New Dock Hall in Leeds.

This was the second year that Paul had been invited to the awards by the sponsor, Barker Brooks, to chair the panel of judges, which comprised of a range of lawyers of different specialisms from accross the regions.



Paul also gave the introductory speech and a tribute to the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

It was a night thoroughly enjoyed by all, with some excellent compering by the BBC's own Dan Walker.

Although there were no Doncaster firms or solicitors amongst the winners this year, DDLS would like to see this rectified next year and are going to actively encourage and support our members to submit nominations as we are sure that our firms and lawyers are up there with the best!



TRAINING UPDATE

Former Training Officer, Alison Kitchman, was delighted to report back on her last successful training event in the position, held on 2 October 2019.

The session was hosted by Dr Simon de Groot, who kindly gave up his time to provide us with an extremely informative, worthwhile and well received succinct presentation on Mental Capacity and Dementia. This stimulated helpful discussion and shared experiences amongst the mixed audience of mainly probate, family and litigation lawyers who attended.

DONCASTER FLOODS

As we are all aware, there are many people in our local area badly affected by the recent flooding in South Yorkshire. We have seen the Doncaster community pull together to help each other and member firms have been doing what they can to support members of staff.

Doncaster Law Society are pleased to have been able to make a donation to the South Yorkshire Community Fund who have made an appeal for donations to support flood victims and a further donation to the Unitarian Church on Hallgate who have invited people to donate either money or cleaning supplies as they are greatly in need.

COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: PAUL SINGH

What would you be if you were not a lawyer?

- Probably a stand up comedian. I have a habit of blurting out inappropriate comments on random occasions. They seem to make people laugh so I might as well get paid for it! I did do a stand up session once and it seemed to go down really well. I like the idea of getting on stage every night and making people smile. I think it would be really rewarding and I would only have to work a couple of hours a day!



Where do you work and what do you do?

- I have just started a new role with the National Education Union as their Regional Solicitor for Yorkshire and Humberside. I will be providing Employment Law advice and pursuing Employment Tribunal claims for their members who include teachers, lecturers and anyone who works in education. I am looking forward to my new post as my previous role required me to devote most of my time to managing a department and it will be good to get back into doing actual case work and the cut and thrust of litigation.

What made you want a career in Law?

- I actually grew up wanting to be a scientist. However, one day's work experience in a laboratory, repeating the same experiment hundreds of times to check the results, made me realise how boring and mundane that job actually was, so I decided it wasn't for me and I decided to be a solicitor as it seemed a bit more exciting. Plus I got to sit down all day and stay out of the rain. When I was growing up, being a solicitor was seen as extremely prestigious and a career in law was very financially comfortable. Whilst solicitors might not be as well paid as they were back in the day, I like to think it is still a respected role and one that carries out an important function in society. We are the people that help those in their most desperate and dire situations and are there to help our clients navigate the complicated legal system in which a member of the public can easily get lost.

Tell us about your role on the Committee?

- My role is a newly created one. I have asked to be the "In-house representative" for Doncaster and District Law Society. In-house lawyers are the largest expanding group in the profession across the country, and this is also true in Doncaster. Having worked in-house for over 6 years I know the difficulty in-house lawyers in feeling as if they aren't part of the wider legal community and understand that it is important for them to be involved in the local law society to feel connected with their colleagues. I also am aware of the problems they will sometimes face convincing their employers why they should pay for membership of the law society and want to use my experience so I can get more in-house lawyers on board and engaged. I am also the immediate past president of Sheffield and District Law society and sat on their committee for a number of years, so hopefully my knowledge of how they ran events and contacts from my time with them will be useful to Doncaster.

Tell us an interesting fact about you?

- My wife has a fear of buttons.

Why do you think #DoncasterIsGreat?

- To me this is my home. I was born here and have lived here all my life. I have always (until now) worked outside in other cities but always looked forward to coming home to Doncaster where I know the streets and the shops and the pubs and the people. I am really passionate about the town and I am looking forward to making it great and stand out amongst the wider legal community. I am also really looking forward to a much shorter commute in the mornings and getting out of bed much later!

OCTOBER: PAST PRESIDENT'S LUNCHEON

Words from the President:

I was delighted to attend the Past President's Luncheon on 18th October at the Mount Pleasant Hotel and spend a thoroughly lovely afternoon with 8 of our esteemed former Presidents of the Doncaster and District Law Society, some of whom are my former colleagues.

We enjoyed a lovely lunch and then were able to spend time reminiscing over some of the experiences we had whilst climbing the legal ladder.

In particular, we were able to fondly remember John Nicholas Pennington (Nick), who was our President in 1983 who sadly passed away earlier in the month.

I was in my teens when I first met Nick after I started working at his family firm Penningtons as a junior receptionist. He was a respected solicitor specialising in criminal law and a 'real character'. He will be dearly missed. I hold him responsible for my choice of career and thus will remain ever grateful to him.

As this Luncheon has been arranged for the last few years, I believe and hope it will continue. I shall therefore look forward to attending next year when our Vice President Stephanie Veysey will be our President and to seeing as many of our Past President's as possible.

Watch out for the 'save the date' which we will endeavour to release in August 2020

Andrea Pashley