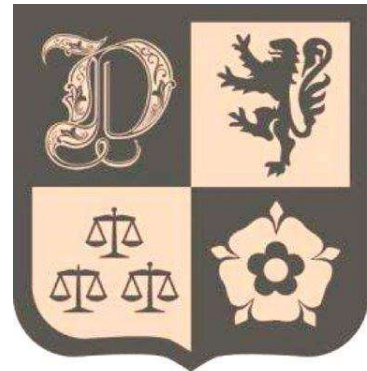


# DONCASTER AND DISTRICT LAW SOCIETY



EST. 1937

## AUTUMN 2020 NEWSLETTER

### WHAT A YEAR ITS BEEN.....

When the last newsletter came out, we thought the next edition would be filled with upcoming events, pictures from our 'Roaring 20's' ball and lots of general news and updates. However, the year of 2020 had other plans for us it seems, and I don't think anyone quite expected it to turn out like this.

Our society has been lucky overall and managed to keep creeping along despite the difficulties. We might not have been able to really do any of the events

and activities we had planned, but we managed to keep in touch and meet virtually most months and even managed to have our AGM in September as planned – more on this later.

Our president, Andrea put together an article for the Leeds and Yorkshire Lawyer magazine, and I think this sums up pretty well how things are going....

As a society, we  
are looking  
forward to  
brighter times



surprises in store, including a carefully selected live band, and it was all coming together nicely.

Like most local law societies, our annual ball is an important feature in

"At the start of the new year and decade, the excitement had started to build as our social officer, Racheal Harrison and I began finalizing arrangements for our annual ball at the end of March 2020. The theme was meant to be the obvious 'Roaring Twenties'. We had lots of

#### IN THIS EDITION:

- What a year it's been!!
- Annual General Meeting 2020
- Society Committee for 2020/2021
- Postponed – Annual Ball
- Always keep dreaming
- Meet our PR Officer

the busy social calendar we already had in place, which, along with our training schedule for the forthcoming year and other committee business, kept our meetings lively, interactive and well attended. I am very proud and honoured to be part of such an enthusiastic team of hardworking professionals who all make time in their busy schedules to support the Doncaster and District Law Society. In fact, in our last face to face meeting at the beginning of March, much of the discussion revolved around the dress code for the ball and whether it should be 'long or short' and who was wearing feathers! The excitement was palpable!!

Then it happened; crash, bang, wallop. Covid-19 had arrived. An urgent decision had to be made on the ball, which at the time was only three weeks away. Without the help of a crystal ball and with little knowledge of this unknown virus, it was sadly cancelled. Then the gravity of the decision hit. All of the ticket money was in and we had 170 guests attending. The table plan was about to go to print! Everything booked simply had to be un-booked. Then came 'lockdown'. Unheard of in my lifetime. Someone had pressed the pause button on life as we knew

it. Thank goodness the right decision about the ball had been made. Even our first very own legal walk in the town (which we were also incredibly excited about) had to be put off for the foreseeable future, along with other exciting events we had planned. What on earth was happening? It all felt surreal. It soon became apparent that the world hadn't gone mad and we were on the brink of a pandemic. Changes to what we knew as 'business as usual' had to be embraced—and quickly.

From April, our meetings became virtual thanks to our amazing secretary Diane Parker and despite a few hiccups, we got there (admittedly, some by sight only, some without sight or sound, or a mixture of both). But we did it! The new 'business as unusual' was here to stay and the enthusiasm had started to return.

Learning to fathom the concept of Zoom, and especially where to find the incredibly important mute button, I am pleased to say has become part of the norm and business as unusual for me.

Although I'm certain there will be lots of uncertainties for all of us in the year ahead, as a committee one of our

main focuses is to retain the loyal members of our precious little society and, while our training schedule won't be as full as it normally is, we are working hard to adapt to the very real and new challenges we are all facing. With the creativity of our committee, I am certain we will be able to deliver a virtual training programme that will benefit our members. Also, with the ongoing hard work and dedication of Racheal, our social officer, and continued support from David Barraclough, chair of the Yorkshire Legal Support Trust, we hope as many of our members (and guests, who are most welcome) will be there at the start of our first legal walk and also at the finish line. We are determined our walk will take place at some point, so that we can raise money for a truly worthy cause. All I am tasked to do is order the weather.

As a society, we are therefore looking forward to brighter times, and myself in particular, to still be able to fit into my Roaring Twenties dress that is ready and waiting.

#### DONCASTER AND DISTRICT LAW SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP 2020/2021

For the 2020/2021 subscription year, we are able to offer a reduced membership rate as follows:

Full Member – Solicitors / Legal Executives (Qualified Status)	£35.00
Associate Member – Other Legal Professionals (Trainees, Paralegals, Support Staff etc.)	£20.00

More details about our membership benefits and our membership pro-rata system can be found on our website

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our first ever virtual AGM!!



2020 has seen the Doncaster and District Law Society hold their first ever virtual AGM. It was definitely a new challenge for the society and something that despite the odds, went quite well.

The AGM was opened by Andrea as president and all attendees were warmly welcomed, as we summarised the year that had passed us by and pondered over what a strange time it had been.

We briefly discussed our accounts, and these have been audited as required. Matters regarding payment for the postponed ball are in hand and we have some possibilities for charitable donations and subsidized events. This is something that the committee will be considering over the coming year.

The main talking point was to put forward a resolution that all

current officers remain in post for the 2020/2021 year. This was to allow officers to (hopefully) be able to plan for and fulfill the roles in a greater way for the next year, and with less difficulties than the previous year. The resolution was passed, although with some slight changes.....

Abigail Duffy, who has been the Training Officer for a few years has decided to step down to focus on other commitments. Her role will be filled in a joint capacity by Jessica Mason and Eleanor Storey (Malcom C Foy). Rachel Wilkins has also decided to step down as one of our joint PR Officers, meaning that Maria Dallas will continue the role alone. Paul Singh has taken on an additional role of Diversity and Inclusion Officer. This is a new role with the aim of expanding our society and ensuring that we can meet the needs of every corner of the legal community in the area. Our departing officers were (and

are) thanked greatly for their involvement and contributions to the society during their time in office.

We turned to look towards our membership numbers, and our Membership Officers confirmed that our number are looking slightly up on where they were for the same time last year, which is huge positive considering the current circumstances.

The meeting itself was quite short and sweet, and the usual accompanying lunch was definitely missed but overall our first virtual AGM wasn't as scary as expected. And at least we know we can do it again if we need to! (but fingers crossed we don't)

## ROARING 20'S BALL POSTPONED

Sadly, we have had to make the difficult decision to postpone our annual ball for the foreseeable future.

After the initial optimistic postponement from 21 March 2020, to September 2020 and onto March 2021, the decision has been made that in light of the ever changing restrictions and recent government announcements, in order for us to put on the best event possible, we need to now postpone once more.

But do not fear, Andrea and Rachael are still pushing on, with crossed fingers and toes, with their plans for a fantastic night of surprises and live music. Rachael has been liaising with the venue already and further announcements regarding this will be made as soon as possible. Any paid ticket and table money is safe and anyone with bookings will be contacted in due course. So, don't get rid of your outfit just yet!!



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### **DONCASTER AND DISTRICT LAW SOCIETY OFFICERS FOR 2020/2021**

President – Andrea Pashley (Malcolm C Foy & Co)  
Vice President – Stephanie Veysey (Atherton Godfrey LLP)  
Junior Vice President – Sarah Thiede (Malcolm C Foy & Co)  
Secretary – Diane Parker (Atherton Godfrey LLP)  
Treasurer – Sarah Naylor (Atherton Godfrey)  
Membership Officer – Janice Oxley / Kirsten Craig (Dawson & Burgess Solicitors)  
Social Officer – Racheal Harrison (Malcolm C Foy & Co)  
PR Officer – Maria Dallas (Atherton Godfrey LLP)  
Training Officer - Jessica Mason / Eleanor Storey (Malcolm C Foy & Co)  
In House Liaison Officer – Paul Singh (National Education Union)  
National Council Officer – Mark Newby (Quality Solicitors Jordons)  
Parliamentary Liaison Officer – Tony Rawlings (Paul Bullen & Co)  
Diversity & Inclusion Officer – Paul Singh (National Education Union)

## NEVER STOP DREAMING

They always say you should never give up on your dreams and the story of one of our newer society members explains why

Emma decided she wanted to become a solicitor after doing work experience with a local law firm when she was 15.

"Rather than just giving me menial tasks, they gave me lots of experience and insight into the legal profession. The partner there really inspired me as he had so much passion for the law."

Such a positive experience made Emma determined that one day she too would be a solicitor. On 14<sup>th</sup> September, Emma, now 28, will finally achieve the goal that she set herself 13 years ago.

Emma says: "Qualifying after so much time, money and effort has gone into achieving the goal I set back when I was a schoolgirl is just an amazing feeling."

"You never really quite think you will make it, especially when you are working at the same time as studying."

After completing her law degree in 2014, Emma took a year out and worked at a bank and studied part-time for her LPC.

Although the bank offered great career prospects, it couldn't compete with Emma's dream of becoming a solicitor.

The last leg of her journey was a two-year training contract that she secured with Atherton Godfrey LLP.

Diane Parker, partner and the firm's training principal commented: "Emma was a stand-out candidate. She impressed us with the focus, dedication, and commitment she had shown in gaining her qualifications. On top of that, she's a very friendly, outgoing person; all the qualities we look for in our trainees."

Emma said she was thrilled to be offered the opportunity. "I wanted to work at Atherton Godfrey because there is a real family feel to the firm – you can feel it the moment you step through the door."

"It's been quite difficult though. There was a long time between me doing the degree and LPC and starting my training contract. Remembering everything I'd learnt was a challenge, so I had to spend hours with my head in the text books again."

Asked what advice she had for anyone thinking about a career in law, Emma said: "The journey is hard work and you have to invest a lot of time and energy. It's important that you have a real passion for the profession. It won't be easy, but keep going, the end result is really worth it."



Emma Millington, Solicitor, Atherton Godfrey LLP

## COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: MARIA DALLAS

1. What would you be if you were not a lawyer? I would have loved to have trained as a Midwife, so I would probably go towards that route if I was having a career change.
2. Where do you work and what do you do? I work at Atherton Godfrey LLP. I am a Senior Legal Executive in the Litigation Department, dealing with Personal Injury Claims
3. What made you want a career in Law? Law was my second shot at a career. I was previously in engineering but that didn't quite work out. I fell into law by accident when I got a job at a solicitors when I moved to Yorkshire and just really enjoyed everything about it.
4. Tell us about your role on the committee. I am the PR officer. I look after our social media, help with press releases and just generally try and spread the word about the society.
5. Tell us an interesting fact about you. I was captain of a championship winning cheerleading squad!
6. Why do you think Doncaster is great? Doncaster reminds me of home (South Wales valleys). I love the community spirit that Doncaster has and how everyone pulls together in a crisis