# Minutes 18 January 2024

**Present:**

Daniel Bedford (DB), Philip Bremner (PB), Anna Bryson (AB) – left meeting at 14.30), Marie Burton (MB), Beverley Clough (BC), Richard Craven (RC), Ciara Fitzpatrick (CF), Simon Flacks (SF), Marie Fox (MF) – joined only for discussion of the conference), Sabrina Germain (SG), Alex Green (AG), Elisabeth Griffiths (EG) – joined at 14.15), John Harrington (JH), Matt Howard (MHo), Marie Hutton (MHu), Emma Jones (EJ), Arwen Joyce (AJ), Smita Kheria (SK), Kay Lalor (KL), Lara MacLachlan (LM), Kirsten McConnachie (KM), Emma Milne (EM), Rebecca Moosavian (RM), Raza Saeed (RS), Mini Saxena (MSa), Marie Selwood (MSe), Mitchell Travis (MT), Emily Walsh (EW)

# 1. Apologies

Mark Simpson (MSi)

# 2. Approval of Minutes and outstanding Action Points

## 2.1. Meeting 14 September

Board approved the minutes.

## 2.2. Action points from previous meetings

### 2.2.1. 14 September 2023

Board reviewed the action points and were satisfied with the outcomes.

### 2.2.2. 11 May 2023

Board reviewed the action points and were satisfied with the outcomes.

### 2.2.3. 12 January 2023

Board reviewed the action points and were satisfied with the outcomes.

# 3. Core business

## 3.1. Ulster conference update on proceeds

CF presented a proposal to the Board that Ulster Law School retain a further £20,000 from the conference cost centre, so reducing the donation to the SLSA, which is expected to be approximately £110,000 to around £90,000. The Ulster conference team advised that these funds would be ring-fenced to support the development of administrative staff and socio-legal research within the institution.

The Board asked CF questions about how the funds would be ring-fenced and the nature of the training and professional development administrative colleagues would use the funds for.

AG asked about the £3,000 for the Woodland Trust. JH and DB confirmed this was part of the original budgeting for the conference to account for the fact that more SLSA members would be flying to attend the conference.

CF left the meeting.

JH reminded the Board that the decision whether to approve the request needs to be considered in light of the SLSA constitution, particularly its Object, to promote socio-legal studies. The Board discussed the proposal. The Board voted and agreed in principle that Ulster Law School could keep a proportion of the profit from the 2023 conference, but a fully costed proposal is required for the May meeting for further consideration. In addition, the use of funds by the Ulster Law School team (including administrative colleagues) needed to be socio-legal in nature.

**Action**: CF and MSi to produce a fully costed proposal for retention of funds for consideration by the Board at the May meeting.

CF re-joined the meeting.

The Board agreed to create a working group to discuss the wider issue of conference hosts keeping a proportion of the profit if the conference is more profitable than forecast in the budget, and propose a policy for how to address similar requests in future. MH to lead on this.

**Action:** MHo to set up working group to discuss core and issues report back to the Board at the May 2024 meeting.

## 3.2. SLSA finances update

PB reported that the SLSA finances are in a good place, partly due to increase in newsletter sponsorship by law schools, but also due to approximately £10,000 increase in membership fees. PB suggested an increase in expenditure budget in light of rising costs. Also suggested increasing the Annual Conference Donation to £40,000 or £45,000.

DB noted will need to ask future conference bids to forecast numbers on the basis of 500 in person and 100 online.

SK asked if the increased contribution would be an expectation for the conferences agreed in 2024, 2025 and 2026, rather than asking for a specific change from them. PB agreed.

The Board agreed the proposal.

## 3.3. Website development

MSe provided an overview of the difficulties with the current website.

PB posed whether we might want to engage a website designer, obtaining a number of quotes, rather than a using the Joomla templates.

The Board discussed if it was worth restructuring now if we plan to go with a redesign, and potentially move away from the Joomla platform.

Board agreed that we should consider a redesign over a restructure and adapting the templates we have access to on the Joomla platform. JH proposed an extraordinary Board meeting to look at the quotes and discuss the way forward. JH also asked for members of the Board to form a working group.

Working group members: MSe, EM, AJ, LM, to liaise with Lewis Gowers (web-developer).

**Action**: Working group to meet and work with MSe to progress, report back to Board at May meeting.

**Action**: Working group plan to integrate the blog into the website.

**Action**: MSe to work with Lewis to obtain quotes for a redesign.

**Action**: EM to organise an extraordinary Board meeting to discuss the website.

## 3.4. Membership database

JH outlined the purpose of reviewing the proposal for work on the membership database was mostly due to the financial implications of the work, but also due to CIO rules in the constitution as EM is a Board member and Trustee. Provision of services to the Association by a Board member in this way is permitted by Clause 6 of the Constitution. The Board will review expenditure and tasks completed on an ongoing basis to ensure conflicts of interest are avoided.

The Board discussed the fact that the current CRM (Customer Relationship Management system) has little to no automated functionality and so everything is conducted manually, which is incredibly labour intensive.

EM left the meeting.

The Board discussed the proposal and approved:

* Package of regular work, conducted on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis, with an estimated cost of £6,288 for 2024 and £6,048 for subsequent years.
* Remedial work to resolve ongoing accuracy issues with the database, with an estimated one-off cost of £1,608.
* Review of whether the SLSA should change the CRM system.
* Members who have not paid fees since before 2023 would be provided with a 3-month window to pay their fees or have their membership cancelled.
* Going forward, members will be given 12 weeks to pay fees and then their membership will be cancelled if no fees received.
* Soft attempts would be made to re-coup outstanding fees from past years.

**Action**: EM to progress regular and remedial work and report progress back to the Board in May.

**Action**: EM to bring proposal to the next Board for a new CRM system.

**Action**: EM to feed into discussions about the website and now the CRM system (existing and/or new) would interact with the website.

**Action**: PB to update the 2024 budget in light of the Board decision re the remedial work.

EM re-joined the meeting

## 3.5. Socio-Legal Education Project

EW outlined plans for the education survey, which will be launched at the conference and then open for a period following.

JH suggested the Board read the paper and write directly to EW with comments.

**Action**: The Board to read the Socio-Legal Education Project paper (3.5.) and write to EW with comment.

**Action**: EW and DB to review and incorporate comments.

# 4. Conferences

## 4.1. Annual conference

### 4.1.1. Ulster

Discussed under item 3.1.

### 4.1.2. Portsmouth

DB provided a summary of the conference organisation. Board noted the application for support for additional conference bursaries submitted to the Modern Law Review by DB and JH. It was agreed that the SLSA underwrite these 5 bursaries pending notification of the outcome

**Action**: DB and EW to distribute bursaries with the additional 5 funded by the Modern Law Review/ SLSA.

#### 4.1.2.1. Impact Committee

Discussed under item 6.5.

#### 4.1.2.2. Plenary on migrant scholars and socio-legal studies

Reported to the Board as part of the Portsmouth team conference update in item 4.1.2.

## 4.1.3. Future conferences

MF provided short update on conference plans for SLSA 2025 at the University of Liverpool and asked when the Board would like to review the proposed timeline for key conference dates. JH agreed that a small number of queries would be picked up outside of the meeting and the timeline and initial plans would be reviewed at the May meeting.

**Action**: MF and Liverpool conference team to present plans and timeline at the May board meeting.

## 4.2. Postgraduate Conference

EG reported a very successful PGR conference at Northumbria. Also reported that 6 delegates dropped out or did not attend, causing significant financial implications. EG also reported that the budget was very tight and the SLSA might want to revise the budget for future PGR conferences.

**Action**: EG to send JH itemised final budget.

**Action**: PG reps, JH and PB to review PGR conference budget in line with future bids received.

JH proposed SLSA run the bidding process for the PGR conference in the same way run the main conference, with a call to the membership, agreeing the hosts two years in advance.

**Action**: JH, LM, MSa and MSe to co-ordinate a call for PGR conference hosts for 2024 and 2025.

## 4.3. One Day Conferences

### 4.3.1. WINIR/SLSA workshop

The Board congratulated RC on his successful conference and thanked him for his final report.

# 5. Officer Reports

## 5.1. Chair

JH reported, due to the specialist nature of the role, the SLSA will recruit a Webmaster as a non-Trustee member of the Board.

**Action**: JH to liaise with DB and MSe to put out a call for interest in taking up the Webmaster role.

**Action**: JH, EM and MSe to review applicants and appoint a Webmaster.

JH reported that BC would attend the AcSS Learned Societies meeting on behalf of the SLSA, in place of JH (date 17/01/2024).

**Action**: BC to produce a brief written report on the AcSS Learned Societies meeting.

## 5.2. Vice-Chair

Nothing to add to written report.

## 5.3. Treasurer

Discussed under item 3.2.

## 5.4. Membership and data protection

CM not present. Board reviewed CM’s report.

### 5.4.1. Changes to Privacy Policy

EM explained that change to privacy policy needed for the EDI survey for prize nominees, grant applicants, seminar competition applicants and stream convenors. Changes added the nature of data we hold and amended the third-party list.

Board approved changes to Privacy Policy

**Action**: EM to update the privacy policy in light of agreed changes.

**Action**: MSe to replace privacy policy on website.

## 5.5. Recruitment

Nothing to add to written report.

## 5.6. EDI Committee

AJreported that the SLSA will need to re-run the EDI survey, as promised in the last EDI report. Suggestion by the committee is that the survey is run every three years. AJasked for thoughts from the Board on this timeline, noting if we run every three years we will need to collect the data after the 2024 conference.

JH proposed the Board leave it for the EDI Committee to decide how often to run the EDI survey. The Board noted that CM needs to be liaised with about the timing of the survey, notably due to the work he is planning in relation to the software used by the SLSA to collect this form of data.

EDI planning to submit a bid to the AcSS for EDI funding. The EDI survey would run after this is submitted.

**Action**: EDI Committee to liaise with CM about the timing of the EDI survey and software used.

**Action**: EDI Committee to submit bid to the AcSS.

AJrequested additional volunteers join the EDI committee, notably those with skills to help run the survey and analyse the data.

RS, MHu and KM agreed to join the EDI Committee.

**Action**: MSe to update the website with new members of EDI Committee.

**Action**: EM to update internal SLSA documents with new members of EDI Committee.

**Action**: AJand BC to update EDI Jisc mail list with new members of EDI Committee.

## 5.7. Precarity Representative

Nothing to add to written report.

## 5.8. Newsletter and Web Editor

The Board discussed the environmental impact of the newsletter and whether we should continue to produce a physical newsletter. JH proposed continue as is, but keep under review. It was noted that ceasing production of the physical newsletter might have financial implications for the SLSA as Law Schools currently fund the production.

**Action**: MSe to report back to May Board with further proposal for planting trees to offset the newsletter.

The Board approved MSe’s proposal to move from Royal Mail to Mailing House.

**Action**: MSe move delivery of newsletter from Royal Mail to Mailing House.

**Action**: EM to update privacy policy to include Mailing House and email to Board for approval.

**Action**: MSe to replace privacy policy on website.

The Board approved a new roll-up banner, roller banner, tablecloth and runner for 2024 conference.

**Action**: MSe to buy new items.

The Board approved inclusion of recruitment flyers in the delegate packs at 2024 conference.

**Action**: MSe to add recruitment flyers to the delegate packs.

## 5.9. PGR Representatives

LM and MSa reported PGR conference went very well, delegates got a lot out of it and were keen to be involved with the SLSA.

## 5.10. International Liaison

SK reported that the SLSA previously agreed to operate the International Collaboration Scheme on the basis of match-funding from partner associations. Asian Law and Society Association (ALSA) asked us to consider a non-50:50 match-fund arrangement, due to the nature and limits of their funding.

JH proposed the International Committee discuss and consider requests on a case-by-case basis. Decisions to be considered in relation to the relevant size of each partner organisation and location globally. Access for SLSA members is essential to these decisions.

**Action**: International Committee to review and report back to the Board at the May meeting.

## 5.11. Webmaster

Position currently vacant, see item 5.1.

## 5.12. Social Media

EG flagged we will need volunteers to manage social media over the conference.

JH asked Board to consider volunteering and communicating this via email with EG.

**Action**: Board members to contact EG if can assist with social media coverage over the 2024 conference.

## 5.13. Blog Editor

Nothing to add to written report.

## 5.14. YouTube Channel

EM expressed the need for assistance producing/editing videos and that she would be discontinuing in the role from May 2024.

**Action**: Board members to consider taking on the role of YouTube Channel Editor.

## 5.15. Publisher’s Liaison

### 5.15.1. Book Prize nomination

RS reported that most publishers who nominated authors for the book prize are attending the conference. JH advised this item should be reviewed after the conference when we have full details of those publishers who attended the conference.

**Action**: EM to add to agenda for May meeting.

**Action**: RS to review publisher attendance at 2024 conference and report back to the Board in light of book prize nominations.

## 5.16. Open Access

Nothing to add to written report.

## 5.17. Stream Secretary

Nothing to add to written report.

## 5.18. Fundraising Group

SK noted that inclusion of a button on the website asking for members to donate needs to be integrated into the work by the website working group.

**Action**: Website working group include the need for “donate” button on redesigned site.

## 5.19. Administrator

Discussed under item 3.4.

# 6. Prizes and Competitions

## 6.1. Book prizes

SK reported that creation of the shortlist is underway, there has been a slight delay but the short-list will be produced by early February. SK asked the Portsmouth team to consider extending the early-bird registration deadline for the conference.

**Action**: DB and EW to extend the early-bird conference registration for those shortlisted for a prize.

## 6.2. Article prizes

JH noted we have the final scores and will return to the Board with a shortlist to vote upon via an online vote. The short-list will be presented to the conference, winner announced then.

**Action**: JH and EM to run an online vote to finalise short-list for the article prize.

## 6.3. Grants

RM presented the ranked scores for each grant, outlining who the grant committee advised to award funds to.

PB asked about the ringfenced fund for precariously employed applicants and asked how much of that had been spent. Noting that further applications should be funded from the additional money.

**Action**: RM to report back to the Board with final scores considering precariously employed.

RM advised that two new members of the Grants Sub-Committee needed.

**Action**: EM to add to agenda item for the short meeting.

RW noted that there is an issue with applicants not sticking to the guidance.

**Action**: Grants committee to review guidance and report any proposed changes back to the Board in May meeting.

**Action**: MSe to include in the newsletter and e-bulletin “things can do to improve submission”.

### 6.3.1. Small grants scores

JH proposed the Grants Sub-Committee present data on how much it would cost to fund all applications considered fundable.

**Action**: RM to report back to the Board the total cost of funding all applications considered fundable.

### 6.3.2. Fieldwork grant scores

Nothing to add to written report.

### 6.3.3. International collaboration scores

RM noted that we might need to reconsider the guidance for this award and the approach to grading these applications.

**Action**: EM to add item to agenda for May Board to discuss the nature of this award and how it is run, including publicity.

**Action**: International Committee to review the guidance as part of the planned review. Feedback to the May Board.

SK asked about funds coming out of funds ringfenced for the Global South collaborations.

RM confirmed only one application with a Global South collaboration was considered fundable.

JH note that we need to report back to Social and Legal Studies how much of that fund they have given has been awarded

**Action**: RM to report back to the Board with final scores considering Global South ringfence fund.

**Action**: Grants Committee to report back to the Board for communication to Socio-Legal Studies.

**Action**: JH to report back to Social and Legal Studies on use of support.

## 6.4. Seminars

SF reported that scoring is under way.

JH proposed the Seminar Competition Committee present data on how much it would cost to fund the applications considered fundable.

**Action**: Seminar Competition Committee to finalise scoring of applications and report to Board total cost of funding all fundable applications.

## 6.5. Impact Fund/Prize

MT reported that more advertisement needed for the Impact grant and award as low applicants for both. Suggested Board members highlight both to their networks.

MT confirmed that the Impact committee would run an ‘impact awareness’ event as part of the Portsmouth conference.

MT reported a shortlist had been created for the Impact Prize. Winner to be announced at the conference.

**Action**: Board members to consider how to better publicise the Impact grant and prize and report back to MT.

## 6.6. Contributions to the socio-legal community

No update at this time.

# 7. Any Other Business

JH reported creation of a pack advising individuals about the role of a Trustee to support individuals interested in becoming a SLSA Trustee.

JH thanks Sabrina for her work as a SLSA Trustee, noting she is stepping down. At the AGM the SLSA will vote for a new Trustee.

EM proposed we should increase the number of Trustees due to the amount of work the SLSA now completes. JH advised this would be reviewed prior to the call for expressions of interest for new Trustees being released.