

**Minutes of the ACL Council Meeting
held on 28th November 2023**
in person at Clarion Solicitors, Leeds



Council members present: Jack Ridgway (JR), David Bailey-Vella (DBV), Stephen Averill (SA), Kris Kilsby (KK), Victoria Morrison-Hughes (VMH), & Amy Dunkley (AD)

Also present: Carol Calver (CC) Head of Operations

The meeting started at 11:00

Item	
1	Welcome and apologies
1.1	Apologies were received from Laura Rees and Julian Caddick. JR welcomed all to the meeting.
2	Minutes of the council meeting held on 19 October 2023
2.1	It was unanimously agreed that the draft minutes of 19 October were an accurate reflection of the meeting. It was agreed that item 7.2 should be partially redacted before publishing on the website.
3	Actions arising from the council meeting held on 23 September 2023
3.1	Actions were reviewed and updated.
4	Chairman's Report
4.1	LexisNexis have invited a member of the ACL Council to sit on an upcoming event panel for 'Law firm pricing strategies in the age of AI'. SA, VMH & DBV will consider once further details and date have been provided, otherwise JR will attend.
5	PR & Marketing Committee Report
5.1	DBV reviewed the London Conference evaluation and reported back an overall positive response. Future evaluations will allow for respondents to detail areas of interest for relevancy of response. Items for improvement were discussed along with a review of sponsor packages to allow more flexibility in speakers and topics & breakout sessions to be included in main conference programme.
5.2	Council discussed a proposed 15% increase in fees for services provided by Black Letter, the increase was deemed acceptable as is the first increase for over 5 years. ACL will take the opportunity to request an update to the template of the eBulletin and will discuss split of future accessibility of all articles on the new website (member or public access)
6	Policy Committee Report
6.1	KK provided a summary of the CLSB 2023 operational protocol shared with the ACL. Council discussed the areas of focus during 2023 and plans for 2024 and are satisfied with the priorities identified.
6.2	KK shared with Council the CLSB intention to work with the MoJ to explore the possibility of expanding the current statutory eligibility requirements for judicial appointments to include regulated Costs Lawyers. The ACL will survey members to provide feedback to the CLSB.

6.3	VMH detailed a recent discussion with the Legal Ombudsman regarding a lack of Costs Qualification within the LeO and that this is not currently outsourced. Council will work with the CLSB in 2024 to review and discuss with the LeO.
6.4	KK provided a summary of recent and anticipated upcoming Policy Committee involvement in FRC (Low Value Clin Neg), MoJ Court Fee Increase, GHR rates Increase and RoCLA for the ACL Legal Aid group.
7	Education Committee Report
7.1	VMH provided feedback following an ACLT Budget 2024 meeting, detailing responses to initial queries raised by the Council. Further explanation is required on certain expenditure, JR will discuss with Sarah H directly to resolve.
7.2	Council discussed the renewal of the ACLT Chair contract for 2024. Council voted unanimously in favour of retaining current Chair, Sarah Hutchinson for the coming 2024 year.
8	Finance & Internal Policy Committee Report
8.1	SA confirmed the transfer/sale of underperforming funds had been completed successfully. This, along with ongoing economic instability resulted in a temporary dip of fund value, which was quickly rebalanced - <i>redacted due to confidentiality</i> .
8.2	SA confirmed he has set up an annual renewal with Nucleus in review of the fund and will report to Council quarterly going forward.
8.3	CC provided an initial 2024 budget for Council to consider, with an explanation of increases and decreases as anticipated for 2024. The budget will be reviewed formally and signed off in January 2024 following completion of membership renewals.
9	Operations Report
9.1	CC provided an update of the website re-design, asking for Council to assist in testing of the new site early in 2024.
9.2	CC detailed to Council a discounted subscription proposal from Costs Law Reports to offer to members from March 2024. Council were happy with the offer, however the limitation of 50 members signing up should not be conditional for the initial year to encourage and simplify uptake.
10	Any other business
	n/a
12	Date of next meeting
12.1	There being no further business the meeting ended at 15:15 Next meeting is scheduled for 30 th January 2024 10:00 to 12:00 via Teams.