

Minutes of the ACL Council Meeting
held on 5th November 2024
 Teams call, 10am



Council members present: Jack Ridgway (JR), Kris Kilsby (KK), Julian Caddick (JC), Amy Dunkley (AD), Victoria Morrison-Hughes (VMH) & Nathan Cameron (NC)

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 David Bailey-Vella and Stephen Averill. JR welcomed all to the meeting.
2	Minutes of the council meeting held on 10 th October 2024
2.1	It was unanimously agreed that the draft minutes of 10 October 2024 were an accurate reflection of the meeting. It was agreed that item 8.2 should be redacted before publishing on the website.
3	Actions arising from the council meeting held on 10 October 2024
3.1	Actions were reviewed and updated.
4	Chairman's Report
4.1	JR summarised progress on updating the Association By-Laws and Articles. Final amends following the second consultation are to be completed and then both documents are to be legally checked prior to final documents being made available to members by the end of the year. A formal EGM in January or February 2025 will finalise the changes through a formal member vote.
4.2	DBV attended the recent CLSB Board Meeting to confirm arrangements for implementation of Costs Paralegal category of membership. It is anticipated that this will mirror the CL supervisory framework. Council are confident any further adjustments can be made on an as and when necessary basis. Council will keep the CLSB updated as the Articles and By-Laws are finalised and member approved.
4.3	JR detailed the upcoming Council term end for Treasurer, Stephen Averill in Jan 25. Council agreed to elect 2 new members in January 25 increasing the Council numbers back up to quota following resignations earlier in the year. CC suggested to Council that SA be co-opted back onto Council for a further period of 6-12 months to cover change in Chair with a full Treasurer term being offered at the end of co-opted period - this is subject to agreement from SA.
4.4	JR confirmed his intention to stand down as Chair from 1 st April 2025 at the end of his term. Timelines were discussed to ensure hand-over duration and so the new Chair can be in place by 1 st April 2025 alongside the 2025 financial year and business plan. Chair nominations and votes will run through February into March allowing for a three week handover planned up to 1 st April. Council discussed the introduction of an online event to allow Chair nominees to canvas members – online session with Q&A planned for Thursday 20 th February.

5	PR & Marketing Committee Report
5.1	AD summarised feedback from London conference, generally positive but noticeable that a general drop off in positive feedback in the afternoon – review of format planned for 2025.
5.2	AD raised with Council that the definition of costs professional on the Legal Service Board website is defined as Costs Draftsman – with a link to ACL website. Suggestion to request update definition and title to Costs Lawyer.
5.3	AD updated Council on work with Black Letter – ongoing and structured social media schedule in place, with Council encouraged to like and share posts. NR is writing an article on diversity in the costs lawyer profession.
5.4	PR-AM continue to work on the Cost of Costs Lawyers analysis to use in future promotion of the profession. Data is limited from the CLSB however we can contribute to future question bank asked of CLs at PC renewal. PR-AM are working with recruitment firms in gathering salary data and intend to survey membership firms to request same data. Council discussed the need for this to be anonymised and generically banded to encourage responses.
6	Policy Committee Report
6.1	KK updated Council on the Precedent G working party breakout session from conference, which was very well attended and generated further discussion. We've also had a good response to the questions regarding this in the Costs Lawyer Survey. KK also took the opportunity to speak to CostsMaster at conference regarding the prospect of them updating their software to incorporate an option to extract Precedent S along with changes recommended by the WP. The WP will meet again this year, however the timeframe may move slightly with final submission to the SCCO / CPRC and production of best practice guidelines by end of Q1 2025 to align with the formal appointment of a new Senior Costs Judge and to allow the Policy Committee to focus on the upcoming the CJC Consultation on litigation funding which has a fixed deadline of the end of January 2025.
6.2	The CJC have announced the formal consultation on litigation funding. KK detailed that the consultation is more complex than expected, covering 3 rd party funding, BTEs and CFAs. Having experience and contacts in this area VMH will support Policy in this. A full member consultation is planned, after a call for evidence from specialist members.
6.3	KK asked Council opinion on providing training on Precedent S / eBills following a member request, after discussion it was decided that this could potentially be covered off through the introduction of micro-accreditations from ACLT.
7	Education Committee Report
7.1	VMH provided a general update on micro-accreditations (which remain outstanding), enrollment numbers to the end of Sept 24, tutor support, and maximum cohort levels.
7.2	Feedback from the June 2024 exams highlighted a concern with the contract and tort exam, following a higher failure rate. Suggestions from external examiner will be incorporated going forward after gaining approval from CLSB. A stand alone session for students on study and exam skills is planned that students can access at any time. Provision of student materials is being reviewed in terms of accessibility and timing.
7.3	Deadline for assessment submissions moved to provide flexibility for students needing support and the revival of a Student council is being considered. <i>Redacted due to confidentiality.</i>
7.4	Initial feedback provided on Marketing campaign <i>redacted due to confidentiality</i> with an increase in traffic and engagement on LinkedIn – <i>redacted due to confidentiality.</i>

7.5	VMH provided Council with an update of role for both Madeleine and Gina, effective from end September.
8	Finance & Internal Policy Committee Report
8.1	CC provided an update in investment value with no concerns from SA or Council.
9	Operations Report
9.1	CC discussed with Council an intent to raise fees for subscriber members only in 2025 along with advertising rates in the eBulletin. Council to agree via email.
9.2	Following discussion at the October Council Meeting CC updated Council on anticipated dates for both conferences in 2025.
9.3	CC detailed to Council member interest in the creation of a further Special Interest Group for Fixed Recoverable Costs – CC to set this in motion with support from JC.
9.4	Council approved JR, SA and DBV review Operations salary for 2025 alongside budget.
10	Any other business
10.1	NC raised a member request that CLs be added to the Professional Court Users Scheme – NC is working with the CLSB to pursue this during 2025. Meeting ended at 11:45
11	Date of next meeting
11.1	Next meeting December 3 rd at 2pm via Teams