



Minutes of Faculty Office Senior Officers' Meeting

Held on Monday 23 March at 11:00 at 1 The Sanctuary, Westminster, SW1P 3JT

Attendees: Charles George QC, Master
Howard Dellar, Registrar
Ian Blaney, Deputy Registrar
Neil Turpin, Chief Clerk

The meeting was conducted by conference call due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 24th February were, with one minor amendment to section 6 of Part I, approved.

PART I - Ecclesiastical Matters

PART II - England and Wales notarial matters

1. Master of the Faculties

It was noted that seven candidates had applied for the position of Dean of the Arches and Auditor and Master of the Faculties to succeed Charles George QC following his retirement on 8th June 2020. A shortlist has been prepared and final interviews are scheduled for 31st March. The shortlisted candidates have been invited to telephone the Registrar of the Court of Faculties to discuss the post of Master of the Faculties in advance of the final interview date.

2. Qualifications Board

In order to bring the Qualifications Board within the requirements of the new Internal Governance Rules, a number of the notarial members of the Board have agreed to become advisors rather than full members of the Board, in addition, two new Lay members (lay as defined in the Legal Services Act) are to be appointed.

3. IGR Compliance Certificate

The final version of the draft of the IGR compliance certificate was approved by the Master and it was agreed that the Registrar should on behalf of the Master, sign the Certificate of Compliance with the Internal Governance Rules 2019 and that the undertakings mentioned in that Certificate be implemented forthwith.

4. Review of professional qualifications

The Master had considered the briefing paper provided as a result of the joint Boards' Working Party which had also been considered by all members of both the Qualifications and Advisory Boards. The Master accepted all recommendations made therein. The Qualifications Board would be invited to consider further the position of Licensed Conveyancers and whether they could be given a block exemption.

As far as the proposal for CPE is concerned and the suggestion of AML being required, it was agreed that we would seek to amend the Notaries (Continuing Professional Education) Regulations 2010 to make provision for the Master to require a specific topic to be covered from time to time rather than specifically relating this to AML although it was likely that AML would continue to be a requirement as this is a fast developing area of work.

As regard the requirement for CPE during the covid-9 crisis, it was reported that both Notary Training and the Notaries Society had made online provision for CPE to enable notaries to secure their CPE points before the end of the year. There was no need, at this stage, for the Master to issue a waiver in respect of the requirement for CPE. This may need to be reviewed if the Notaries Society annual conference at the end of September has to be cancelled as this is the event at which a significant proportion of the profession secure their annual CPE points. This would be reviewed in May.

5. Progress of Code of Practice revisions

It was reported that some sections of the code of practice had been reviewed but we were still awaiting the final draft. It was agreed that this ought to be chased again.

6. Disciplinary cases – update

Re VM – VM had now lodged an appeal to the High Court against the decision of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal. Once the outcome of the appeal is known further action may be required. A Nominated Notary has been appointed but is on hold pending the outcome of the appeal to the High Court.

Re CC – the formal complaint has not yet been lodged and this would be pursued.

Re GS – nothing further has been heard from the SRA and this will also be chased up. GS is no longer practising as a notary and therefore is considered to be low risk.

7. Practice authorization statutory instrument

Unfortunately no further progress had been made with the MoJ as regard setting up a meeting with the lawyer who amended the draft statutory instrument. This would be pursued as the Master is concerned that this has now dragged on for some considerable time.

8. Complaints about City of London Police and related matters

The City of London Police had been informed of the errors contained in their letter but no progress was anticipated from them. The matter has now been reported to the SRA.

9. OPBAS

OPBAS have published a progress report on all the professional body supervisors and a copy has been provided to the Master. Attention was drawn to the announcement in the Budget of a proposed

electronic crime levy and there is to be consultation process in due course to discuss how this will be collected and on whom it will be levied but there is little further detail at this stage.

PART III Overseas Jurisdictions

12. Any other business

There was none.

13. Date of next meeting

27 April at 11.00 by teleconference

18 May at 11.00 by teleconference