

**OPEN UNIVERSITY LAW SOCIETY**

**Society Committee**

Saturday 17th March 2025

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the 7th meeting of the 2024/25 Society Committee held online on Saturday 17th March 2025.

**Present:**

Chair

Treasurer

Secretary/ Acting Vice-chair

Patricia Thomson

Mark Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

William Brazier

**Agenda:**

N/A.

**Welcome:**

Patricia Thomson, Committee Chair, welcomed everyone to the 2024/25 Society Committee’s 7th meeting.

**Housekeeping:**

N/A.

**Absent:**

Vice-Chair

Christopher Paul Matejak

**Minutes of the last meeting:**

N/A.

**Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda:**

Ms Thompson

Raised an incident that occurred during the 2nd round of the current mooting competition on 16/03/2025. Ms Qadira Ayad, acting in her capacity as Mooting Mistress was judging with Ms Thompson acting as the secondary judge, the idea being for Ms Thompson to take a backseat.

One of the competitors wasn’t available, therefore they scheduled for 16/03/2025. It was explained to them that if they did not get through, they would be placed onto a reserve list, and this was agreed. It was also explained to this member that they wouldn’t receive their results till 5pm.

Ms Ayad was unable to make this deadline, however Ms Thompson wanted to stick to this due to factors relating to member’s needs. Ms Thompson attempted to explain this to Ms Ayad who began shouting, alleging a failure to adhere to her reasonable adjustments. The above member was present to this. Ms Thompson stated that Ms Ayad began screaming and shouting at her regarding her reasonable adjustments.

There was a follow up phone call via WhatsApp, in which Ms Thompson felt unable to communicate to Ms Ayad due to the high volume of shouting. Ms Ayad terminated the call, before following this up with a series of lengthy WhatsApp messages, alleging that this particular incident regarding the scoring had has caused her to go into crisis.

Additionally, another issue arose regarding the alternative scoring for this round, as it related to public speaking as opposed to the technicality of legal submissions.

Ms Thomson states that she did not share this owing to a genuine mistake. That being said, Ms Thompson stated that Ms Ayad did not explain this. When Ms Ayad did raise the need for a differing scoring sheet, Ms Thompson responded within a few minutes.

Ms Thompson explained that Ms Ayad had a private appointment, and Ms Thompson accommodated for this on an undated previous occasion.

Following the above incidents Ms Thompsons did have an appointment. Ms Ayad reportedly stated that she felt better, and explained how this incident had opened her eyes to private matters of which are outside of the scope of these minutes.

Ms Ayad subsequently sent the mooting scores via email.

Ms Thompson replied to this and explained that she would account for any reasonable adjustments, however stated that deadlines cannot be amended, especially those set by the High Courts.

Ms Thompson emailed the attending member and apologised, however the member stated that they would testify as to what occurred over the call with Ms Ayad. Ms Thompson sought advice from the committee on this matter.

Ms Thompson stated that on the basis that the vice-chair is absent, it is inappropriate for them to be accessing the vice-chair account.

Ms Thompson had received an email from student societies explaining that there had been structural changes, however these shouldn’t have any effect on the functioning of the OULS.

Ms Thompson confirmed that there has been a three further guest speaker confirmed for the ongoing guest speaker series, with one of these facilitated by Ms Ayad.

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

Stated that he felt Ms Thompson handled the above situation well, and explained that Ms Thompson is not Ms Ayads employer, was not aware of the need for reasonable measures, and does not hold the same duty of care as an employer would. Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle felt as though the conduct not appropriate in the circumstances and explained that a courteous warning challenging the conduct was appropriate, as well as offering support regarding meeting any reasonable adjustments that Ms Ayads may have.

Mr Brazier

Stated that he felt Ms Thompson handled the above situation well, and explained that Ms Thompson is not Ms Ayads employer, was not aware of the need for reasonable measures, and does not hold the same duty of care as an employer would. Mr Brazier felt as though the conduct not appropriate in the circumstances and explained that a courteous warning challenging the conduct was appropriate, as well as offering support regarding meeting any reasonable adjustments that Ms Ayads may have. Additionally, Mr Brazier explained that he felt if a similar incident was to occur again, namely a volunteer for the OULS speaking in an unacceptable tone to a committee member, then it may be best to part with that individual so as to maintain member confidence in the OULS.

Additionally, Mr Brazier offered to act as a mooting coordinator in reserve.

**Report:**

N/A.

**Actions:**

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

* Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle is to present the accounts to Ms Thompson by the end of Friday.

**Finance:**

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

* The accounting end of year date is the end of February this year.
* A covering email was received by the Treasure Gmail account, however there was nothing to suggest that this was to do with the OULS accounts. However, upon closer inspection it appear that the email was a request get the accounts to be gotten together and prepared.
* Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle shall complete them by next weekend.
* Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle has requested clearer communication and better notice in the future.
* Additionally, Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle is to present the accounts to Ms Thompson by the end of Friday.

Ms Thompson

* Required to understand the OULS accounts before Saturday.
* Re: Gareth Jones, PayPal are now not completing their obligations.

**Proposed changes to the society byelaws and society guidelines**

N/A.

**Any other business**

N/A.

**Date of next meeting**

N/A.

**Signed:**

William Brazier, Secretary.