

REPORT on the ASSOCIATION OF CHARITY LAWYERS

Back in the summer of 1992 a group of charity practitioners met for lunch at the offices of Richards Butler to discuss the possibility of forming an association of lawyers practising in the charities field. It was agreed that the idea should be developed and that a meeting should be arranged to gauge the overall prospective interest in such an association. Following this a mail-shot was sent to barristers, solicitors and academic lawyers known to be interested in the field.

The inaugural meeting of the Association of Charity Lawyers was held at the Law Society on 3rd November 1992 and was attended by 56 charity lawyers (expressions of interest having been received from a further 47 practitioners).

Anne-Marie Piper of Richards Butler addressed the meeting with an outline of plans for a possible Association. She indicated that the remit for the Association would be to provide both an informal arena for charity lawyers to meet and a more formal group which could represent the professional views and concerns of its members to the relevant authorities.

She suggested that membership of the Association should be open to solicitors and barristers practising in the field and to academic lawyers. She also suggested that there might be three categories of membership: full voting membership; associate membership (for practitioners with less than three years' experience and retired practitioners and academics); and affiliate membership (for practitioners from other disciplines).

It was also suggested that meetings of the Association should be held quarterly and that the format for such meetings would be a short talk, an update slot on recent developments in the charities field and time for drinks and socialising.

It was agreed that an Initial Committee should be formed to consider the future of the Association. One of the items for early consideration by the Committee would be the future relationship of the Association with the Charity Commission.

Hubert Picarda QC and Stephen Lloyd of Bates Wells & Braithwaite then addressed the inaugural meeting with complementary talks on the subject of statutory offences under the Charities Act 1992.

Membership application forms were circulated to those attending the inaugural meeting and at the date of writing nearly 153 members have applied to join. There has also been a mailing to those who expressed interest in the Association but were unable to attend the inaugural meeting and it is hoped that further members will join as a result of this.

A committee has been formed for the Association whose first officers include: as Honorary President, Hubert Picarda QC; as Chairman, Peter Mimpriss of Allen & Overy; and as Secretary, Anne-Marie Piper of Richards Butler. Other members of the Committee are Michael Stewart (Hempsons), Stephen Lloyd (Bates Wells & Braithwaite), Michael King (Stone King & Wardle, Bath), Geraint Thomas (Barrister), Dr Peter Smith (University of Exeter) and Judith Hill (Farrer & Co). The Committee met for the first time on 13th January 1993.

The second meeting of the Association took place on Tuesday, 2nd March at 6 pm in Committee Room C of the Law Society. The meeting was addressed by Jean Dollimore of Trowers & Hamblins on the subject of *The Liabilities of Charity Trustees*. A discussion on that subject followed. Mark Lacey of Allen & Overy also provided an update slot.

The next meeting is to take place on Thursday 3rd June at the offices of Richards Butler.

Anyone wishing to obtain further details of the Association and the meeting on the 3rd June should contact Anne-Marie Piper at Richards Butler, Beaufort House, 15 St Botolph Street, London EC3A 7EE.

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