DRAFT

MINUTE

Annual General Meeting

**8th May 2025**

**Present**:

Duncan Osler (Chairperson), Peter Ware (Finance and Membership Secretary), Anya Topley, Andrew de Whalley, Anthony Woolich, Catherine Maddox, Ed Williams, James Goudie KC, James Neil, Jamie Dickson, Jonathan Davey, Kyle Duggan, Laura Thornton, Michael Bowsher KC, Manjinder Nagra, Matt Evans, Penri Desscan, Philip Mole, Steven Duffett, Tom Hanson, Tom Ward, Tomos Lewis, Totis Kotsonis, Victoria Fletcher, Yindi Gesinde and Kieran McGaughey.

1. **Introduction and Approval of Minutes**

Duncan Osler welcomed members to the AGM and it was noted that a quorum was present.

It was noted that no notice had been received of additional business for the AGM and therefore the AGM would address only the ordinary business set out in the Notice of AGM.

A draft minute of the previous AGM on 16th May 2024 was tabled to the meeting (Appendix 1), and was approved as an accurate record.

1. **Retiral and appointment of Relevant Members to serve on the Executive Committee**

The following members of the Executive Committee retired at the AGM, were eligible for re-election and had been nominated to do so:

* Kate Davies and
* Kate Gough.

In addition, it was noted Catherine Maddox and Jonathan Lewis had been nominated for election to the Executive Committee.

It was noted that the number of Relevant Members validly nominated to join the Executive Committee exceeded the number of spaces available and accordingly there was a requirement for an election to take place.

Voting papers were circulated and it was agreed that completed voting papers would be collected later in the meeting. It was proposed that the result of the election be announced with AOCB i.e. towards the end of the meeting.

1. **The approval of annual subscription fees for each class of membership**

As indicated in the covering email issuing the Notice of AGM, the following annual subscription fees for each class of membership were proposed by the Executive Committee:

a. No charge for lawyers having under 3 years PQE,

b. £12.50 for public sector lawyers, and

c. £30 for private sector lawyers.

Duncan Osler explained that since Stripe who operate our membership subscription service retain a percentage of fees paid and annual subscription fees had been unchanged for a number of years, the Executive Committee proposed and recommended a small increase to £30, in the annual subscription fees for private sector lawyers.

The above annual subscription fees were approved by a show of hands at the meeting.

1. **The approval of Brooks Mayfield Chartered Accountants as auditors**

Brooks Mayfield Chartered Accountants were proposed for re-appointment as our auditors. This was approved by a show of hands at the meeting.

1. **Annual Report of work done by or under the auspices of the Committee**

Duncan Osler delivered an annual report of work done by or under the auspices of the Executive Committee (Appendix 1). There were no questions for the Executive Committee and the annual report was accepted.

1. **The approval of the audited accounts of the Association relating to the preceding Financial Year**

Peter Ware as Finance and Membership Secretary spoke to selected parts of his Report to the AGM (Appendix 2). There were no questions arising.

The Audited accounts for the Association for the year ended 30 November 2023 and also for the year ended 30 November 2024, were circulated at the meeting and it was noted these had been available on the PLA's website for member review.

These were approved was approved by a show of hands at the meeting.

1. **AOCB**

**Update on Executive Committee Election**

Peter Ware reported that voting papers had been collected, votes had been counted and the following members were successful in being elected:

* Laura Brealey
* Kate Davies
* Jonathan Lewis.

The new members above were congratulated and appointed to the Executive Committee anthe other candidates were thanked for putting their names forward.

There was no other business, and the AGM was brought to a close.

**Appendix 1**

DRAFT

MINUTE

Annual General Meeting

**16th May 2024**

1. **Introduction and Approval of Minutes**

Duncan Osler welcomed members to the AGM and it was noted that a quorum was present.

It was noted that no notice had been received of additional business for the AGM and therefore the AGM would address the ordinary business set out in the Notice of AGM.

1. **Retiral and appointment of Relevant Members to serve on the Executive Committee**

The following members of the Executive Committee retired and were eligible for re-election:

* Jonathan Davey
* Totis Kotsonis
* Duncan Osler
* Rebecca Rees
* Chris Murray
* Anthony Woolich
* Ewen West KC
* Joseph Barrett KC
* Kieran McGaughey

It was noted that the number of vacancies on the Executive Committee exceeded the number of members applying to join the Executive Committee and accordingly there was no requirement for an election to take place. The following members having applied and being eligible for appointment, were appointed to the Executive Committee:

* Jonathan Davey
* Totis Kotsonis
* Duncan Osler
* Rebecca Rees
* Chris Murray
* Anthony Woolich
* Ewen West KC
* Joseph Barrett KC
* Kieran McGaughey
* Manjinder Nagra.
1. **The approval of annual subscription fees for each class of membership**

The following annual subscription fees for each class of membership were proposed:

a. No charge for lawyers who have under 3 years PQE,

b. £12.50 for public sector lawyers, and

c. £25 for private sector lawyers.

The above annual subscription fees were approved.

1. **The approval of Brooks Mayfield Chartered Accountants as auditors**

Brooks Mayfield Chartered Accountants were proposed for re-appointment as our auditors. This was approved.

1. **Annual Report of work done by or under the auspices of the Committee**

Duncan Osler delivered an annual report of work done by or under the auspices of the Executive Committee. This was accepted.

1. **The approval of the audited accounts of the Association relating to the preceding Financial Year**

Audited accounts for the Association for the year ended 30 November 2022 were circulated at the meeting and it was noted these had been available on the PLA's website for member review. After discussion, these were approved.

1. **AOCB**

There was no other business and the AGM was brought to a close.

**Appendix 2**

**Procurement Lawyers' Association**

**Annual General Meeting 8th May 2025**

**Annual Report**

Dear members,

Thank you to Anthony Woolich and the team at Blake Morgan LLP for hosting the Annual General Meeting of the Procurement Lawyers Association this year, we are very grateful. Thank you all for taking the time to join us here. I am conscious that meeting online would have enabled more members to participate and hold us on the Executive Committee to account. However we do feel there is a benefit in being able to meet in person both to compare notes and exchange views on procurement law matters, and make and strengthen connections between us.

Turning to reporting on the Committee’s work during last year, I am very grateful to all those on the Committee for their hard work during and outside our regular meetings. I would like to thank Peter Ware in particular as our Finance and Membership Secretary and also Totis Kotsonis as our Events Organiser, but will mention others too when mentioning our various activities.

Of course, our prime focus in the past year has been the Procurement Act 2023 coming into force as of February 2025.

We provided some support to the Public Procurement Research Group's Global Revolution conference in June 2024 at the University of Nottingham, which had a focus on UK procurement reforms. In particular, Ewan West delivered a commentary on the 2023 Act in a conference plenary session, and we also maintained our long term focus from the procurement practitioner perspective in the workshop session we delivered. Totis Kotsonis, Emily Heard and Jonathan Davey each focused on different elements of procurement under the 2023 Act.

That work led to the development of our current series of Roundtable events, which we decided should be timed to follow the 2023 Act coming into force. The first of our Roundtable events was held on 6 March 2025 and over 80 attended online to hear a panel discussion on macro procurement options under the 2023 Act. Importantly given that it remains early days for the new procurement regime, there was an encouraging range of questions and comments from those attending online as well as some very helpful insights from Deok Joo Rhee KC of 39 Essex Chambers, Dr Rebecca Rees of Trowers & Hamlins, Leyna Stewart from Sellafield Ltd and Edward Vera-Cruz from Southern Water.

Please look out for details of our future Roundtable events and thank you to Emily, Totis and Jonathan for leading on our Roundtable series.

As a Committee we are very concerned to be inclusive and to engage as widely as possible. We have an Associates Sub-group which organises events designed to meet the needs of members at that stage. Also for lawyers with up to three years post qualification status, equivalents and students, we are continue to sponsor and run the Rosemary Choueka Memorial Essay Competition, with deadlines for this year's submission on 6 June. Congratulations to Beth Edwards for her winning essay last year and of course we heard from our 2023 prize winner, Jamie Dickson, earlier this afternoon. Thank you to Anthony Woolich and Rebecca Rees as well as our judging panel for their hard work running the competition this year.

In addition, our Public Sector Sub-group is looking to encourage and support public sector membership. We would like very much to have a greater number of public sector members. We hope to encourage more public sector lawyers to see the benefits of membership and the ability to access valuable learning and insights, for modest cost. Please speak to Manjinder Nagra and Kieran McGaughey who are actively developing initiatives to that end.

We were particularly pleased that there was another 'full house', over 180 in attendance, at our Annual Dinner at the Stationers Hall last November. Over 180 tickets were sold, and our after-dinner speaker Mr Justice Waksman spoke very memorably. More on our plans for the 2025 Annual Dinner soon. Thank you to Shailee Howard and Chris Murray in particular for their hard work in relation to the Dinner.

We are focused on representing, promoting and strengthening procurement law expertise in the UK but public procurement has an international context. In November 2024 the Government Contracts Section of the US Federal Bar Association engaged with us and at our Annual Dinner, Ralph C. Thomas delivered and handed over a Declaration towards collaboration between us and their Section. Since then we have attended one of their meetings as observers and we are actively looking at how we might collaborate further. A truly interesting prospect, not least on account of the significant size of the FBA and the Government Contracts Section, and ongoing developments in US Federal contracting.

Looking back on the past 12 months, I would like to thank everyone on our Executive Committee for their hard work throughout what has been an important year for procurement in the UK.

Finally, thank you everyone, and to all our members, for your continued support.

Although shortly we might move to the next formal stage of this meeting, before doing so I should like to invite any questions from members present.

Thank you and best wishes.

**Duncan Osler**

**Chair, Executive Committee**

**Procurement Lawyers' Association**

**Appendix 3**

**THE PROCUREMENT LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION**

**Report by the Finance and Membership Secretary to the AGM on 8th May 2025**

I have submitted to the meeting 2 sets of audited accounts for the periods ending:

1. 30 November 2023; and
2. 30 November 2024.

These were prepared by our auditors, Brooks Mayfield. A number of copies of these accounts are available here at the meeting for inspection. If you would like an electronic copy, please contact me by e-mail.

Whilst we continue to hold a good level of reserves we are now not accruing them at the rate we previously have done. As at the date of the last set of accounts we held £40,596.02 in our account.

The Executive Committee has continued to give ongoing consideration as to how best to apply the reserves. Suggestions and actions have included.

* We held the the annual Rosie Choueka Memorial Essay which attracted some excellent entries and deserving prize winners.
* Administrative support. We largely get by on the basis of time given voluntarily by Committee members and a small number of secretaries / PAs within our respective firms. We make a modest gift of Christmas hampers / vouchers to those secretaries / PAs each year.
* Paying for academics and other speakers to travel to attend events whenever appropriate.
* Occasional use of external venues for larger events. We generally rely on the goodwill of members who persuade their firms or organisations to allow us use of their facilities at no or very modest cost. I would just like to use this opportunity to invite any members who are able to assist with facilities (of whatever size) for events to get in touch with Committee members (particularly Totis Kotsonis).
* The largest thing that we incur expense on is the subsidy for the Annual Dinner. Our contribution largely pays for the discounted price for public sector colleagues and the cost of our guests at the dinner. The committee continue to consider that this is a worthwhile thing to do given the high regard it is held in by all those who attend.

It is undoubtedly a good thing to have reserves and the ability to use these to benefit our members and promote procurement law. Please come forward to the Committee with or suggestions on how we should use our surplus.

We finished last year with **413** members – made up of 388 (paid) + 25 (NQs / Free). The new membership system has made renewals much simpler (for my PA!) but has also, I think, simplified it for members however, if there are any issues please do ensure that you raise them with me. The membership remains primarily solicitors in private practice although interest from the Bar and to a lesser extent the public sector is increasing. We would welcome more members from the public sector, in-house lawyers of whatever variety, the utilities sector and the defence sector.

We would also welcome any suggestion as to how we can better cater for our members based outside the British Isles and, indeed, for those based outside London. If you are a current member and are looking for something additional or specific from the PLA, please put your ideas forward to any of the Committee members and, rest assured, they will be discussed and, if needed, put to the membership.

**Peter Ware**