

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW BY CHAIRMAN

HAMISH LAL

- 1 The Adjudication Society has had a successful 2023 *but* there is more to do in 2024. I say this because:
 - a. We have the highest number of **Members** since the Society started;
 - b. We have the strongest set of **Financials** since the Society started;
 - c. We have elected our **Inaugural Honorary President**, Victoria Russell;
 - d. We welcome our **first female Chair**, Susan Francombe;
 - e. We launched **Women in Adjudication** and the **Equal Representation in Adjudication Pledge**;
 - f. We launched two **Mentoring** Schemes (designed to help younger and new adjudicators better embrace the practicalities of Statutory Adjudication);
 - g. We launched **“Spotlighting Adjudicators”** (showcasing the broad array and diversity in our Members who sit as Adjudicator); and
 - h. We attracted a good number of Members to stand for **Election** to the Executive Committee – this important on many levels. New people, new talent and new ideas is vital for the Society.

- 2 I am delighted that we have had (and will now continue to have) a strong team dedicated and determined to achieve success for the Society across many areas. The Executive Committee works really well, and everyone was committed to making sure that Members are respected, rewarded and thanked for participating in the various initiatives.

Financials

- 3 The Treasurer is Martin Ewen. Happily, the Treasurer's Report continues to demonstrate that the Society is in good financial health. However, we cannot be complacent – a number of Societies compete for members and whilst our subscription is relatively modest we are keen to and must now more actively promote the Society and thus attract new members from QS Firms, Claims Consultants, Law Firms, Chambers, In-House Legal Departments and Industry. As the King's College London and The Adjudication Society Report on Construction Adjudication shows, adjudication is the primary form of dispute resolution and in the vast majority of cases the 'final and binding' form of dispute resolution in the construction sector. The Adjudication Society *must* take all the opportunities and continue to be the primary Society dealing with all aspects of adjudication.

Education, Training & Learning

4 The objects of the Society remain:

“to promote for the public and the individual member benefit, education, training, study and research (and the publication of the useful results of such research) in the field of adjudication practice and procedure and related subjects worldwide).”

To meet these objectives, in 2022 we robustly reinvigorated various activities and I will touch upon some of them below.

- **The Quarterly Case law Updates** have been a huge success. James Pickavance and Claire King must be congratulated. Members have heard from excellent speakers and we have sought to make sure that all Members are informed about all the key developments in the Courts. The feedback from Members has been very positive and our speakers have been praised for delivering information and legal analysis in a way that is readily understood also by non-lawyers.
- Our **collaboration** with Professor Nazzini of King's College London continues and with publication of the *2023 Construction Adjudication in the United Kingdom: Tracing Trends and Guiding Reform*. I highlight Mrs Justice O'Farrell's comments in the Foreword:

“Two issues stand out – adjudicator bias and lack of diversity. Perception of bias on the part of the adjudicator should be capable of remedy through codes of practice and early disclosure to the parties of any potential conflict; transparency is usually sufficient to allay any concerns regarding impartiality. Improved diversity will take more time and effort, through leadership within the industry and the adjudication nomination bodies, diversity training and mentoring.”

The Committee is pleased with the 2023 Report and it is apprehended that Women in Adjudication will take the lead in addressing Mrs Justice O'Farrell's comments about improving diversity.

- The **2023 Conference** has “sold out” thanks to the sterling work of our Junior Vice-Chair, Arran Dowling-Hussey. Arran has been a huge asset to the Society and his elevation to a senior leadership role evidences the high regard *both* Members and the Committee have for Arran. I thank all the Moderators and Speakers for their time and expertise. I am also grateful to Lubna Shuja, Immediate Past President of the Law Society of England and Wales, and Mrs Justice Jefford who respectively, open and close the 2023 Conference with Keynote Speeches.
- The **Practical Workshops** led by Sean Gibbs, Dean Sayers and Susan Francombe have been a success and in 2023 we looked at Adjudicators' Terms & Conditions, Jurisdiction and Evidence in Statutory Adjudication. The Member feedback has been excellent.
- Our **Newsletter**, case notes and the resources on our website provide a source of valuable reference materials. They also provide a trusted hub for discussion and sharing of expertise within the adjudication community on the topics that challenge us. I very much encourage Members to continue to provide articles or papers. I must thank Tim Willis who led the Newsletter Team in 2023.

Diversity

- 5 Claire King and Morwenna Crichton have dedicated significant time and expertise and shown great leadership with all their work on Women in Adjudication and the Equal Representation in Adjudication Pledge. Both seminal initiatives were launched on February 28th, 2023 and a great deal has been achieved in a short space of time. One only has to look at our website to see the number of events, information on 'route to panel' and the new Mentoring Schemes to assess what Claire and Morwenna have contributed. The "Meet the ANBs" Event held on April 27th, 2023 will not be forgotten – in many ways, it was a 'wake up call' to the ANBs and The Society will continue to work hard to effect further improvements. As Mrs Justice O'Farrell states (in her Forward to the 2023 Report), "Improved diversity will take more time and effort, through leadership within the industry and the adjudication nomination bodies, diversity training and mentoring." I thank warmly, and congratulate Morwenna Crichton and Claire King on a very successful 2023.

The Executive Committee

- 6 I am personally very grateful to all the 2023 Committee for all the time, hard work and support shown for the common endeavour. It is fair to suggest that The Society is in super shape. I say this because we have had an excellent and collegiate committee over the last several years and one focused happily and solely on helping our Members, and because the Society is progressive, ambitious, and acutely aware of what the next generation (rightly) expects and demands.
- 7 I am grateful to, and recognise the seminal work that the following members of the Committee have given to The Society. For the first time in 20 years, a significant number of the Committee have left allowing new talent, new aspirations and new people to join. This is wholly impressive. I am immensely grateful to Lawrence Davis, Edward Quigg, Tim Ellis, Richard Booth, Claire King, and Theresa Mohammed for all the time, leadership, hard work and lack of self-interest. Following the recent Election, I am delighted to announce that the following people were elected as General Members:
- ✓ Bernadette Barker
 - ✓ Amy Bonczyk
 - ✓ Nicholas Gould
 - ✓ Hamish Lal
 - ✓ Suryen Nullatamby
 - ✓ James O'Donoghue
 - ✓ James Pickavance
 - ✓ Carly Thorpe
- 8 We have new regional teams in Ireland and in London – this is excellent news and so I apprehend an array of new learning and social events. We have much to look forward to in 2024. In that context, I wish the 'new' 2024 Executive Committee all the very best. I must end by thanking Members for all their support, feedback and contributions – without Members the Society struggles, with Members it flourishes.

Hamish Lal
25 November 2023