



**Annual Report of the Advisory Council on
Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers**

1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

June 2023

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Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to present the twelfth Annual Report of the Advisory Council on Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers.

Officers of court are the executive arm of the courts in Scotland and as such they make a vital contribution to the delivery of justice by ensuring that obligations are met and rights can be enforced. The public must have confidence in them as a profession and it is right that they are properly regulated both by the courts they serve and by their professional association. Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers are to be thanked for their continuing role in the justice system.

The Hon. Lady Poole
(Chair)

1. Introduction

Establishment

- 1.1 Section 76(1) of the Debtors (Scotland) Act 1987 (“the 1987 Act”) established the Advisory Council on Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers (“the Advisory Council”) whose functions are to advise the Court of Session on the making of Acts of Sederunt under section 75 of the 1987 Act and generally to keep under review all matters relating to officers of court.

History

- 1.2 The Advisory Council first met on 2 November 1987. The Advisory Council has had five Chairs, Lord Prosser (1987-2001); Lord McEwan (2001-2009); Lord Uist (2009-2015), Lady Wolffe (2015-2019) and Lady Poole (February 2020 to date).

Increased role

- 1.3 Part 3 of the Bankruptcy and Diligence etc. (Scotland) Act 2007 sought to effect a fundamental reform of the regulation of messengers-at-arms and sheriff officers. It sought to unify those two offices and establish a Scottish Civil Enforcement Commission with regulatory functions in respect of them.
- 1.4 These reforms were never brought into force. Instead, by way of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, significant modification of the reforms was effected. The unification of the two offices was reversed. The provisions concerning the Scottish Civil Enforcement Commission were repealed, with the majority of its proposed functions being placed instead on the Advisory Council or on the Lord President and the sheriffs principal or on the professional association for officers of court. The Society of Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers (“SMASO”) was designated as the professional association for officers of court by the Scottish Ministers on 1 April 2011.

Annual report

- 1.5 Section 51 of the Bankruptcy and Diligence etc. (Scotland) Act 2007 (as amended) provides that the Advisory Council must prepare a report on its activities during the whole of each financial year as soon as practicable after the end of the period to which the report relates. This is the Advisory Council's twelfth annual report and is for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- 1.6 The Advisory Council must send a copy of the report to the Scottish Ministers and publish the report.

2. Membership

- 2.1 Section 76(2) of the 1987 Act provides that the Advisory Council shall consist of –
- (a) the following persons appointed by the Lord President of the Court of Session –
 - (i) a judge of the Court of Session (who shall act as chair);
 - (ii) two sheriffs principal;
 - (iii) two officers of court;
 - (iv) two solicitors; and
 - (v) such other persons (not falling within sub-paragraphs (i) to (iv) above) as the Lord President considers appropriate;
 - (b) one person appointed by the Lord Advocate; and
 - (c) the Lord Lyon King of Arms.
- 2.2 Section 76(3) provides that the secretary of the Advisory Council shall be appointed by the Scottish Ministers. The current secretary is Edward McHugh, solicitor.

2.3 As at 1 April 2022 the membership of the Advisory Council was as follows:

The Hon. Lady Poole (Chair)

The Right Hon. the Lord Lyon (Dr Joseph Morrow)

Sheriff Principal Murray

Sheriff Principal Turnbull

Roderick Macpherson - officer of court

David Walker - officer of court

Walter Drummond-Murray- Scottish Government

Pauline Allan - Citizens Advice Scotland

Yvonne MacDermid - Money Advice Scotland

Eileen Blackburn – CA member

Fergus Thomson– solicitor member

2.4 During the period covered by the report

- Roderick Macpherson resigned as an officer of court member and was replaced by *Alex Irvine*;
- Sheriff Principal Murray's membership came to an end as a result of his retirement and he was replaced on the Advisory Council by *Sheriff Principal Nigel Ross*;
- Sheriff Principal Turnbull's appointment came to an end and he has been replaced on the Advisory Council by Sheriff Principal Sean Murphy KC (whose appointment took place in May 2023, after the end of the period covered by this report);
- the memberships of Pauline Allan and Yvonne MacDermid (consumer representatives) came to an end. *Ged Mulvey* has been appointed as the new consumer representative. The second consumer representative position remains vacant;
- Eileen Blackburn resigned as the Chartered Accountant member. That position remains vacant;

- *Tom Hempleman* was appointed to the Advisory Council as a solicitor member.

The Advisory Council records its thanks to the members who left the council for their valuable contributions during their years of membership.

3. Meetings and work of the Advisory Council

- 3.1 The Advisory Council met on 7 June 2022. The minutes of the meeting are attached as appendix A to this report.
- 3.2 SMASO submitted its annual memorandum to the Advisory Council. It is attached as appendix B to this report.
- 3.3 SMASO had brought to the attention of the Lord President an issue regarding the requirement that officers of court hold a bond of caution in addition to professional indemnity insurance. This requirement is set out in Rule 9 of the *Act of Sederunt (Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers Rules) 1991/1397* (Caution and professional indemnity insurance). The Lord President had asked ACMASO to consider the issue. The Advisory Council did so at its meeting on 7 June 2022 and agreed that Chair should write to the Lord President recommending that the requirement for officers of court to obtain a bond of caution be revoked by amending Rule 9 of the 1991 Rules.
- 3.4 The Lord President agreed with the Chair's recommendation and instructed the Lord President's Private Office to prepare the necessary amending statutory instrument. This led to the making of *Act of Sederunt (Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers Rules) (Amendment) 2022 (S.S.I. 2022 / 355)* which came into force on 28 December 2022.

- 3.5 In relation to advising the Court of Session on the making of Acts of Sederunt under section 75 of the 1987 Act, S.S.I. 2022/355 was the only such instrument which came to the Advisory Council's attention this year.
- 3.6 The Advisory Council were in email contact rather than formally meeting in October 2022 and at that time agreed to bring forward the next meeting to May 2023.

4. Statistical Information

The Advisory Council previously indicated an intention to include in its report a statistical analysis of the performance by officers of court of their functions as envisaged by section 51 of the 2007 Act. This takes the form of a report from the Accountant in Bankruptcy containing the statistics provided by officers of court under section 84 of the 1987 Act. The report for 2021- 2022 (published in September 2022) can be accessed here:

<https://aib.gov.uk/scottish-diligence-statistics-2021-22>.

APPENDIX A

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON MESSENGERS-AT-ARMS AND SHERIFF OFFICERS

Meeting 7 June 2022 at 3pm by webex

Present

- The Hon. Lady Poole (Chair)
- Sheriff Principal Turnbull
- Sheriff Principal Ross
- The Right Hon. the Lord Lyon (Dr Joseph Morrow)
- Mr. David Walker - Officer of Court
- Mr. Roderick Macpherson - Officer of Court
- Mr. Ged Mulvey - Money Advice Scotland
- Mr. Walter Drummond-Murray - Scottish Government
- Mr. Tom Hempleman -solicitor

Secretariat

Mr Edward McHugh – Deputy Secretary to the Lord President

Apologies

Fergus Thomson, solicitor

Item 1: Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and, in particular, welcomed Ged Mulvey, Sheriff Principal Ross and Tom Hempleman to their first meetings. Apologies were noted from Fergus Thomson.

Item 2: Membership of Council: update

2. The Chair noted the retirement of Pauline Allen, Alison Gow, Eileen Blackburn CA and Yvonne Macdermid. She thanked them for serving on the council. She informed members that the Lord President's Private Office was engaged in attempting to identify a replacement Chartered Accountant member via the Institute of Chartered Accountants for Scotland

Item 3: Bonds of Caution

3. The Society of Messengers- at- Arms and Sheriff Officers had brought to the attention of the Lord President an issue regarding the requirement that officers of court hold a bond of caution in addition to professional indemnity insurance. This requirement is set out in the *Act of Sederunt (Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers Rules) 1991/1397 (Caution and professional indemnity insurance)*. The Lord President had asked ACMASO to consider the issue.
4. Information provided by SMASO and the Association of British Insurers persuaded members that insurers in Scotland will no longer be providing bonds of caution to new customers and that there may be a question mark over how long existing customers will be able to obtain this cover. That being the case, the Council agreed that the Chair should write to the Lord President recommending that the requirement for officers of court to obtain a bond of caution be revoked by amending Rule 9 of the 1991 Rules.
5. Members considered whether, in consequence of this, there should be an increase in the minimum professional indemnity insurance cover (currently £100,000). The view was that there was no evidence to justify an increase.

Item 4: SMASO Memorandum

6. Members noted the terms of the SMASO memorandum. Mr Walker highlighted two matters; namely i) the Society's development of its digital strategy and specifically a desire for its members to be able to interface with relevant parties, via SCTS's Civil Online Platform and ii) the Society's interest in exploring digital signatures for relevant documents.

Item 5: Scottish Government Update

5. Mr Drummond-Murray provided a short oral update of relevant matters for the Council's attention as follows:
 - The Coronavirus Recovery and Reform Bill is at stage 2 in its parliamentary passage. He highlighted the measures to support remote hearings and measures regulating eviction processes.
 - A bill on moveable transactions was introduced last month.
 - The First Minister has committed to a legal aid reform bill in this Parliament.
 - An extensive array of secondary legislation is in hand including recently laid orders on court fees, orders to facilitate tribunals transfers, and we are working with the SCJC to support the final commencements of the Civil Litigation (expenses and group proceedings) Act 2018 building on the measures for qualified one way cost shifting and group proceedings that are already in place.

Item 6: Best practice regarding determining the residence of a defender.

7. Members discussed a matter brought to the attention of the Council by Sheriff Principal Murray, namely what best practice is when sheriff officers are trying to establish the residence of a defender. After discussion the council agreed that no further action was required by ACMASO. It considered that it was for

SMASO to decide whether it wishes to communicate with its members about this matter.

Item 7: AOCB

8. Mr Macpherson proposed that the Council revert to its pre-pandemic practice of holding a meeting in the autumn (normally October) with a spring meeting being held if business justified that. Members agreed that the virtual format of the meeting had worked well, and could be used in the future, although it may be that in person meetings might be required from time to time depending on the issues to be discussed. The Council would in principle meet by video-conference in October 2022.

9. The Chair thanked members for attending and closed the meeting.

APPENDIX B: SMASO Memorandum

MEMORANDUM ON THE YEAR 2022

FROM THE SOCIETY OF MESSENGERS-AT-ARMS AND SHERIFF OFFICERS TO THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The most recent SMASO AGM was held on 3rd December 2022, within the Dunblane Hydro Hotel. This was a hybrid event with the majority of members attending online.

In the course of this meeting, Andrew Fraser was elected President, along with a new Executive Council, charged with the management of SMASO's affairs, in accordance with its constitution. Happily, this new Executive Council has returned to regular, in person meetings at our office in Rutland Square, Edinburgh, which is a most welcome return to partial normality.

Whilst the worst aspects of the COVID pandemic are now behind us, the profession has struggled to recover to pre-pandemic levels of activity, due to a variety of external factors. This situation has been exacerbated by the ongoing cost of living crisis. The impact of dramatically rising operating costs and a general lack of instructions, has left some businesses struggling financially, more so in respect of servicing the most outlying and remote areas.

Some of our members expressed their concerns about two tendering exercises by SCTS, which resulted in single contractors being appointed, thereby replacing all other officers. Roderick Macpherson informed us that he resigned from the Advisory Council in July, because of concern at these developments. Roderick Macpherson has also since raised a further concern in relation to a solicitor client discontinuing service by officers, on the grounds of not having ISO accreditation.

Membership of the Society

At the time of preparing this report, membership stands at 137 officers.

SMASO Centenary

The highlight of the celebration of the centenary was the Civic Dinner on 20th May, within the City Chambers, Glasgow, at which were welcomed to Scotland members of the International Union of Judicial Officers (UIHJ) from the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, England and Wales, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, USA, and Uzbekistan, along with many of SMASO's members and partners.

A book was presented by the Society to every UIHJ colleague in attendance, entitled Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers: Scotland's place in the history of our

international profession. The foundation date of SMASO, in June, was marked by a lecture in Perth, organised by the Lord Lyon.

Looking ahead to the latter part of the centenary year, during 2023, a dinner dance, to which all members and partners were invited, was held at Dunblane Hydro on 4th March; in April, the Lord Lyon granted our petition to display, in saltire behind the Society's shield, the Lyon Court Mace, and the Society's sword, in recognition of our centenary. This sword was sometime the property of the Society of Messengers-at-Arms in Edinburgh, which was in existence by 1631, until its dissolution in 1865. A portrait of the last Secretary and Treasurer of that Society was, by courtesy of the WS Society, put on screen at SMASO's 2022 AGM.

Misconduct Report

The Honorary Secretary handled 15 complaints to the Society during 2022 (there have been 9, to date, in 2023), none of which required referral to the sheriffs principal or the Lord President.

Continuing Professional Development

SMASO has continued to provide CPD seminars for our members, with the preference now being for fully online events. Events took place on 27th April 2022 and 15th September 2022, both of which were attended by over 60 of our members. Speakers have included: -

Laura Browne, Partner, Aberdeen Considine: Mortgage Repossessions - Service Requirements and Resolution of Title Discrepancies.

Shaju Noor, Associate, Aberdeen Considine: Ship arrestment in Scotland, procedure and practicalities

Jos Uitdehaag, 1st Vice-President UIHJ: Digital Enforcement, our challenge for the future

Our next CPD event is scheduled for 24th May 2023, with the session presented by Andrew Kinnes, Fiona McKerrell and Serena Weir of Shepherd and Wedderburn LLP, solicitors, presenting on: Transforming the Scottish security landscape – The Moveable Transactions (Scotland) Bill

We are delighted to report we have once again obtained 100% compliance with our CPD requirements. In addition, our members have been able to access CPD through various webinars provided by the International Union of Judicial Officers (UIHJ), the details of which are regularly circulated to members.

Examination and Training

The Executive Council is currently reviewing the examination and training structure with a view to modernising and encouraging new entrants to the profession.

The rules for training, examination and qualification have remained almost unaltered for over 30 years and leavers and retirals from the profession are far outweighing the level of newly commissioned Officers. There are several underlying factors to this including market requirement against a reduced traditional demand and the COVID pandemic.

A sub committee was formed and has met with the Committee of Examiners to SMASO to discuss the proposals made.

Training

The only proposed change to primary legislation involves a reduction in the period of training for both a Sheriff Officer and Messenger-at-Arms. Whilst provision exists within the current Rules to reduce the period of training to become a Sheriff Officer to 1 year, the Executive Council believes the current 3-year training period deters potential entrants to the profession. Due to the reduced traditional demands on a Sheriff Officer, there are several legislative areas whereby Trainees will be unlikely to have a practical opportunity to experience within the 3-year period, although are expected to be fully conversant with sometimes, very complex areas of the law at the point of examination. A minimum 2-year training period would attract more people to the profession and increase their motivation to become conversant with the necessary legislation in a modular structured timescale.

Similarly, the legislative shift of categories of business previously carried out by Messengers-at-Arms to Sheriff Officers (i.e., personal injury actions, Inhibitions) has gone unrecognised in the rules around training and qualification of Messengers. Given the similarities in Diligence, a prospective Messenger will have previously covered many scenarios in their Sheriff Officer Training. Therefore, our view is that Officers qualifying following the completion of the 2-year period should only require a further 1-year Training period prior to sitting the Messenger examination.

The Committee of Examiners are supportive of these legislative changes and would welcome ACSMASO's comments on the proposal.

Examination The subcommittee raised several proposals for consideration by the Committee of Examiners with a similar ambition of increasing flexibility around the examination regulations to make exam diets more frequent and increasing the level of feedback provided to candidates following an unsuccessful result.

The Committee agreed to the proposal of the use of electronic versions of the Parliament House Books in the examination environment and SMASO is currently reviewing this to ensure that adequate procedures and safeguards are in place so that any such devices were Data and Wi-Fi disabled to ensure the integrity of the examination.

The Committee agreed to the proposal to provide additional candidate feedback through individual bandings for each individual paper 2 question. They propose to

pilot this in 2023 and will thereafter review the effect and impact before making any permanent change.

The Committee had mixed views on the proposal to allow candidates in certain circumstances who passed Paper 1 but failed Paper 2 to sit a further Paper 2 only. They have however welcomed further consideration and detail on this proposal.

Accountant in Bankruptcy

Following the publication in August 2021 of the Final Report of AiBs Diligence Working Group, the Scottish Government published a consultation in August 2022 and the subsequent responses in January 2023. At present we understand a new draft Bankruptcy and Diligence Bill is being prepared to implement the Scottish Government's recommendations.

As well as hopefully amending a number of small technical changes to current diligence the Society anticipates that the bill will bring forward Information Disclosure Orders.

This was first introduced in the 2007 act however has never been implemented. The Society believes that this would be a welcome and useful addition to existing measures.

We have some concerns that it will not be available for use with the Crown and would urge the amendment of primary legislation to remedy this.

AiB Section 84 Return

The Society continues to liaise with the Accountant in Bankruptcy as they collect and collate the statistical data required for the diligence statistics required under S84 of the Debtors (Scotland) Act 1987. There have not been any significant issues in the last year.

Bonds of Caution

Following ACSMASO's recommendation to the Lord President, that the requirement for a Bond of Caution be revoked, we are pleased to report that on 30th November 2022 the Act of Sederunt (Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers Rules) (Amendment) 2022 was laid before Parliament and came into force on 28th December 2022, thereby revoking the requirement for an officer of court (Messenger-at-Arms or Sheriff Officer) to be covered by a bond of caution. We are not aware of any subsequent difficulties and very much appreciate ACSMASO's prompt action and support in respect of this matter.

Statutory Fee Review

Please note our last uplift of 6% was in June 2021, which preceded the current financial crisis and was effectively a catch up for several years, of sporadic reviews and uncertainty in terms of policy and future strategy. Like most service providers, we

have been badly impacted by the rising cost of energy, and other operating costs, however unlike other such sectors, we are unable to readily adjust our charging structure.

Supported by our external advisors, Johnston and Carmichael, we have made an application for a 11.9% increase in the statutory table of fees. For the first time, this application was accompanied by a report explaining the rationale for our application and a summary of the various measures taken by members to improve operational efficiency reduce cost.

We understand that the SCTS Cost and Funding Committee are actively considering this application and we are eagerly awaiting some positive news.

Other factors impacting the profession including emergency debtor protection legislation can be summarised as follows: -

The Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022 (Amendment of Expiry Dates and Rent Cap Modification) Regulations 2023 -

Restricts Councils and Private Landlords from instructing an eviction order, which cannot be enforced until 6 months after the order was granted, or until the legislation is revoked, currently scheduled for 30 September 2023, whichever date is sooner. There are some exceptions, including Landlord wishing to sell or live in the property, the property is empty, or in relation to criminal or anti-social activity.

Bank Arrestment and Earnings Arrestment, are the principal methods of diligence in Scotland. Recent legislation has sought to provide enhanced levels of debtor protection, thereby restricting the effectiveness of both diligences and as such creditors' ability to recover debts owed.

Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Act 2022 -

In respect of Bank Arrestment, the protected sum ring fenced for the benefit of the debtor, has increased from £566.51 to £1000.00. Whilst there was some consultation with SMASO as to the impact of this change, it was effectively a "political fait accompli."

The Diligence against Earnings (Variation) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 -

To a lesser extent there has been an adjustment, increasing the protected sum for Earnings Arrestment deductions, again this change may undermine the effectiveness of this enforcement option in certain cases.

Legacy Royal Mail COVID Policy

Our members remain concerned in respect of the ongoing lack of control and consistency when postal workers are delivering postal citation envelopes. It seems that temporary, flexible working arrangements permitted during the pandemic, have

now become the norm, to such an extent that in some instances, postal workers are making little or no effort to interview a resident, when delivering a postal citation, instead simply depositing and self-signing the mobile device.

The hand service of failed postal citation, has always been a very important source of income for our members, therefore any lasting change to Royal Mail policy, deliberate or otherwise, continues to negatively impact our members. SMASO has attempted to correspond with the Royal Mail, on this issue, however our letters, thus far have been ignored. Notwithstanding the financial implications, the policy of postal workers signing for packages containing citation or other court documents, must in itself be highly questionable, given the absolute need for verification of intimation upon the respondent.

Challenger Banks - Cross Border Arrestment

We have become concerned regarding the effectiveness of the diligence of Arrestment in an increasingly digital age. The greatest proportion of arrestments are served in the hands of banks. In recent years there has been a decline in the number of high street banks which in turn has led to an increase in so called challenger banks. Many of these banks operate solely online with no local branch network and only a registered office or headquarters in London. This poses a problem should a creditor wish to attempt to arrest with one of these banks.

At present there is no provisions in the Sheriff Court rules for service of an arrestment where the arrestee is located furth of Scotland. There is also the issue of how does jurisdiction apply where the account is online but the account holder is domiciled in Scotland but the third party in another part of the United Kingdom. The Society believes that this issue will be of growing importance as we increasingly move into a cashless and digital society. We would recommend that this is an area of the law which requires development and is perhaps worthy of the attention of the Scottish Law Commission.

Party-Litigants

Our members have anecdotally reported an increase in the use of court process by Party Litigants in recent years, perhaps due to the introduction of Simple Procedure.

While this increased access to justice for the public is applauded our members have also noted a number of issues.

The main issue is that many party litigants have unrealistic expectations of what happens once they have obtained a Decision in their favour. Many of these cases are embarked upon where there is little or no prospects of recovery from respondents. In addition, we see frequent instances where actions have been raised against the wrong party. The most common example being the respondent has been listed as a natural person however the trading name section of the form has the name of a limited company. We would recommend that more information is provided at an earlier stage

in the process by SCTS, to better inform party litigants before they incur the additional expense of a court action.

SMASO Digital Strategy

Under the direction of the new Executive Council, a sub-committee has been set up to delivery SMASO's digital transformation strategy. We have pleasure to enclose our initial strategy paper for your information (see Appendix B).

Specific projects underway include SMASO members having access to Civil Online, to lodge certificates of service and other relevant facilities. Contact has been made with Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service's Civil Lab - Change & Digital Innovation (CDI) team. This resulted in an opportunity to join the working group, presently tasked with improving all aspects of Civil on Line. Initial feedback seems positive, suggesting that we may well be able to interface with this system in the not-too-distant future.

In respect of Digital Signatures, we are conducting research and planning to educate members on the benefits of this technology, including the option to use a digital signature as an alternative to traditional wet signature. This may well need legislative change for consideration by ACSMASO, hopefully in the near future.

The group is also researching the potential for introducing e-service of both Earnings Arrestment and Bank Arrestment.

Regarding Earnings Arrestment, we anecdotally believe that some large employers would welcome the option of receiving an Earnings Arrestment by way of email. In this regard, we intend to embark on a consultation exercise to gauge the level of interest. We anticipate that this innovation will provide significant cost savings and other operational benefits for all stakeholders.

Regarding Bank Arrestments, there has already been pilot exercises with some Scottish Banks, to improve the operational efficiency of serving bank arrestments. This has been achieved by serving by hand in the traditional method, including post-copy, supported by a data file, which has been used by the bank to search its records, as opposed to individual, time-consuming manual searches. We have already initiated contact with the Committee of Scottish Bankers, which represents several high street banks and are now awaiting an opportunity for detailed consultation on this matter.

We do anticipate some nervousness around this move towards E-Enforcement, however, by focusing on the two, principal third-party diligences, we feel that we are taking a pro-active and measured approach to E-Enforcement in Scotland. Again, we would welcome ACSMASO's support in respect of all relevant changes to relevant legislation.

International Business

Following the resounding success of last year's international conference in Glasgow, which happily coincide with SMASO's centenary, The UIHJ celebrated the 70th anniversary of its own in establishment, in the course of the November 2022, Paris Permanent Council meeting.

The three-day conference was a very busy affair, given that this was the first full scale, post-COVID conference, supported by a very strong Scottish delegation, which continues to "punch above its weight" on the world stage.

The most contentious issue for consideration, related to the suspension of the Russian Federal Bailiff association, following the invasion of Ukraine. Historically, Russia has been a strong financial supporter of UIHJ, meaning their suspension has resulted in a significant, unplanned budget shortfall. Happily, most member organisations agreed the need to support our international organisation, by voting for a 15% uplift in subscription fees.

Society Office Bearers

At the Society's Annual General Meeting on 3rd December 2022 the undernoted officer bearers were elected:

President: Andrew Fraser

Deputy President: Joy McLaughlin

Vice President: William Cameron

Treasurer: Kevin Mackay

Honorary Secretary: Roderick Macpherson.