

Bristol Pro Bono group
Minutes from meeting on 20 October 2020

- Welcomes – names**
- Victoria Channing, Simmons & Simmons (chair) **(VC)**
 - Miriam Bishop, Bevan Brittan (vice chair) **(MB)**
 - Julian Hemming, Osborne Clarke **(JH)**
 - Jeremy Thompson, Support Through Court **(JT)**
 - Rachel Wood, UWE **(RW)**
 - Amanda Crutchley, University of Law **(AJC)**
 - Lucy Burrows, BPP **(LB)**
 - Michael Hayles, Burges Salmon **(MH)**
 - Ali Cloak, Royds Withy King **(AC)**
 - Sarah Oliver-Scemla Bank of America / In-House Pro Bono Group **(SoS)**
 - Claire Johnson, Law Works South West **(CJ)**
 - Mark Calverley, Bevan Brittan **(MC)**

Apologies:

Dave Miller (Avon and Bristol Law Centre) **(DM)**
Jane Emanuel (Avon and Bristol Law Centre) **(JE)**
Daniel Preddy, DAC Beachcroft **(DP)**
Deborah Sheldon, TLT **(DS)**

Minutes:

1. Actions from last meeting:

- a. Outstanding: Jane E to introduce Victoria to Sue Evans of the CAB / send Victoria and Miriam images for the website

VC noted that JE is not in attendance and she will catch up with her separately on this.

- b. Update required: All members to add link to BPBG website to their own websites / send Victoria/Miriam any blog posts for website / social media

VC asked the group if could please flag the website with their own Business Development and Marketing teams. If it is possible to have signposting from the firm's websites to BPBG then this shows support and increases visibility.

2. In House Pro Bono Group: Presentation by Sarah Oliver-Scemla

SoS is counsel at Bank of America and has set up the in-house pro bono group which is a group of in-house counsel who meet to discuss how to set up pro bono work for in-house counsel. This can range from advice on specific projects, organising training (for lawyers to help at law clinics) and organising roundtable discussions.

SoS advised that she is keen to work more closely with BPBG. She noted that although most of their members are in London they are keen to reach out across the UK generally to assist with work in the regions. They have two kinds of groups as member organisations 1) larger companies with a pro bono programme and 2) smaller companies with just a couple of lawyers who are looking for bigger projects. She is keen to get both kinds of groups involved. SoS also noted that if anyone has any clients who are in-house counsel and are keen to get involved in pro bono work she is happy to take referrals from firms and would be pleased to be put in touch.

VC added that she has found the relationship with In-House Pro Bono Group very rewarding, as it means that there is a broader range of projects that Simmons can offer to in-house counsel and can pour time and resources into projects for them.

SoS noted that if you see any recurring themes with pro bono advice then they can do training on a specific topic in order to speed things up in that respect. At the moment they have the Legal Clinics 101 project (with assistance from Simmons). They have also had training on the Chancery Lane Climate Change project.

VC asked if anyone has had any queries from in-house clients looking for pro bono projects?

MH advised that he has a client who has asked if they have anyone who can support their in-house team on pro bono projects, so may contact and connect with her on that. He asked if there are any examples of projects that they have worked on.

SoS noted that the project they have worked on the most is the Chancery Lane Project as this is easily accessible for most members. The other is the legal clinic at Queen Mary in which they assist students with legal advice queries. There are also a number of mentoring projects that they are looking at expanding into. The main focus is not to provide pro bono opportunities for members per se, but to support in-house counsel in setting up and getting involved in their own projects. They also work closely with Law Works who provide additional support.

VC introduced Claire Johnson who works with Law Works South West.

CJ advised the group noted that they are always available to be contacted and to provide guidance and training opportunities to lawyers in the South West.

SoS thanked CJ for her input and noted that she will put any in-house counsel in the South West region with CJ.

JH asked if SoS' details can be passed around.

SoS is happy for details and the website / pro bono week events that they are doing to be shared with the group. There are a series of lunchtime talks which are open to anyone, not just in-house lawyers. She particularly highlighted recent talk which gave a "crash course" on volunteering at legal clinics.

3. Pro Bono Week

- a. Update on "Celebrating Pro Bono in Bristol" event

VC updated the group that the participants have just had a brief call – it is lining up to be a very interesting session with a lot to cover. She asked the group to circulate the flyer and asked them please to share these as widely as possible to their contacts and to increase publicity around the event.

- b. Linked in post: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6724011123990904832>

VC asked people also to share and like the LinkedIn post (as above).

- c. BPBG draft animation:

- i. Option 1: Original logo colours (some logos are hard to see) <https://simmons-simmons.wistia.com/medias/kid89w7qpj>
- ii. Option 2: All logo colours changed to white: <https://simmons-simmons.wistia.com/medias/gvcr41haqp#>
- iii. Awaiting logos from: CMS CMNO, Support Through Court, University of Law, UWE, Ashfords, Charles Russell Speechlys, Guildhall Chambers

VC updated the group on the animation that the Simmons team have been pulling together. She showed the group the two animations have been put together – one in black and white and one in colour. VC asked if anyone had any concerns then to let her know asap.

JH and MB confirmed that the colour version looked better.

The group agreed to use the colour animation in the event publicity.

The group noted that they wished to formally thank Simmons for their hard work on this, it is appreciated as it does take time.

d. Blog posts during Pro Bono Week – one a day? (Ali at Royds Withy King)

VC updated that she has been discussing blog posts with AC. It is noted that blogs are a great way to increase engagement with BPBG activities to a wider audience. They noted that the plan is to have a blog post per day in Pro Bono Week.

AC noted that they are already pulling together some posts and asked if other people want to add to these. She queried how people felt about using different formats on different social media accounts. She has some of her own ideas and has a digital marketing assistance that she can draw up, so is inviting ideas from the group.

VC asked if each firm can feed a couple of paragraphs about what they have been up to in relation to pro bono work for AC to share.

MH confirmed that they are certainly happy to do this.

AC suggested that there is a follow up email to explain to the members exactly what information is required.

4. **Student members:** minutes, management of social media?

VC updated the group that since the launch of the website several students have contacted them to see if they can be members of BPBG. The response to date has been that this should be / has been the people from organisations who have a member and we don't have students engaged at present, but she was keen for the group's feedback.

LB queried whether the students are from universities who are represented on the group or not.

VC confirmed that some are from UoB who are not yet fully engaged and others were from groups who are engaged. She is conscious that there might be things that the group could use assistance with (like admin and minutes) but wasn't sure how to manage this and / or if it was appropriate.

LB suggested that we confirm that there are not student members on the committee but there are sometimes events which students may be able to assist with. There are definitely opportunities for this and they could help, but it would need to be managed carefully.

MB noted that it can be hard managing volunteers and would be cautious about creating additional work supervising students, there is a risk that it could create more work than it did assist.

AJC / RW also agreed.

LB noted that support for events might be helpful in the future i.e. if the pro bono week had been physical then they could have helped with this.

It was agreed that we would for now direct students towards the universities own groups within those organisations.

5. **Clinics list:** Seeking volunteer to consider how we make use of this information

VC what do we want to do with this list?

CJ missed the initial conversation around the list, but thinks that it could be a lot of admin to keep this going. The question is, who is the intended audience?

VC noted that there is already a signposting page on the website which links to other people's websites but it doesn't have any further details.

There was a discussion around how to keep the data current and what data should be included.

It was agreed that it might be better for now to link to people's websites, which avoids having to keep dates and times of services that are available locally.

6. Updates:

a. Law Society Meeting (Miriam)

MB updated the group on the first meeting as a BPBG member of the Bristol Law Society meeting. The majority of the meeting focussed on the opening of the new Nightingale Court in the BLS building. MB introduced herself and explained the role of BPBG to BLS (noting the difference with the CE Group), she also promoted the BPBG and the Pro Bono Week event.

b. Meeting with Pro Bono Coordinator at Quartet (Victoria)

VC updated the group that she has met with John Stienlet the new co-ordinator in order to discuss the professionalisation of the offering. She has highlighted the difference between the CE Group and BPBG and the possibility of join working between the groups as well as the risk of crossover.

MC updated that he had also been at the last CE Group meeting and noted that there is still a general crossover with the use of the term "pro bono" and Quartet is broadening its usage of the term to include all free professional support (not just legal).

c. Bristol Trustee Group events (Victoria)

VC updated the group of the Bristol Trustee Group sessions. There have now been several meetings of the group and recorded training sessions. She highlighted the fact that there are links to these sessions on the BPBG website and noted that the sessions have been very useful and were good profile-raising groups.

d. Family Law project (Dave Miller, Mark Calverley)

"HHJ Wildblood - Representation in the family court is very low indeed – in 80% of private law cases have at least 1 person not represented. PSU and other pro bono support groups are under pressure and generally assistance is on the descent. He would like to see the re-establishment of the rota in the court building which used to be widely accessed. Seeking volunteers to champion re-engagement and have a call with him to discuss options to progress"

MC couldn't come to the last of these sessions and isn't quite sure what the output of this was.

VC updated the group that there have been a few emails with the CE group about this issue. HHJ Wildblood wants to boost representation on the family court and is looking for a volunteer to discuss how to best to do this.

MC updated that BB don't have any family law involvement.

VC does know of an organisation in London (FRAP) who give training to lawyers who can then assist with the court.

LB could raise this with Advocate to see if anyone could assist generally talking through structures.

7. AOB

Final plea to advertise the BPBG event.

Date of next meeting **1 December**.

Actions:

1. Victoria:

- a. Circulate details for In House Pro Bono Group - COMPLETED
- b. Introduce Clare at LawWorks to HHJ Wildblood to discuss family representation initiative - COMPLETED
- c. Ask Simmons animation team to produce updated version of (coloured) BPBG animation

- d. Update students who have contacted BPBG re. participation – signpost them to Uni representatives
 - e. Ask Sarah Phillimore to post BPBG event on Twitter - COMPLETED
 - f. Circulate updated speaker plan for BPBG event / contact Evi to discuss her slot
2. Miriam
- a. Circulate BPBG event flyer to JLD representative
 - b. Seek assistance from trainee to make use of clinic information collected by wider group
3. Ali: to coordinate series of blog posts / social media posts to go out each day of Pro Bono Week
4. All:
- a. Publicise the BPBG event:
<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6724011123990904832>
Flyer attached
 - a. Send Ali suggestions for website blog / social media posts