

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE 2008 - 2009

We are living in challenging times with many threats and opportunities for the profession and as a local society, we remain committed to supporting members in any way that we can. This has included our support of the national advertising campaign to highlight the services offered by the profession and an opportunity to hear how to run a law firm in these difficult times from an expert in the field at our AGM this year.

As planned last year, we have launched a new look **website** (www.swansealawsociety.co.uk) that is a smarter, more modern face for the society with a more comprehensive coverage of the activities of the society and useful links. We have not extended to offering an online payment facility (as your feedback was that this would not be widely supported) but it is now possible to contact us directly via the website and to print off booking forms for events. Do have a look at the website and let us know if you have any ideas for enhancements, as this is an ongoing project.

We are making such good progress year on year against the objectives in our **Business Plan** that we are revisiting this on an annual basis. This is particularly important given the changing nature of the profession and the additional pressures placed upon us every year. The committee remains keen to ensure that the society offers services of real value to its members and welcomes feedback on this objective by way of formal or informal means. Our updated Business Plan accompanies the AGM papers.

In order to safeguard the future of our profession it is important that we develop strong links with those about to enter the profession and those new to the profession. To this end, we are continuing to forge close links with **Swansea University** and have recently supported its “Work Friday” scheme to allow LPC students a taste of life at the office. This is especially valuable for the students in a time when Training Contracts are so difficult to obtain. We are particularly pleased to report on the strong links now formed with the local **Junior Lawyers Division** whose President is a regular attendee at our committee meetings.

In accordance with our business plan, we have continued to raise the profile of the profession through **charitable support**. The committee again chose to support local, under funded charities this year being: Swansea Women’s Aid, Swansea Community Farm, Longfields, Age Concern Swansea, Cyrenians, Cancer Information & Support Services and Local Aid for Children & Community Special Needs. Fund raising events have included a team running at the Swansea Bay 10k, raffles by the YSG and at the Annual Dinner and the “Presidents Challenge”. For the first time this year, the President introduced a challenge for members and friends as a means of raising funds. This year the challenge was to walk “the three Welsh peaks” in one weekend (preceded by a couple of practice outings). Who knows what next year will bring?

Our local programme of **Continuing Professional Development** remains popular and well supported by practitioners in Swansea and West Wales. Whilst this is an important

source of income for the society, our priority is to provide high quality but good value courses. That will not always result in a significant income stream as we strive to help solicitors in straightened circumstances but who still need CPD hours to retain practising certificates.

This year's **social calendar** included the following

- The Annual Dinner at the Brangwyn Hall is always a highlight in the local professional calendar and this year's event did not disappoint in this respect with our guest speaker chosen from the local bar, Mr Geraint Walters.
- The Presidents Drinks Party is being organised as this report goes to print with the same venue and format as the highly successful evening at the Dragon Hotel last year.