

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Monday 17 February 2020, Thistle House, Edinburgh

Present

Mrs Nicola Gordon, Chairing Member	Mrs Alison Mitchell
Ms Neelam Bakshi	Sheriff Michael O'Grady, QC
Mrs Liz Burnley, CBE	Ms Morag Ross, QC
Mrs Deirdre Fulton (teleconference)	Professor Stephen Tierney
Sheriff Principal Marysia Lewis	The Hon. Lady Wise, QC
The Hon. Lord Minginish, QC	Ms Eilidh Wiseman

Apologies

There were no apologies for this meeting.

In Attendance

Mr John Craig, Chief Executive
Board Secretary
Appointments Administrator

1. Welcome & Apologies / Declarations of Interest

The Chairing Member (the Chair) welcomed all attendees to the meeting. There was the standard declaration of interest from Ms Bakshi in relation to the Social Security Tribunal recruitment.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting & Action Tracker Update

The minutes of the January Board Meeting were approved by the Board subject to amendments to item 3.1 and 8.3. The Board reviewed the Board Action Tracker. The status to action 29 & 30 will now be changed to 'closed'. There were no further comments made in relation to the Board Action Tracker. The Chief Executive (CE) will circulate a draft copy of the Annual Operational Plan to the Board next week.

BMU Action (1): Action 30 status to be changed to 'closed'. As above. CE to circulate a copy of the Annual Operational Plan to the Board by 28 February 2020.

3. General Updates

3.1. The Chair gave an oral update to the Board:

- The Chair and Sheriff Principal Lewis participated in a Law Society of Scotland (LSS) event 'Journey to the Judiciary' with Summary Sheriff Flinn on Tuesday 28 January 2020.
- Ms Wiseman and the Chair attended a Scottish Ethnic Minorities Lawyers' Association (SEMLA) event on Diversity held in Glasgow on Thursday 6 February 2020. The event was well attended. JABS plan to deliver a webinar with SEMLA in the near future.
- The Chair has been interviewed for an article in the LSS Journal this month to promote the upcoming shrieval competitions.
- The Chair will meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice on Wednesday 19 February 2020 for the annual meeting.
- The Chair will meet with the Lord President on Tuesday 3 March 2020 for their regular meeting.

3.2. The CE gave an oral update to the Board:

- The BMU visited the Glasgow Tribunal Centre on Friday 31 January 2020, to meet colleagues and observed a tribunal hearing.

4. Recommendations for Appointments

4.1. Sheriff Principal

- #### **4.1.1.**
- Candidates for the Office of Sheriff Principal were presented to the Board and a list in order of merit was fully discussed and agreed. The Board decided to recommend the individual to the office of Sheriff Principal.

5. Appointment Rounds Updates

5.1. Lay Assistants 2020

- #### **5.1.1.**
- The recruitment of Lay Assistants is ongoing and the panel are in the process of interviewing applicants. It was noted that JABS received positive feedback in relation to the new IT system and efficiency of the process.

- #### **5.1.2.**
- The panel decision meeting will be held on 19 February and the Board Decision Meeting will be held on 16 March.

- #### **5.1.3.**
- It was agreed that Mrs Fulton would coordinate the training of the new Lay Assistants with the CE.

[Board Action \(1\): Mrs Fulton to coordinate the process of training the new Lay Assistants with the CE and Ms Burnley for the next Board Meeting on 16 March.](#)

5.2. Social Security Tribunals 2020

- #### **5.2.1.**
- The Board noted the recent exchange of letters on Social Security Tribunals (SST) recruitment and that there are issues that can only be resolved and managed to a resolution outwith JABS.

5.2.2. The Board discussed the consultation process that JABS has proposed to the Senior President of Tribunals. The CE will liaise with other officials and provide a draft SPT consultation letter to the next Board meeting.

5.2.3. The Board agreed that they would add the Senior President of Tribunals and the President of the Scottish Tribunals to the JABS Privacy Notice.

BMU Action (2): CE to provide a draft SPT consultation letter on 16 March.

5.3. Parallel Competitions 2020

5.3.1. Work on the upcoming Parallel Competitions is well underway and the first planning meeting with the Panels took place on 7 February.

6. Quality Assurance

6.1. Legal Skills & Qualities

The legal and judicial members met on 20 January to discuss the assessment of legal competence. Further discussion will be held and the Board will be kept updated. It was agreed that Mrs Burnley's expertise will be incorporated at a later stage.

Board Action (2): Legal and judicial members to update the Board on the assessment of legal competence.

6.2. Shortlisting

The Board discussed the paper on exploring the challenges around shortlisting for the parallel competitions in order to provide guidance to Board members and achieve consistency. The Board agreed not to take an approach with an initial assessment of legal skills only. The Board agreed to trial an 'interim moderation' approach during shortlisting.

Board Action (3): The Chair and Mrs Burnley to draft assessment guidelines and an 'interim moderation' approach and prepare to pilot it in the upcoming parallel competitions.

6.3. Conflicts of Interest Policy

It was agreed that the Conflicts of Interest Policy would be deferred to the next Governance meeting in April.

BMU Action (3): Conflicts of Interest Policy to be deferred to the April Board Meeting.

7. Any Other Business

There were no items covered under Any Other Business.

7.1. Criminal Convictions Update

An update on Criminal Convictions was provided under item 5.3 in the meeting.

7.2. Tribunal Skills & Qualities

The Tribunal Skills and Qualities were circulated to the Board for information.

8. Board Meeting Closed at 12:25.

9. Welcome to the Law Society of Scotland (LSS)

The Board welcomed the LSS President, Vice-President and Chief Executive. The LSS and Board Members discussed how we can increase the quality and diversity of applications for judicial office from LSS Members.