**Chancery Court Users’ Committee Meeting**

**6 November 2024, 16:45**

**2nd Floor Conference Room, Rolls Building & MS Teams**

MINUTES

Chancellor of the High Court, Sir Julian Flaux (CHC)

Mr Justice Michael Green

Chief Master Shuman

Chief ICCJ Briggs

HHJ Richard Hacon

HHJ Alan Johns KC

DJ Charlotte Hart

Andrew De Mestre KC

Jeff Lewis

Beverley Barton

Zoe Barton KC

George Hobson

Kevin Ellmore

Natalie Todd

Lauren Edmonds (online)

Wilf Lusty (online)

Mo Uddin

Joe Quinn

Amy Jabbal

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from HHJ David Hodge KC, HHJ Marc Dight KC, Lisa John and Ian Byfield.

1. **Minutes of the last meeting, 21 April 2024**

Noted and agreed.

1. **Update on current issues**

Rolls Building - facilities

CHC provided an update on the Building Management System update that had been ongoing since September in the Rolls Building. The works were expected to be completed by the end of Dec or early 2025. The impact of this was that the temperature was not always stable, however it was being recorded daily and interim measures were being put in place when possible. The CHC apologised to users for any inconvenience caused by this. To better manage the heat, the CHC had extended the Practice Note from the previous term, enabling robes to be dispensed with if needed, until further notice.

Some of the Judges shared that the heat in the building had generally felt a little better lately, but that could be owing to the cooler temperatures outside.

Foreign Process Section

The CHC shared that owing to the combined work of Dingemans LJ, Senior Master Cook and HMCTS, the waiting times for processing applications in the Foreign Process Section had reduced from 6 months to 1 month. This was a welcome change and thanks to those who worked to achieve this.

Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC)

The CHC shared that the Chancery Division had recently welcomed Mr Justice Nicholas Thompsell to the High Court bench, following (the now) Lord Justice Zacaroli being elevated to the Court of Appeal.

The next JAC competition for the High Court bench had launched and would close for applications in mid-December.

Security Incident in the Rolls Building

CHC shared details of a recent incident in Court in a case being heard before a Deputy High Court Judge. It involved a Litigant in Person (LIP) who was joined by a number of supporters who were disruptive and attempted to be intimidating. The hearing was adjourned, and listed remotely for the following working day when it was dealt with without incident.

The security team and HMCTS staff managed this as well as possible with the resource available to them – including having security from the main RCJ building come over. The next steps were to do a lessons learned and pull together a protocol for the Rolls Building with the assistance of ICCJ Greenwood (Judge in Charge of Judicial Security) and HMCTS to protect the Judges and Users in future.

It was suggested that the Rolls Building team may join up with the RCJ planning meetings that listing had with security to forward plan and flag cases that may require additional measures.

If there was a way to mark cases on CE-file that may require additional measures that it should be highlighted. The ChBA might also be able to feed into this from dealings with CLiPS.

George Hobson shared that there have been measures applied for counsel and teams representing HMRC in cases when it is known that they may be at risk, such as separate access to court arranged.

It was noted that there was an issue with online abuse towards Judiciary that the SPJ was alive to.

1. **Waiting times:**

**High Court Judges**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1-2 days | 3 months |
| Up to 5 | 8 months |
| 6-9 days | 11 months |
| 10 + days | 14 months |

**Chancery Masters**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Less than 1 day | 7 weeks |
| Up to 1 day | 13 weeks |
| Up to 5 days | 19 weeks |
| Over 5 days | 21 weeks |

**Insolvency and Companies Court**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 15/30 mins | March 2025 |
| ½ day | May 2025 |
| 1 day | May 2025 |
| 2 days | June 2025 |
| 3 days | July 2025 |
| 5-10 days | October 2025 |

Chief ICCJ Briggs shared that the ICCJs had been given an additional deputy budget to compensate for being under Judicial complement. Overall, there had been a 20% increase in work a trend which was likely to continue.

Central London County Court (CLCC)

HHJ Alan Johns KC shared that they were able to list a case of 3+ days within 4.5 months, and there was capacity to list earlier if the case were to be ready.

City of London Court

There had been a suggested that the B&PC work heard in CLCC would move into the new City of London Court. Other types of work / jurisdictions included high value crime fraud work from Southwark Crown court, City of London Magistrates and the Lord Mayors Court.

1. **User feedback:**

Kevin Ellmore raised an issue when filing claim forms at CLCC in accordance with part 53 2.3b. He shared there was inconsistency with the filing of claims in different County Courts, and that it was particularly arduous when there were multiple defendants / parties. HHJ Alan Johns KC shared that this could be looked into

ACTION: Kevin Ellmore to email HHJ Alan Johns KC to look at ways to resolve.

1. **AOB:**

Christmas period

The Court will be closed 25-27 Dec and 1 January 2026.

1. **Date of next meeting:**

The next meeting will be held on 7 May 2025.