

SLSA Annual General Meeting 2025 Agenda

Held at the University of Liverpool, Yoko Ono Lennon Centre, 60 Oxford Street, L7 3NY and online (details tbc via SLSA ebulletin).

John Harrington (chair), Philip Bremner (treasurer), Marie Selwood, Richard Craven, Colin Moore, Juliet Brooke, Andra Le Roux-Kemp, Robert Dingwall, Rachell Cahill-O'Callaghan, Dillon McMaon, Dave Cowan, Caroline Hunter, Neve Gordon, Mohsin Bhat, David Whyte, Arwen Joyce, Marie Hutton, Katie Hunt, Alex Powell, Mini Saxena, Neil Graffin, Jed Meers, Eilsabeth Griffiths, Simon Sneddon, Sally Sheldon, Ed Kirton-Darling, Giorgio D Vrakas, Jenny Kanellopoulou, Judith Rauhofer, Matt Watkins, Caer Smyth, Alison Tarrant, Louise Austin, Shane Burke, Diamond Ashiagbor, Anne-Maree Farrell, Sarah Devaney, Emmanuel Oke, Ciarán O'Kelly, Raza Saeed, James Hand, N. Annavaram, Joy Debski, Emma Milne, Bukola Faturoti. John Harrington (chair), Philip Bremner (treasurer), Marie Selwood, Richard Craven, Colin Moore; Rosemary Hunter; Linda Mulcahy, Marie Fox, Sally Wheeler, Smita Kheria, Ruth Fletcher; Bukola Faturoti; Imogen Jones; Kirsten McConnachie; Paolo Vargiu; Andrew Woodhouse.

1. Approval of minutes from 2024 SLSA AGM
APPROVED

2. Annual Accounts (Philip Bremner)

PB said that accounts are in a good position thanks to donations from Ulster and Portsmouth. SLSA finances are in a robust state. However, we need to reflect on how we prioritise the allocation of funding going forward – making decisions on which funding schemes etc, competitions, prizes that we support. The finances are also in good state also because of newsletter sponsorship from law schools support. Funds are spread across current and savings account to maximise funds. And setting up a new account to minimize risk.

PB invited comments and feedback re priorities. Rosemary Hunter said that the SLSA has done well out of the last couple of conferences and that it is problematic that there is such a large surplus especially at a time of austerity in law schools and constraints on academics spending on research and conference attendance. She said that it would be good to see plans for spending the surplus.

PB said that the focus has been on prudence but as a charity the SLSA has an obligation to spend funds for the benefit of the community. Spending priorities need to be discussed by the new chair in the next Board meeting in May.

Rosemary Hunter said that it would be good to keep down registration costs for the conference as this would benefit all members. People at all levels are being affected by the austerity measures atm.

Linda Mulcahy said the SLSA needs to redirect funds to benefit its ECRs and that perhaps the SLSA should provide more conference bursaries: whichever option would work best for ECRs.

Marie Fox (2025 conference organiser) said that the SLSA had met a large majority of bursary demands this year and that institutions with funding were still willing to fund conference fees. Linda Mulcahy said it would be good to hear from junior members about how the money should be spent.

Neve Gordon said that this year the conference fees are high compared those of other associations in which he is involved. At the moment there is no progressive way of paying so

that those who earn more pay more. He suggested progressive registration should be introduced and set percentage of fee income could go towards bursaries.

3. Trustee's Annual Report (John Harrington)

JH said that the reason for the large surplus is because receipts from conferences are uneven. Some institutions don't transfer the donation as promptly as others. Thus, the size of the current surplus is due to receipts from the Ulster and Portsmouth conferences both reaching SLSA at the end of 2024.

He added that the Association has already moved to redistribute as much of the surplus as is prudent to the membership, as set out in the Trustees Annual Report for this meeting. Thus, the early bird conference rate had been held fixed for past three years, and funding pots increased. In addition 80 bursaries have been awarded for this year's conference, double the number last year, at a total value of £24,000.. He proposed that the new Chair and Board should make plans for managing and prudently deploying the current surplus when they meet in May.

SW queried the number of bursaries re MF's earlier comment. MF explained that the only ones turned down had not met the eligibility criteria. SW said that timing of bursaries was a problem for some people.

JH agreed that the Board should look at timings of bursary awards. He noted that the number of bursary awards can only be prudently determined when it is clear how large delegate numbers will be, and thus, how much leeway there is. He noted the risk of moral hazard whereby some universities may rely on the Association to fund conference attendance although allocating resources to other priorities. Sally Wheeler commented that such university initiatives and priorities are also important.

JH said that the Board would welcome ongoing dialogue with members about resources and future planning.

JH thanked Liverpool organisers of the 2025 conference, and the other retiring trustees Anna Bryson, Beverley Clough, Simon Flacks, Emma Milne, Rebecca Moosavian and Mitch Travis.

He also thanked CM, MS and RC for help with AGM etc.

He announced the appointment of a new precarity representative Beth Kamunde Kpogo.

Finally, he announced that the SLSA Conference will be at Northumbria in 2027. The Board is still in discussion with a candidate for hosting in 2028.

4. Retirement and Elections of Trustees and Ex-Officio Trustees

Emma Jones has offered to take on Hon Sec. The meeting expressed its approval, and the nomination will be ratified by the SLSA Board at its May meeting.

a) Richard Craven formally retired and was re-elected to Board.

b) election of 7 new Trustees: Rachel Cahill-O'Callaghan, Dave Cowan, Joy Debski, Jennifer Hough, Arwen Joyce, Caer Smyth, Clare Williams

c) election of new Chair: Smita Kheria, University of Edinburgh

5. SLSA website demo (Daniel Bedford)

DB did brief demo of website. He explained that the aim was for a fresher modern feeling and easier navigation, better integration with members database, new features and enhanced accessibility. He highlighted the main features of the new site, structure etc, giving the example

of the ability to book registrations via the website eg SLSA seminar scheme events.

He outlined the features of the new Members section: it will be a lot easier to become a members; there will be no between registration and becoming a member. The SLSA will not be using Paypal.

Members will be able to login in and manage subscriptions. They will be able to use recurring payments, but can cancel at any time.

There will be a new social networking section structured around streams.

Online courses will also be available – with basic virtual learning environment, mix of text, video and interactive content.

Funding applications, prize nomination etc will have digital forms.

Also there will be a new membership directory – with integral privacy settings – which will help with networking and connecting.

The membership section only accessible if the relevant membership is live and up to date.

Members will have to create new accounts. We are not migrating old database over. Two reasons: to ensure that all data is accurate; and that members consent to their data being used.

Feedback from the floor was generally positive. CM responded to a question about how the contract was awarded to DB. He explained that had been a tendering process and that the working group had also used a consultant to assess bids. DB's was by far the best package and well-priced.

Ruth Fletcher noted that Wix (website platform provider) is an Israeli company.

6. Conference Dinner (Robert Dingwall)

RD suggested that this matter should be put to the Board for further consultation. Question was about appropriateness of compulsory veganism and whether this was respectful to the all members of the socio-legal community. He proposed writing a piece for the newsletter and suggested that the matter should be considered by future conference hosts.

7. AOB

David Whyte and colleagues from QMUL noted that there is a protest encampment on campus in support of Palestinian rights. He said that this is an important issue for many members. He mentioned that the protestors were brave and had been threatened with disciplinary action by the university.

He proposed a statement of support which the Chair said would have to go to the Board.

LM proposed a vote of thanks to JH for his excellent work as Chair.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at the University of Sussex on 31 March 2026.