



Society of Labour Lawyers  
The legal think tank of the Labour Party

## **Executive Committee 2020/21**

### **Elections and Results**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Candidates</b>	<b>Results</b>
Chair	Kate O'Rourke	<i>Elected unopposed</i>
Vice Chair  <i>(2 positions under the current constitution, 1 under the new constitution)</i>	David Drew Omar Salem – <i>withdrew on 20/11/2020</i>	<i>David Drew has been elected unopposed.</i>  If the new constitution does not pass, nominations will re-open for the remaining position after the AGM.
Secretary	Catherine Atkinson	<i>Elected unopposed</i>
Treasurer	Adrian Williamson	<i>Elected unopposed</i>
Assistant Secretary	<i>No nominations received</i>	If the new constitution passes at the AGM, this position will be abolished.  If the new constitution does not pass, nominations will re-open after the AGM.
Elected Executive Member  <i>(7 open positions under the current constitution, 6 positions under the new constitution with 3 reserved for women)</i>	Deeba Syed* Elen Griffiths* Hannah Gomersall* Ali Henry Sadek – <i>withdrew on 01/12/2020</i> Andrew Dismore Daniel Jones Dil-veer Kang Grahame Anderson	If the new constitution passes at the AGM, candidates with an asterisk will be elected unopposed due to gender balancing, and the remaining three places elected at the AGM.  If the new constitution does not pass, all candidates will be elected unopposed as there are seven candidates remaining after the withdrawal of Ali Henry Sadek.

## Chair

### **Kate O'Rourke**

Proposed by: Catherine Atkinson

Seconded by: David Drew

*I am standing again to be Chair of the Society, an organisation that I have been privileged to lead over the past few years.*

*In the next 12 months I would seek to implement the proposed changes to the Constitution, progress our governance review, encourage greater diversity and build on the links between members of the Society and the Parliamentary Labour Party, particularly members of the Junior Labour Lawyers. I would also hope to launch an initiative to develop new policy proposals for the Party - a successor publication to our successful "Law Reform 2015" should be our aim in the lead up to the next General Election.*

*I have been a Labour Party activist for more than 25 years. Following many years campaigning in my local Constituency, including being CLP Chair, I became more involved in the Society – working my way up from Assistant Secretary to Chair. My history of participation means that I have a very broad knowledge of the membership and spirit of the Society and I believe I have helped establish the Society as the authoritative voice on legal issues, not just for the Party but for the wider legal community as evidenced by our recent submission to the Independent Review of Administrative Law.*

*Over the past 12 months we have revolutionised our internal operations. We now have the structure to build on our past and help the Party campaign for success, with progressive policies that will help ensure access to justice and equality under the law for everyone.*

## Vice Chair

### **Dave Drew**

Proposed by: Kate O'Rourke

Seconded by: Hannah Gomersall

*Over the last seven months, the Labour Party has become a formidable opposition and is beginning to look like a credible alternative government. However, despite the Government's mishandling of Covid-19, Brexit blundering, and contempt for constitutional norms and the rule of law, Boris Johnson (or his successor) will be very hard to beat at the next election.*

*The Society of Labour Lawyers is in a unique position to help the Party develop a compelling and credible message. We have seen an enormous increase in requests for legal support from Shadow Ministers as they hold the Government to account and begin to grapple with the profound challenges facing the country.*

*As Vice Chair, I would do everything possible to support the Chair and Executive Committee to maximise the expertise and enthusiasm of our members and help the Labour Party back into government, in particular:*

- > Better engagement with our members: making the Society open and welcoming and encouraging more members to participate in groups and activities*
- > Improving inclusivity and diversity: increasing the diversity of our membership, active participation and representation in leadership positions*
- > Increasing engagement with the Shadow Teams: continuing to expand our support for the Shadow Teams, particularly as they start to develop new policy*
- > Helping improve access to the profession: working closely with Junior Labour Lawyers on opening up the profession and improving working life for junior lawyers*

**Omar Salem**

*Withdrew on 20/11/2020*

Secretary

**Catherine Atkinson**

Proposed by: Kate O'Rourke

Seconded by: Omar Salem

*This is a hugely exciting time for the Society of Labour Lawyers. More than ever the Society is needed to support the opposition front bench as they hold the Government to account, a Government who could not be more ill-equipped to meet the challenges of a national crisis.*

*In the last year the Society has made significant strides. The Covid 19 webinar series which I was honoured to Chair was able to highlight the significant ramifications of the pandemic across the legal front line, engaging with experts, our Front Bench and our wider membership. The Covid-19 briefings contributed to by a wide range of members were impressive and timely contributions. The Society held an incredible amount of online discussions and events. I believe the Society has stepped up, and necessarily so, as we see that the Government will continue to attack the rule of law and access to justice.*

*I have been privileged to serve not only as secretary of the Society but also to be the delegate of SLL to the Socialist Societies on whose executive I act as Chair. In recent years we have seen much more collegiate work across the different Socialist Societies as well increasing engagement with the Leadership, front bench, national party and input into policy formation.*

*I would like to build on the very positive work already being undertaken by the Society of Labour Lawyers and hope that I have the opportunity to do that as Secretary.*

## Treasurer

### **Adrian Williamson**

Proposed by: Kate O'Rourke

Seconded by: Sam Townend

*I am a QC specialising in construction law at Keating Chambers, and also sit as a recorder and Deputy High Court Judge. I have been a member of the Labour Party for 45 years and have held various office at Constituency level. I have served as treasurer for the Society since 2014 and would be delighted to continue to do so.*

## Elected Executive Committee Member

### **Deeba Syed**

Proposed by: David Drew

Seconded by: Daniel Jones

*No statement received*

### **Elen Griffiths**

Proposed by: Chloe Hill

Seconded by: Omar Salem

*I am an active member in the Society of Labour Lawyers, and last year enjoyed supporting the Society's activities, from contributing to the Society's Covid-19 legal report, to giving a talk to SLL members about the data protection law aspects of Covid-19 measures such as contact tracing, to briefing members of the Shadow Cabinet on legal aspects, to co-ordinating action within the Society to discuss Labour's position on the concerning CHIS Bill. I enjoy working with both members of the Society and its more junior members of Young Labour Lawyers, and I would relish the opportunity to contribute to the important work of the society for another year to come.*

### **Hannah Gomersall**

Proposed by: Kate O'Rourke

Seconded by: David Drew

*I have sat on the EC for the past few years as well as being co-chair of the Family Law Group. I've really enjoyed the opportunity of advising the Labour front bench on a range of issues from the domestic abuse bill to the impact of COVID on the courts.*

*I practice predominantly in legal aid children work and witness every day vulnerable parents struggling to access justice. There has never been a more important time to campaign on access to justice, the rule of law as well as diversity within our profession.*

**Ali Henry Sadek**

*Withdrew on 01/12/2020*

**Andrew Dismore**

Proposed by: Kate O'Rourke

Seconded by: Fraser Whitehead

*I joined SLL in the 1970s and qualified as a solicitor in 1980, with Thompsons. MP for Hendon 1997-2010 including chairing the JCHR. I am now London Assembly member. I have been a member of the EC for many years. I also sit as a part time tribunal judge in SSCS chamber. I believe it is helpful to have on the EC someone with the inside practical knowledge of how parliament works and who is a practicing politician.*

**Daniel Jones**

Proposed by: Deeba Syed

Seconded by: David Drew

*This is an exciting time for SLL, with a growing membership and opportunities to advise the Party in a meaningful way. If elected, I would champion the SLL Mentoring Scheme as its coordinator. I would also promote a proactive and constructive SLL, using our collective expertise to contribute to policy debates that matter to us.*

*As Vice-Chair and then Chair of Junior Labour Lawyers, I played a key role in launching the SLL Mentoring Scheme. I have continued to act as the Scheme's coordinator, with the support of a working group of members. Electing me to the EC would provide a platform to further develop the Scheme and ensure it is fully embedded in the Society's wider work.*

*Over thirty members from across the country have volunteered to mentor participants in the next cohort, starting in January 2021. They will have a direct and lasting impact on the future prospects of mentees and reinforce that any legal career can be combined with strong Labour values. The Scheme will contribute to the long-term vibrancy of SLL, with a group of enthusiastic young members joining each year.*

*I have been encouraged to see the building of stronger connections between SLL and the frontbench since April 2020. I've personally provided advice on Brexit and international trade issues, as well as supporting the coordination of the International Trade Group. On the EC, I'd be an advocate for broadening this advice service to involve members from outside London and junior members wherever possible.*

**Dil-veer Kang**

Proposed by: Tom Callaby  
Seconded by: Matthew Turner

*My candidacy will focus on 3 aspects for the Society of Labour Lawyers (SLL) (1) opportunities, (2) events, and (3) policy.*

*(1) Opportunities - I want to make sure that the SLL provides a network for all its members, young and old. This network should also be providing opportunities for its members, therefore when new opportunities arise within the network, whether in relation to legal job opportunities or in relation to policy / campaigns, I want to make sure these opportunities are both being created and being shared in a clear central hub for the network.*

*(2) Events - we have had some amazing events over the past few years and I intend to ensure that these continue. I want to ensure we keep high quality speakers for our network, such as David Lammy who spoke recently, but ensure a focus on speaking to the shadow cabinet to ensure the SLL is able to find a way to access and opine on Labour policy, and help to shape it.*

*(3) Policy - this was touched on above, but overall the SLL should be helping to shape and drive Labour policy. Many individual members do this on a daily basis and through the sharing of opportunities and ensuring we have high quality events, I hope to ensure that every member of SLL will have the opportunity to create a platform for and also join other platforms in shaping Labour policy.*

*I thank you for reading this statement and hope that it can persuade you to give you my vote!*

### **Grahame Anderson**

Proposed by: Kate O'Rourke  
Seconded by: Hannah Gomersall

*I am an employment law barrister and chair of the Employment Group. Most of my work involves representing individuals, companies and unions in Employment Tribunals, including for the North East Law Centre where I do a great deal of pro bono work.*

*My route into the law was the same as my route into the Labour party: a reaction against injustice, in particular in the workplace. One of the great privileges of being active in the Society is in helping ensure the Labour party helps ensure justice.*

*I have been an active chair of the Employment Group: we have a number of ongoing projects, are engaging new members who have not involved before, and have had some excellent speaker events. I will bring that proactivity to the Exec.*

*Pandemic aside, I split my time between London and my native Newcastle. It will be good for the Society to be sure it continues to include perspectives from outside of London and I am*

*keen that we have a presence for non-London members, including at regional conferences. I hope you will vote for me for the Exec.*