



CBA CHAIRMANS REPORT SEPTEMBER 2011.

The summer was busier than expected. Chris Kinch issued an unprecedented Chairmans report in August. The riots took place. My agenda has been packed from day one. I hope you are aware of: my appearance on the Today programme, 26th July; comments and interviews on the riots, and on cameras in court; the Press release on 1st September; the Times interview with Frances Gibb; CBQ.

Congratulations to Michael Turner on his election as Vice Chairman, and thanks to Amanda Pinto for having the courage to stand for election, and for continuing as International Director, on which she will report. The Bar Council 2012 elections are underway. We will decide in Committee whom to support.

The national meeting on 26th July demonstrated the strength of feeling on cuts, the upcoming competition consultation, and the predicament of the criminal Bar in general. We have instructed counsel (4 eminent silks) to advise on direct action and balloting the membership. I intend to publish that advice after discussion in Committee. Liaison with all six Circuits via their Leaders is ongoing. We have headline CBA events planned in the North (22nd November Committee meeting) and North East (April Spring Conference). There may be more.

The crisis over the appalling delays in LSC payments deepens. We and the Bar Council Remuneration Committee are doing what we can. Members suffering financial hardship should come forward.

CPS Panels applications are in. Bar input in assessment, and appeals, is a hot topic. The Circuits are heavily engaged. Separately, the CPS fee consultation, delayed by the sheer workload over Panels, is almost through. Mark Lucraft will report.

Defence fees will suffer again through the Funding Orders now in place despite our unanswered objections. We have tabled many amendments to the Legal Aid and Sentencing Bill; that battle will be carried to the Lords in November. Dermot Keating, Aisling Byrne and Hannah Kinch (others may forgive me for singling them out) have been working hard.

QASA will occupy many of us in the coming months. Patricia Lynch has taken on the role as my alternate at future meetings, of which there are many. We continue to insist upon a realistic timetable, judicial evaluation as an inescapable necessity for all, and a scheme with places only for trial advocates genuinely fit for purpose. The ATC and the Inns are striving to set up assessment centres, which could provide a welcome income stream.

The competition consultation is likely at the end of the year. The government is determined to buy justice on the cheap and in bulk. We are determined to maintain quality in advocacy, and to make the case for the Bar, who are undervalued public servants in need of the recognition we deserve.

TLG and Jonathan Oliver have been worth it. The CBA has a voice of its own. We must stand up for ourselves. We have made a start.