

## CHAIR'S REPORT FOR 2024

### **Welcome**

I welcome our members, committee (both current and incoming) and our Honorary President to this Annual General Meeting. It has been an honour and a pleasure to be Chair of the Adjudication Society for the 2023/2024 year.

### **Overview of the Year's Activities**

I'd like to start with an overview of the year's activities.

Firstly, it was a pleasure to welcome two new groups to the Adjudication Society family. Launched in May in Birmingham, the New Practitioner's Group was set up to provide support, development and learning opportunities, mentoring and networking for new practitioners. The launch was followed up by the Hot Topics event held in London in September. This covered some of the main questions asked by aspiring adjudicators, such as what is the quickest route to getting on an ANB panel, weighing evidence and of course the all-important question of getting paid.

The second new group is the Yorkshire branch of the Adjudication Society who have been busy working on a series of events for next year. Judging by their enthusiasm I can see these being particularly popular.

Not to be outdone, our existing branches also produced some fascinating events. Our Irish branch held three contrasting evenings in Dublin. Firstly, a very useful introduction to adjudication called what everyone in construction should know about adjudication. This was followed up with the great debate suggesting changes to the Construction Contracts Act 2013 and adjudication practice in general. And finally, an event called meet the adjudicators, discussing what adjudicators want from party representatives.

Our regular Case Law Updates continue to be popular. We have held four of these this year. And to maximise availability to members these have been held in London, Leeds, Edinburgh and online.

The London region held a panel discussion on what parties really want from their adjudicators and an additional event on the use of expert and factual witnesses in adjudication.

Bristol held two further events including a panel of adjudicators revealing the tips, tricks and pitfalls of adjudication and a discussion about the effects of termination and insolvency on adjudication.

In another innovation we held our first biennial Adjudication Society Dinner, at the Worshipful Company of Pewterers. This was a marvellous venue and a great evening of meeting friends old and new.

## **Achievements and Milestones**

Our membership numbers continue to grow but we are still short of our elusive target of 1,000 members. Although with our programme of events for next year and your support I'm sure we will achieve that soon.

We continue to partner and collaborate with other organisations, holding joint events with the Dispute Resolution Board Foundation, the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and the Society of Construction Law. And of course, not forgetting our three-year collaboration with King's College.

There are some people who go above and beyond in their support of the Society. One of these was Martin Potter, who was involved in the founding of the Society and remained a long-standing committee member and supporter until only a few years ago. A regular at our conferences, he sadly passed away six months ago. To acknowledge his support the Society has agreed, with the consent of his family, to set up a bursary in his name. The details of which will be finalised next year.

## **Diversity and Inclusion**

You will have heard the presentation this morning of the Kings' College London and Adjudication Society Report on Adjudication in the United Kingdom. Whilst it is true that the number of women adjudicator's has only slightly increased, the work carried out by the Adjudication Society umbrella group Women In Adjudication is impressive. The amount of time and effort put into mentoring support in particular is exceptional.

I like to think that this work has helped to inspire several of the ANB's to review their panel criteria and application processes in the interests of transparency and inclusion. Those that have done so are to be commended. But the work continues, particularly regarding other protected characteristics.

## **Acknowledgments**

None of the year's achievements could have happened without the hard work of our main committee together with our regional and specialist groups. Those of you who are stepping down, thank you for your support and time. Those who are incoming, good luck and thank you for stepping forward. I wish you all the best.

I also must thank the speakers and panel members who have supported us throughout the year, as well as those who have generously provided the venues for our events.

Finally, to you the members. This is your Society and with your help it will continue to grow and be successful. Thank you.

**SUSAN FRANCOMBE November 2024**