

THE
ACCESS
TO JUSTICE
FOUNDATION



The Access to Justice Foundation & Legal Support Trusts NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2011



Welcome to our inaugural joint quarterly newsletter

The Access to Justice Foundation and the seven Legal Support Trusts raise funds to support the provision of free of charge legal help to those who need it most.

LEGAL WALKS IN MAY

For more information on these fundraising walks, please read on within the newsletter or email the contact below. You can also download flyers for each walk at www.ATJF.org.uk/walks

MAY 16TH

- London chair@londonlegalsupporttrust.org.uk
- Nottingham legalwalk.nottingham@googlemail.com
- Birmingham birmingham.legalwalk@gmail.com
- Cambridge easternlegalsupporttrust@gmail.com
- Bristol limestone@beachcroft.com
- Guildford chair@londonlegalsupporttrust.org.uk
- Newbury chair@londonlegalsupporttrust.org.uk
- Luxembourg chair@londonlegalsupporttrust.org.uk
- Plus 5 cities in Australia!

MAY 18TH

- Newcastle paul.mckeown@northumbria.ac.uk
- Leeds enquiries@nelst.org.uk

FOUNDATION LAUNCHES NEW CAMPAIGN, 'IT'S NOT JUST PEANUTS'

The 12th of January saw the launch of the Access to Justice Foundations 'It's not just Peanuts' campaign. In attendance were the Attorney General Dominic Grieve QC MP and the Solicitor General Edward Garnier QC MP, together with a number of law firms and pro bono organisations. The event was kindly hosted by Hogan Lovells LLP who helped develop the campaign.



The Foundation's 'It's Not Just Peanuts' campaign begins when there is considerable pressure on both Legal Aid and local government funding, meaning at a time of increased public need, the voluntary legal and advice sector faces real financial difficulties.

continued overleaf...

It's 'Not Just Peanuts' continued...

The campaign is specifically targeting amounts of less than £50 that have been unclaimed by clients and so remain in solicitors accounts. These sums can arise in a number of ways, for example, on a property sale where the costs were slightly less than expected but the client can no longer be traced, or where money returned to a client has not been cashed despite reminders.

The campaign takes advantage of a 2008 rule change which allows a law firm to donate unclaimed sums of less than £50 to charity without SRA approval. Whilst it's not the initial focus of the 'It's Not Just Peanuts' campaign, it is hoped that sums over £50 will also be donated to the Foundation, however, these sums require firms to apply to the SRA on a case-by-case basis.

The Attorney General Dominic Grieve QC MP commented: *"Enabling money to go to pro bono work is clearly of the utmost importance. The 'Its Not Just Peanuts' campaign is one of both simplicity and ingenuity by making use of client account monies lying unclaimed and we need to promote the message that such sums are there to be used."*

Former attorney general Lord Peter Goldsmith QC who chairs the Foundation said: *"Although the individual funds generated may seem small, collectively they will represent a significant contribution towards the work of The Access to Justice Foundation to support organisations that provide free legal help, vital at this time of Government funding cuts. We need the support of as many firms as possible and are very grateful for their time and effort to unlock these funds for the voluntary legal sector."*

Bob Nightingale MBE, Chief Executive of the London Legal Support Trust said: *"The Foundation designed the campaign with the support of Hogan Lovells following the Government's announcement in November to drastically reduce the Legal Aid Budget. The cuts will lead to many being unable to obtain legal assistance. The funds raised by the campaign will go a little way to prevent the worst effects on people most affected by the cuts, by supporting social welfare law areas such as benefits, debts, employment and immigration."*

Download the campaign booklet at www.ATJF.org.uk/clientbalances



"A firm recently donated 20 small client accounts to the Foundation, totaling £250. On its own, such a sum seems like peanuts - unlikely to do anything to improve the lot of the voluntary legal advice sector. But if 30% of the 14,134 law firms in England & Wales alone that appeared on the Law Society website were in that position and donated those sums to the Foundation - those £250 amounts would come to over £1 million pounds."

LORD GOLDSMITH QC



UNLOCK FUNDS FOR JUSTICE PRO BONO COSTS CAMPAIGN STEPS INTO HIGH GEAR

The 'Unlock Funds For Justice' campaign, launched during National Pro Bono Week 2010 by the Master of the Rolls and the Solicitor General, has sought to raise more funds through "pro bono costs".

The campaign is being organised by The Access to Justice Foundation to increase the use by lawyers of pro bono costs under s.194 of the Legal Services Act 2007, and is supported by the Law Society, Bar Council and Institute of Legal Executives.

At the launch of the Master of the Rolls, Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury, said, "*pro bono ensures access to justice, which is a central pillar of any democratic society. I welcome this publicity campaign as the drive to make lawyers acting for free aware that they can obtain pro bono costs on winning a civil case requires action rather than words.*"

Lord Goldsmith stated that the unlock funds for justice campaign "*aims to increase awareness of pro bono costs, and increase the number of orders sought, providing funds for much needed free legal assistance.*" He added "*we have not yet begun to see the full potential of the pro bono costs scheme.*"

Lord Goldsmith explained that pro bono costs produce 'new money' for justice, on the back of a successful pro bono case and without much additional effort by the pro bono lawyer. In addition to raising funds, he commented that pro bono costs could also help achieve a settlement by leveling the playing field, because both sides now have a costs risk to consider.

Recently the Foundation has been shifting this campaign into high gear with the help of 10,000 flyers and posters kindly printed by Allen & Overy. These are being distributed and displayed in the Inns of Court, barrister chambers, law firms and courts. The aim is not to only encourage more lawyers to seek pro bono costs but to also raise awareness of this valuable method of funding. As expected this is an ongoing task for the Foundation.

This has culminated in the recent case in which the largest single pro bono costs were ordered, in the sum of **£41,000**. Continued thanks to the Bar Pro Bono Unit for their support given the number of costs orders they have produced!

Download the pro bono costs material at www.ATJF.org.uk/costs





NEW INTERNS AND A NEW HOME FOR THE FOUNDATION

2011 has marked a new start for The Access to Justice Foundation. Following on from a recruitment campaign, the Foundation is pleased to announce that it now has two new interns to help with the day to day running of the Foundation, and to support the Regional Trusts. The Foundation has moved its operations to the National Pro Bono Centre on Chancery Lane in the heart of legal London. This major step comes as the Foundation seeks to grow and generate more funding for the voluntary legal advice sector.

The new interns are:

Adiam Weldensae, called to the Bar in 2010 and an LLB graduate. She is committed to improving access to justice and in particular to pro bono work. To this end Adiam also works as an intern caseworker for the Bar Pro Bono Unit. Adiam is currently pursuing a pupillage and hopes to eventually practice as a barrister.

And:

Oliver Warder, is a graduate with a Masters in International Law and a BA in Peace and Conflict studies. Before joining the Foundation, Oliver worked for a regeneration company that dealt with getting single parents back into work on behalf of Hackney council. Oliver eventually hopes to pursue a career in humanitarian law and the law of war.

The 7th of March 2011 proved to be significant date as it has seen the Foundation move into its new home! Together with its new interns the Foundation now occupies one of the hot desks at The National Pro Bono Centre. It is from this office that the organisation will be running its day to day operations and stepping up the pace of its major campaigns.

The Foundation would also like express its gratitude to Rebecca Hilsenrath (CEO, Lawworks), Rebecca Wilkie (CEO, Bar Pro Bono Unit), and the Trustees of the National Pro Bono Centre for their support.

The National Pro Bono Centre

The Centre houses the profession's national clearing houses for legal pro bono work delivered in England and Wales: the Bar Pro Bono Unit, LawWorks (the Solicitors' Pro Bono Group) and ILEX Pro Bono Forum. The Centre is designed to be a "hub" for pro bono charities in the sector and will support the wide range of pro bono projects and brokerage which the charities support, helping individuals and community groups all over England and Wales.

To learn more, visit

www.nationalprobonocentre.org.uk



Walk the Thames, a 40 mile walk in darkest February, raised over £75,000. Beneficiaries included Hammersmith Law Centre (£25,000) Threshold Housing advice Centre in Balham (£10,000) and Mary Ward Legal Centre (£8,000).

Preparation for the forthcoming London Legal Walk on the 16th of May 2011 is also continuing, with 220 teams booked at the time of going to print.

This is up considerably from last year. With 8 weeks to go in 2010 they've already had 161 teams registered at the same point. So far this year they have 220 teams and over 1000 walkers.

The College of Law get the team building award this week having registered 62 walkers from a standing start.

Government lawyers are also starting to book in now as the government legal services team registered 24 walkers during the week, and crown prosecution service 18.

Senior walkers have been registering in force too. Lord Justice's Leveson and Jackson and Justices Irwin, Swift and Openshaw have joined the RCJ team while Desmond Browne QC joint head of 5RB and Paul Mendelle QC joint head of 25 Bedford Square joined to lead their teams.

Among the law firms, team building has started and K&L gates have 45 in their team so far, Holman Fenwick Willan has 29, DLA Piper 23, McGuire Woods 22 and Norton Rose 20. Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, K&L Gates and Trowers & Hamlin have already signed up their senior partner or London senior partner. Full steam ahead!

So with time still to register, this year's London Legal walk, 16th May 2011, looks on course to outdo previous years.

For more information on the London Legal Support Trust, including the London Legal Walk, please visit their website at

www.londonlegalsupporttrust.org.uk or follow the Trust on Twitter at www.twitter.com/londonlegal

Also upcoming are the South Coast walks now fixed for: Brighton June 21st, Eastbourne July 11th, and Hastings September 5th.

LEGAL WALKS SPONSORSHIP



Following the Law Society's long standing sponsorship of individual walks, we are delighted to report that the Law Society is kindly sponsoring all walks in 2011 as the national sponsor. The Foundation also continues to sponsor the walks by funding the public indemnity insurance. We are grateful to the Law Gazette for their media support, together with the sponsors of individual walks.

NEWS FROM LEGAL SUPPORT TRUSTS



London Legal Support Trust

The London Legal support Trust is pleased to announce that its recent sponsored event

Midlands Legal Support Trust



This month members of the legal community who took part in the 2010 Midlands Legal Walk gathered to present a cheque of over £5000 to the Birmingham Law Centre with some of the sponsorship raised from the event.

Julia Jones, trustee of the Midlands Legal Support Trust (MLST) who presented the cheque stated *"it is fantastic that due to the generous sponsorship of people working in the legal community in 2010, the MLST was able to make a number of grants to assist charities and advice agencies who really need financial support due to funding cuts"*.

The Trustees were particularly pleased that they were able to support organisations providing free legal advice across the Midlands, and, enabling a large number of people across the region to have access to vital advice about their legal rights and representation.

On receiving the grant, Chief Executive of Birmingham Law Centre, Pete Lowen, said; *"we are very grateful to the MLST for this grant. We can now replace our central photocopier and scanner without which we cannot operate. I will certainly be doing the walk again in May this year"*.

The 2011 Midlands legal walk will take place in Nottingham and Birmingham in the evening of 16 May 2011. *"We hope that as in previous years hundreds of people who work in the legal community will walk again to raise these much needed funds"* said Julia.

The grant to Birmingham Law Centre was one of a number of grants made to free legal advice agents from the funds raised from the walk. Other grants included monies to Coventry Law Centre to help them launch and develop a new service to reach particularly vulnerable clients by raising awareness, a grant to the charity framework to help them extend their free specialist legal representation service to reach vulnerable people in Nottinghamshire who are at risk of homelessness through repossession and eviction. Plus St Anne's Advice Centre in Nottingham also received a small grant to a pay for a laptop for volunteers providing free advice on social law issues.



MLST CELEBRATES THE SUCCESS OF LAST YEARS WALK

"it is fantastic that due to the generous sponsorship of people working in the legal community in 2010, the MLST was able to make a number of grants to assist charities and advice agencies who really need financial support due to funding cuts...We hope that as in previous years hundreds of people who work in the legal community will walk again to raise these much needed funds"

JULIA JONES, MLST TRUSTEE



THREE COURTS WALK 2010

Reaching Justice Wales Cyrraedd Cyfiawnder Cymru



Reaching Justice Wales Cyrraedd Cyfiawnder Cymru has arranged four sponsored walks to date: The Three Courts Walk in Cardiff (admittedly, the 2010 event became the Two Courts Walk due to the small matter of the Ryder Cup Welcome Concert in the Millennium Stadium!). In November 2010, they were delighted to organise the inaugural North Wales Walk around Caernarfon, led by the Lord Chief Justice, to coincide with the Legal Wales Conference.

Since its inception, RJW/CCC has made donations to legal advice organizations throughout Wales. These include Cardiff Law Centre, Speakeasy Advice, Riverside Advice, the Benefit Advice Shop in Rhyl, and Connect Disability Rights and Advice in Pembrokeshire.

This year they have decided not to hold a sponsored walk in the autumn of 2011, with the intention of bringing future walks into line with the May timing of other Regional Trust walks, from 2012 onward. Instead, for 2011, they are inviting colleagues (the fit and enthusiastic ones!) to take part in the Cardiff Half Marathon on Sunday 16th October, with RJW/CCC as their designated charity for fundraising. If you would like to help in this way, please do contact them to register your expression of interest at reachingjusticewales@cardiff.ac.uk

For more information on RJW/CCC please visit their website at:

www.reachingjusticewales.org.uk

Midlands Trust Continued...

The MLST is also urgently looking for someone in the Oxford area who is interested in becoming involved in the MLST and setting up an Oxford walk.

For more information about the Trustees and the work of the Midlands Legal Trust please contact Julia Jones at julia.jones@anthonymcollins.com

To register a team or for more information about the 2011 walk please contact:

Nottingham Legal Walk
Yvette Thomas
legalwalk.nottingham@googlemail.com

Birmingham Legal Walk
Alex Loxton
Birmingham.legalwalk@gmail.com



THE LEEDS WALK SETS OFF

South West Legal Support Trust



The South West Trust is pleased to report the news it was incorporated on 22 February 2011.

Bristol's inaugural Access to Justice Walk is being held on Monday 16 May 2011, 5.30-6.30pm starting at the law library on Small Street in Bristol. For more information on the walk, a walk information pack can be downloaded at www.swlst.org.uk

For more information or to register your support for this event, please contact Lisa Elston on limestone@beachcroft.com or 0117 918 2041. Or you can donate online at www.justgiving.com/swlst

Until it receives a charity number, the Trust is grateful to the London Trust for its help in receiving walk donations and donating them back to the South West Trust.

North East Legal Support Trust



Following grants awarded last year to various organisations across the region, this year, the North East Trust has undertaken its second grant round by accepting applications during February and March. We look forward to announcing the results in the next newsletter.

The Trust is organising two walks on Wednesday 18th May 2011. The Leeds walk starts at 5.30pm at the Leeds Combined Court Centre, with its 10km route passing Leeds canal. If you would like further information or to sign up for the Leeds walk please contact enquiries@nelst.org.uk.

The second walk on May 18th will be held in Newcastle and starts at the Quayside at 5.30pm. For details or to sign up to the Newcastle walk please contact paul.mckeown@northumbria.ac.uk.

If you would like to help the Trust with other fundraising activities such as organising quiz evenings, balls and other social events please e-mail us enquiries@nelst.org.uk

Further walks are planned for later in the year in Sheffield, York and Hull.

North West Legal Support Trust



The North West Legal Support Trust looks set to organise its successful walk in Manchester again this year on Thursday 22 September 2011. This will be their 4th annual legal walk. Over this period they have made several well received grants with very positive feedback. Details will be announced in the next newsletter.

For more information on the North West Trust visit www.nwlst.org.uk

Eastern Legal Support Trust



The Eastern Legal Support Trust (ELST) is pleased to report it is now fully up and running, having received its charity registration on 15 March 2011.

The Eastern Trust will be holding its first sponsored legal walk in Cambridge to coincide with the other walks on 16th May 2011. It hopes that its inaugural walk will prove to be the first of many milestones.

For further information on the upcoming Cambridge walk and to register your interest in either taking part or becoming a sponsor please contact:

easternlegalsupporttrust@gmail.com

If you are interested in supporting the Trust more generally please contact Trustee Richard Harrison on richard.harrison@lawworks.org.uk

Australia



WALK FOR JUSTICE

Join the Walk for Justice in your State or Territory

Brisbane, Townsville, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide will again host legal walks on Monday 16 May 2011 at 7.30 am. Walk for Justice is now in its fourth year and the number of walkers has increased every year. It is the opening event of Australia's National Law Week. Monday 16 May is also their National Pro Bono Day and members of the legal profession are encouraged to think of activities that they can do to raise the visibility of their pro bono legal work on this day.

Importantly it is a fundraiser for the work of pro bono clearing houses. The focus this year is on raising money to cover disbursements associated with delivering pro bono legal services such as interpreter's fees, filing fees, cost of expert's reports, travel and accommodation for regional and remote area work.

For more information on Australia's walks visit the National Pro Bono Resource Centre www.nationalprobono.org.au or email info@nationalprobono.org.au

NEXT ISSUE

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR NEXT ISSUE:

- RESULTS OF THE FOUNDATION'S 2ND ANNUAL STUDENT COMPETITION.
- FIND OUT HOW MAY'S WALKS FARED.
- AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE FOUNDATION'S CAMPAIGNS.
- DETAILS OF MORE LEGAL WALKS IN 2011.
- FIND OUT HOW OUR INTERNS ARE GETTING ON!

THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOUNDATION

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Please contact us if interested in sponsoring or advertising in the next newsletter.