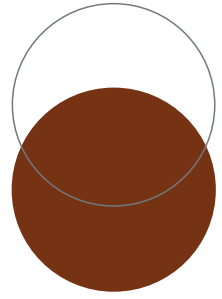




THE  
**LAW SOCIETY**  
OF HONG KONG  
香港律師會

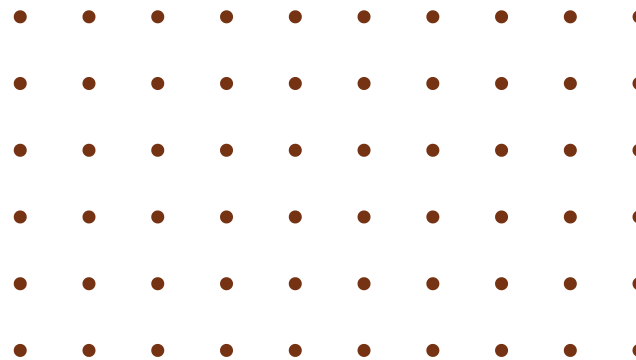
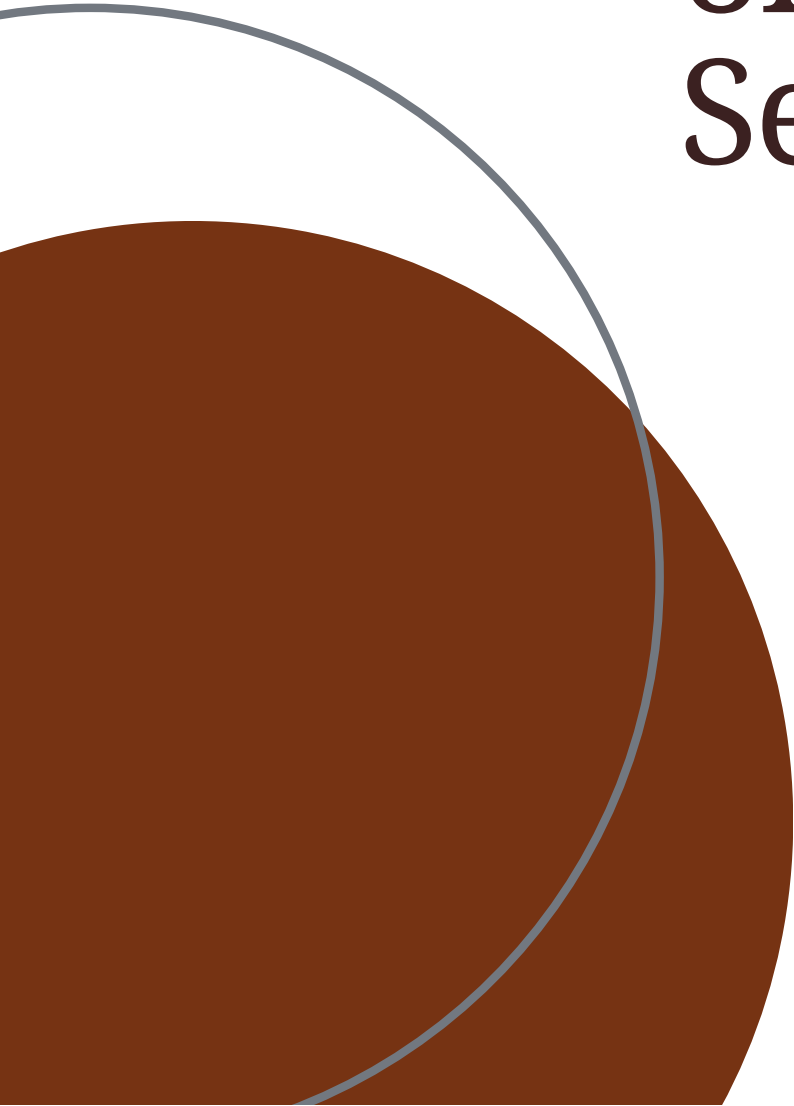


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# 2023

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# Standing Committee on Member Services



## STANDING COMMITTEE ON MEMBER SERVICES

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The Standing Committee on Member Services formulates and oversees the implementation of strategies and programmes that enhance members' benefits and interests. It is the Standing Committee's mission to provide the best benefits to members and to unite them with a common goal of developing the legal communities locally and internationally. The Standing Committee also makes recommendations to other Standing Committees on issues pertaining to members' legal practice. The Standing Committee met 11 times in 2023.

## **Members' Forum and Dinner Gathering**

The Standing Committee successfully brought back the long-awaited Members' Forum and Dinner Gathering on 5 October under the theme of "Envisioning the Future – Strategic Position of the Legal Profession". The Forum received an overwhelming response, with more than 130 members and guests attending the event. Participants actively engaged in fruitful discussions on various topics such as the shift of business focus, competition for talent and how legal practice could be enhanced by AI intelligence and other tools. They also shared with the Council challenges that they were facing in their practice and career in the post-pandemic era.

## **COMMITTEE FOR MEMBERS WITH MAINLAND BACKGROUND**

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The Committee for Members with Mainland Background was newly established under the Standing Committee on Member Services in October to study the needs of members, trainee solicitors and registered foreign lawyers with a Mainland background and to address difficulties they encounter when working, studying and living in Hong Kong. It aims at providing a platform for communication and exchange for this demographic, supporting them in social integration, personal development and making contributions to Hong Kong and our country. The Committee met once in 2023 to map its plans going forward.

## **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE**

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The Diversity and Inclusion Committee ("DIC") was established to promote diversity and inclusion in the profession with a short-term focus on removal of unconscious bias in the workplace, particularly in the employer's policies and practices relating to recruitment, training, development, retention and promotions, as well as promotion of women to leadership positions. DIC convened one meeting in 2023.

DIC organised its first webinar on 29 August gathering female leaders from various jurisdictions and overseas lawyers' associations, including England and Wales, India, Malaysia, Poland and Singapore, to explore the issues that challenge women in breaking the invisible glass ceiling in today's society, and to share their insights and experiences in promoting women in leadership in the respective jurisdictions.

## IN-HOUSE LAWYERS COMMITTEE

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In-house lawyers (“IHLs”) refer to those members who are not in private practice and mainly work in a legal capacity in commerce, trading, industrial, financial, educational, governmental or nonprofit sectors. The In-House Lawyers Committee (“IHLC”) is established to support the in-house sector of the legal profession in Hong Kong by creating a platform for sharing experiences and resources and exchanging views and ideas in relation to the role of IHLs. IHLC also works towards providing opportunities to facilitate and foster the relationship between IHLs and members in private practice. IHLC convened five meetings in 2023.

The 2023 Annual Conference of In-House Lawyers (“Conference”), the first physical conference returning in full scale in four years, was held on 16 August. The Conference attracted a full house of audience, mainly in-house lawyers representing different industries and sectors. The theme “From In-House Connector to Super-Connector” was chosen to highlight the extended roles of in-house lawyers not only within their businesses but also in the international arena, bridging Hong Kong with the Mainland and the world. Topics discussed included opportunities presented by national policy development, cross-border dispute resolution, emergence of Mainland enterprises in Hong Kong, advancing IP literacy, and revival of the IPO market. Apart from Law Society members who attended in person, the Conference welcomed participants from the Greater China region, and for the first time, from overseas jurisdictions joining online. The Conference was conducted in English and Putonghua, and supported by simultaneous interpretation in the two languages to cater for different language preferences. In appreciation of the support of the distinguished speakers and sponsors, IHLC invited them to a luncheon between the morning and afternoon sessions of the Conference.

IHLC organised panel discussions (in the format of webinars) under the series entitled “Sweat & Glory” where speakers were invited to share experiences and knowledge on the following topics which were pertinent to the daily work and career development of IHLs :

- Be Genuinely Green: How to Avoid Greenwashing (19 April)
- Personal Information Protection Law in PRC (11 May)
- Working in the Department of Justice (21 June)

IHLC also organised a webinar with Harney Westwood & Riegels under its “In-House Lawyers Training Programme (in collaboration with law firms)” this year on the topic “Trump or Trumped – When It Becomes Necessary to Amend the M&A” on 24 May.

As an added benefit to IHLs and the wider membership of The Law Society, all courses organised by IHLC, as well as the Conference, are CPD accredited.

## INNOTECH COMMITTEE

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The Innotech Committee provides technology knowhow and services to members as well as innovative ways of applying information and communication technology to law firms and legal services. It met six times in 2023.

During the year, the Committee continued its exchanges with technology-related bodies to establish collaboration with The Law Society, initiated discussion with eBRAM International Online Dispute Resolution Centre Limited (“eBRAM”) on ways to enhance the use of LawTech in Hong Kong and with service providers on the implementation of new technologies such as generative artificial intelligence, and organised a webinar on digital common law with the Judiciary of the HKSAR (“Judiciary”).

### Use of Technology for Court Hearings

Due to the pandemic, the Judiciary introduced the use of three types of video-conferencing facilities (“VCF”) for remote hearings. With the objective to enhance members’ understanding on the use of the VCF solutions and test the compatibility of common VCF, webinars were arranged for members to observe actual testing sessions conducted by the Judiciary. A list of tested systems which are compatible with the court VCF for remote hearings has been published in the dedicated webpage in The Law Society’s website.

Following the testing sessions on the use of VCF and a webinar on electronic bundles (e-bundles) organised by the Academy of Law, the Committee published an article to summarise the important points to note when preparing e-bundles and illustrate how the administration of justice could be facilitated through implementation of the use of technology in the courts, and organised another webinar with the Judiciary on digital common law, with role play sessions to introduce this new feature which could enhance access to the law and facilitate submissions to and at court.

### The Technology Roadmap

In December 2017, the Committee produced a Roadmap outlining what The Law Society should do to assist the profession in taking advantage of the technology, the relevant time frame and the cost. The Roadmap also identified a few product deliverables to be further considered.

To ensure that the Roadmap deliverables will suit the needs of members (especially small law firms), the Committee conducted a Law Firm Technology Survey on all law firms in September 2018. The Committee received a 6.3% response rate. The survey results assisted the Committee in identifying tools which law firms considered relevant and useful for them to adapt to the changing legal landscape.

The Council expressed support for putting in resources to assist members in taking advantage of technology.

During the year, the Committee further developed the Technology Roadmap setting out concrete steps which The Law Society could take to assist the profession in taking advantage of the technology, the relevant timeframe and the cost.

Based on the findings of the Survey, the needs of members especially that of smaller law firms had been identified, including solutions on solicitors accounting, electronic document retention and law firm management, digitalisation in legal practice and technology-related training seminars for both lawyers and support staff.

The Law Society partnered with Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (“HKSTP”) on its Global Acceleration Academy Programme to source start-ups, locally and/or globally, to develop legal solutions for members. An inaugural programme named “Future of Law” was designed to enable The Law Society to find technology solutions, or co-create new solutions with innovation start-ups that best fit members’ needs and expectations. The Committee has been in contact with a few shortlisted service providers to explore how they could develop a customised solicitors’ accounting solution that works best for Law Society members.

The Law Society will continue its collaboration with relevant stakeholders and develop suitable products for members under the multi-year Roadmap.

## **Digitisation of Documents**

Arranging space and resources for storage of documents has been a problem faced by many law firms and members. The pandemic has accelerated the implementation of remote work arrangements and brought to fore the growing needs for digital storage. Since 2020, the Committee has been invited to review and make recommendations on storage and destruction of old files against the backdrop of cloud technology.

In September 2022, the Committee issued a new guidance note on digitisation of physical documents and conversion of electronic record, followed by a webinar to go through the best practice for members and law firms when digitising relevant documents, in conjunction with the Guidance Note on Storage and Destruction of Old Files which set out guidelines on storage of different types of files. Follow-up meetings with law firms were held in 2023 to collect feedbacks from members for the Committee to further refine the Guidance Note.

## **Webinars**

The Committee organised a series of webinars and workshops with various themes related to the use of lawtech and the use of generative artificial intelligence tools in the legal profession, and all were well received.

- Webinar on Enhancing Legal Services through LawTech (18 January)
- Webinar on Digital Common Law (24 March)
- Webinar on ChatGPT (29 March)
- Webinar on Ethics, Professional Conduct and Legal Issues on the Use of Generative AI tools (26 June)

## Articles

With a view to bringing news updates on legal innovation and technology for members and subscribers, a dedicated section on InnoTech was created in *Hong Kong Lawyer* in 2019.

The Committee contributed two articles to the InnoTech section on the following topics in 2023:

- “Use of Electronic Bundles in Portable Document Format in Court” (published in the March issue)
- “Re: SFC Consultation Conclusions on the Proposed Regulatory Requirements for Virtual Asset Trading Platform Operators Licensed by the SFC” (published in the August issue)

## The Law Society’s App

A large number of Law Society members have downloaded The Law Society’s App (“the App”) on their iOS or Android devices and have regularly been using the App to read *Hong Kong Lawyer*, read the President’s Letters and weekly circulars, search the members database, download event photos, keep track of and sign up for numerous recreation, sports, and members’ benefit events and CPD courses, and add events to their diaries with a simple click. Since its launch in 2013, the App has accumulated 34,728 downloads on iOS and Android devices. In 2023, the “hit rate” of instances of members clicking within the App reached over 2 million.

The Committee receives constructive comments and suggestions from members of the App and will continue to improve the functionality of the App.

## MEMBER BENEFIT COMMITTEE

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The Member Benefit Committee (“MBC”) works towards improving the personal well-being of members through identifying and offering a wide range of services and products, and organising various networking and wellness activities for members as member benefits, thereby enhancing the development of the profession as a whole. MBC convened seven meetings in 2023.

MBC introduced two new initiatives during the year:

- MBC Thirsty Thursday: a new series of networking drinks events to gather members on Thursday evenings for a casual catch-up or making new friends, and to start winding down for the weekend. Six events were organised in 2023.
- Pet Lovers Series: a new series of workshops to share knowledge on various aspects of pet ownership with members. The first workshop was held online on 21 March on the topic “Understanding Dog’s Behaviour”.

The Children’s Programme had also returned, and two activities were held in summer, attracting a total of around 90 members and their children:

- Mosaic Coaster Workshop (5 August)
- Visit to CUPNOODLES MUSEUM Hong Kong (12 August)

The first physical seminar under the Wellness Programme in four years was held on 9 November, where a functional medicine practitioner shared with members on the topic “Optimal Detoxification for Longevity and Health”.

MBC also brought back its signature event, the Annual Christmas Party, on 6 December after a five-year hiatus. The event was themed “Have a Green X’mas” and gathered around 200 members and their guests, many of whom dressed up in outfits that echoed the theme. Live band performances by “TLF”, the “VIP Band” and guest band “Alliance”, together with the drinking competition, the Best Dressed Competition, and the immensely popular lucky draw, created unforgettable memories for all participants.

MBC wrapped up the year with a curator-led guided tour for “Gazing at Sanxingdui: New Archaeological Discoveries in Sichuan”, a special and popular exhibition at Hong Kong Palace Museum, on 9 December, providing participants with a very rare and precious opportunity of learning about these grade-one national treasures through the lens of the curator in-charge of the exhibition.

Alongside festive offers for members to celebrate the Chinese New Year, Tuen Ng Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival, MBC continued its effort in sourcing and offering a wide range of services and products for members as year-round benefits under six categories, namely:

- Culture and Lifestyle;
- Dine and Wine;
- Education and Learning;
- Health and Leisure;
- Household and Living; and
- IT Products and Services.

“Lai see” packets featuring the zodiac sign for the Year of the Rabbit were distributed to members at the beginning of the year.

The Law Society also continued its collaboration with American Express in offering the Law Society American Express Platinum Card exclusively for members.

## **PRACTICE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

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The Practice Management Committee is dedicated to educating members on best practices in managing and operating a law firm. The scope of its work includes providing guidance to members on the opportunities and risks arising from the business of operating a law practice, and on formulating strategies to expand law practice, manage risks in practice, enhance



services to clients, motivate staff and manage finance and information. It aims to help law firms achieve practice management excellence. It also formulates guidelines and practice manuals and organises training programmes, seminars and conferences on practice management. One formal meeting was held in 2023.

## **Helping Members Manage and Grow their Businesses**

To keep members apprised of the global development of the legal industry, the Committee organised two events during the year on some of the hottest topics in the world. A webinar on “The 21st Century Law Firm: Are you prepared for the ESG takeover” was organised on 5 September, exploring the crucial role of legal advisors in providing suitable advice to clients amidst the intricate intersections of ESG factors. The speaker highlighted the significance of legal advisors in guiding clients through the complexities of ESG considerations, providing participants with valuable insights to help them better navigate this fast-changing landscape. The Committee also organised an in-person seminar on “All You Need To Know About Cybersecurity and Digital Risks Seminar” on 29 November, discussing the latest information and happenings on cybersecurity and digital risks. In addition to discussing the updates, the speaker also equipped participants with directions on how to navigate the digital risks that emerge from these threats and how to handle the incidents should they occur.

## **ISLAMIC FINANCE WORKING PARTY**

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The Islamic Finance Working Party (“IFWP”) makes recommendations on the legal development of Islamic financial products and services in Hong Kong and aims to equip members with updated knowledge and insights in the rapidly growing Islamic finance market in the world. It aims to facilitate the development of Islamic finance in Hong Kong and works closely with financial institutions, government, non-governmental organisations, international organisations and universities relating to Islamic finance. The Working Party also meets local and overseas lawyers to discuss developments in Islamic finance and identifies and reports on local Islamic product initiatives. IFWP convened one meeting in 2023.

At the invitation of the Consulate General of Malaysia Trade Section (“MATRADE”), IFWP visited MATRADE’s Hong Kong office on 16 May. During the meeting, both parties exchanged views on the development of Islamic finance and culture in Hong Kong, and explored future collaboration opportunities. IFWP also suggested that MATRADE should keep an eye out for the opportunities of Islamic business in the Greater Bay Area (“GBA”) as the Muslim market on the Mainland has been growing rapidly and the business goes where the market is.

The IFWP Annual Reception returned in physical form on 23 November after being held virtually for a few years. The theme “Moving Into the New Phase: The Islamic Market is Not Future. It is Here Now.” was selected to reflect the dynamic landscape of Islamic finance, which has now firmly established its presence in the global market. The event brought together over 100 legal professionals and active industry players, including Consul Generals,

government officials, and representatives of banks and corporations. It provided a platform for thought-provoking conversations and exchanges about enhancing Hong Kong’s position as an international financial hub to allow the sustainable growth of the Islamic financial and business sector in the city, and as a gateway for Islamic investors around the world to tap into investment opportunities on the Mainland. Esteemed speakers, including representatives from the Legislative Council, MATRADE and The Law Society, shed light on the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, and inspired the audience to continue working towards a stronger, more vibrant Islamic finance ecosystem. The annual reception concluded with a networking session where Halal food was served.

## **WORKING PARTY FOR SME FIRMS**

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The Working Party for SME Firms was established under the Practice Management Committee to (a) make recommendations to the Committee on any support and guidance which the Working Party may consider desirable for small and medium-sized enterprise law firms (“SME Firms”); (b) provide a forum for networking, sharing experience, exchanging views and discussing common problems among sole practitioners and small partnership firms on practice management; and (c) provide a channel of communications between such firms and The Law Society.

The Working Party has been constantly exploring better ways of promoting sustainable professional growth of SME Firms, maintaining strong communication with various associations and organisations and exploring avenues of support and networking opportunities for SME Firms. These include, but are not limited to, technological enhancements, accounting assistance, and more.

The Standing Committee on Member Services resolved in November 2023 that the Working Party be disbanded for having completed its initial good cause. A Small and Medium Firms Committee will be set up with appropriate terms of reference to address the needs of small and medium firms.

## **WORKING PARTY ON CLIENT ENGAGEMENT LETTERS**

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The Working Party on Client Engagement Letters was formed in 2020 with the primary aims of identifying practice areas where a signed client engagement letter would be considered an essential tool for managing the risks of a law firm, and developing *pro forma* client engagement letters and explanatory and/or guidance notes for the use of the same. The Working Party is finalising three sets of template Client Engagement Letters and a Practice Note, and is working with the service provider towards launching the templates and Practice Note in 2024.

## PRO BONO COMMITTEE

The Pro Bono Committee (“PBC”) is formed to review the types of pro bono work undertaken by the profession, promote public awareness of pro bono services of The Law Society, and encourage participation by the profession in pro bono work. Composition of the committee members are diversified including solicitors of various levels of seniority, local practitioners, international expatriates, in-house lawyers and academics. The Committee convened six meetings in 2023.

PBC organised two webinars and a physical seminar during the year on the following topics relating to the provision of pro bono services, attracting a total of over 400 participants.

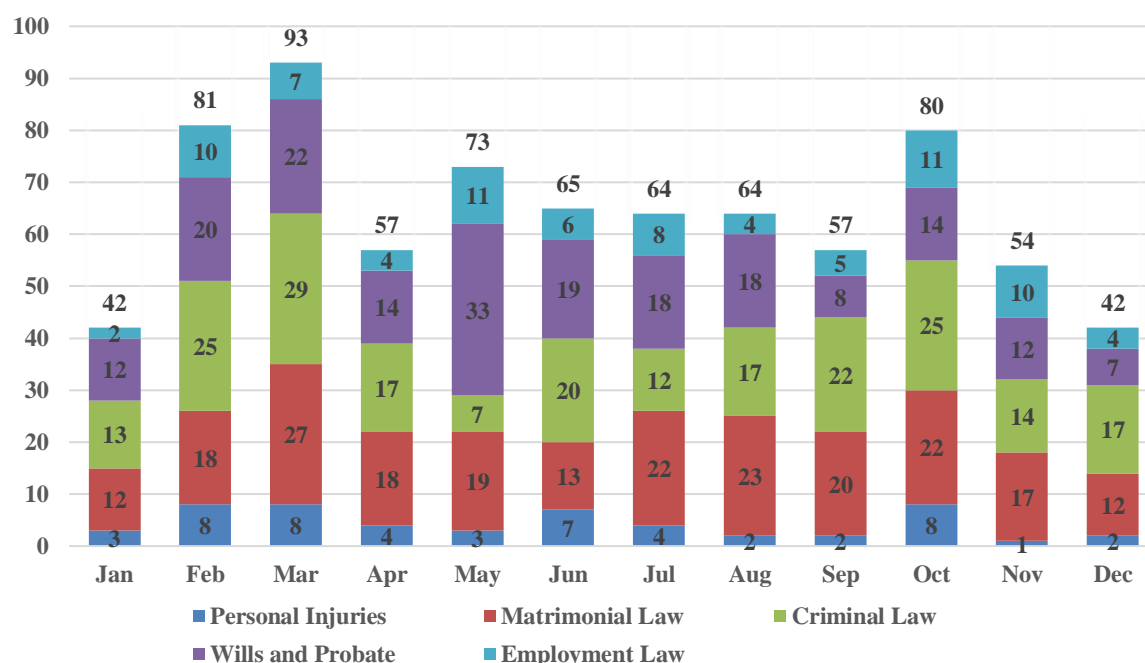
- Providing Pro Bono Legal Assistance to Charitable Institutions (10 March, webinar)
- Where to Find Pro Bono Work Opportunities (14 June, webinar)
- Update on Setting up a Charity in Hong Kong and What can go Wrong (28 November, seminar)

Throughout the year, PBC continued to oversee and coordinate the participation of Law Society members in the following pro bono schemes.

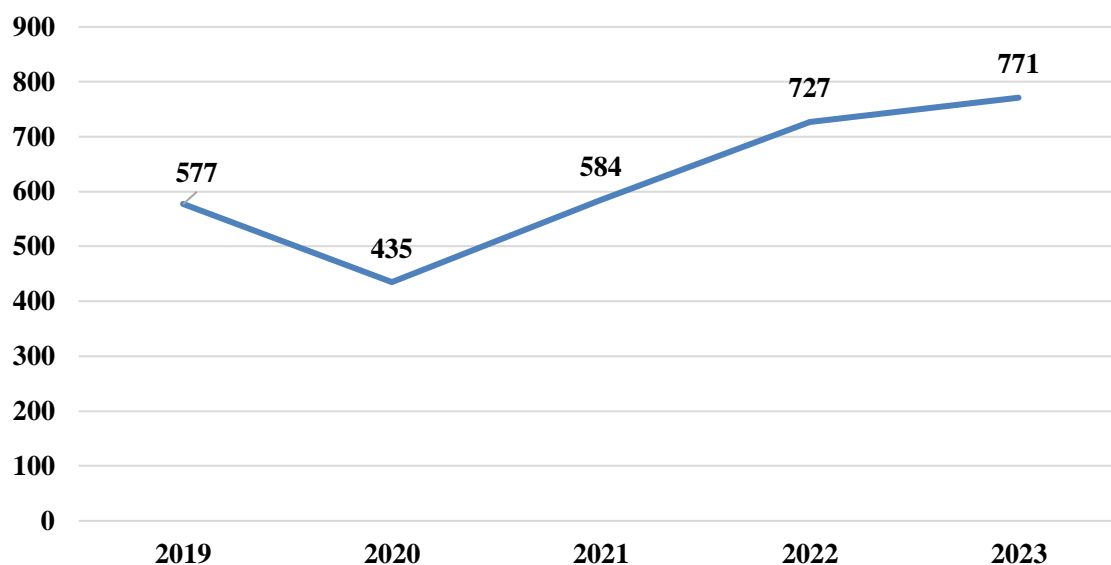
### Free Legal Helpline

The Free Legal Helpline (“Helpline”) was established in 2013 with the aim of offering pro bono legal advice to the public in need on five areas of law, namely Personal Injuries, Matrimonial Law, Criminal Law, Wills and Probate, and Employment Law. As of 31 December, there were 166 volunteers on the panel of solicitors of one or more helplines, and over 11,100 calls had been handled since its inception. The reviews by users have been overwhelmingly positive.

**Figure 1: Number of cases received in 2023**



**Figure 2: Number of cases received over the past five years (2019-2023)**



There is also the Mediation Helpline dedicated to answering enquiries in relation to mediation. A total of 164 cases have been received since December 2014.

### **Collaboration with External Organisations**

The Committee has partnered with the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (“HKCSS”) since 2015 through participation in HKCSS’ “NGOs Governance Platform Project” to promote best practice and facilitate experience sharing about governance among board members of the NGO members of HKCSS. PBC has also been participating in the “Business-School Partnership Programme” (“BSPP”) of the Education Bureau to promote better co-operation and closer alliances between the legal sector and the schools, to lead students out of the classroom to gain a wider perspective of the world, and to get them better prepared for life in the society.

While activities under the collaborations were rendered impossible owing to the pandemic over the past few years, The Law Society has resumed discussion with the two external bodies on future plans in 2024.

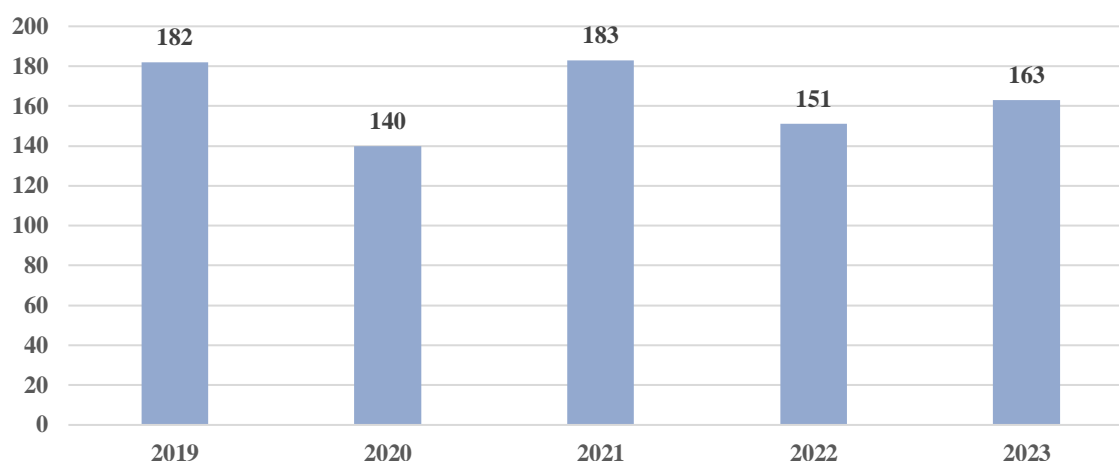
## Pro Bono Projects on Building Management Work

The Committee administers the following pro bono projects in relation to building management.

### Free Legal Advice Service on Building Management

Since early 2015, The Law Society has been working with the Home Affairs Department (“HAD”) on the Free Legal Advice Service on Building Management (“FLAS”) to offer free legal advice to the public, in particular property owners and Owners’ Corporations (“OCs”). In 2023, 163 cases were processed.

*Figure 3: Number of cases processed over the past five years (2019-2023)*



As of 31 December, there were 175 volunteer solicitors on the FLAS panel.

A Basic Course on Property Management (comprising five sessions) (“Basic Course”) and a Refresher Course on Property Management (“Refresher Course”) were held from September to October to provide potential and existing panel members a better understanding of the relevant topics on property management. 40 members completed the Basic Course while 90 panel members completed the Refresher Course.

### Free Outreach Legal Advice Service on Building Management

In collaboration with The Law Society, HAD launched the “Free Outreach Legal Advice Service on Building Management” (“FOLAS”) in September 2019 on a three-year pilot basis to enhance legal support to OCs in conducting general meetings. FOLAS has been regularised upon completion of the pilot scheme.

As of 31 December, there were 16 volunteer solicitors on the FOLAS panel. Seven cases were processed in 2023, and three cases are in progress.

## PRO BONO AND COMMUNITY WORK RECOGNITION COMMITTEE

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The Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Committee is tasked to promote and encourage active participation of individual members and law firms in pro bono and community work by showing appreciation for and recognition of their outstanding commitment to volunteering at the annual Award Ceremony.

Since its inception in 2010, the Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Programme (“the Programme”) has been highly regarded by The Law Society and has established itself as one of The Law Society’s flagship events. In 2023, the Programme continued to gain recognition among the legal profession with 451 applications.

The 2023 Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Programme successfully concluded with the Award Ceremony held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on 13 December. The Law Society was very honoured to be graced by the presence of The Honourable Chief Justice Andrew Cheung Kui-nung, GBM, The Honourable Secretary for Justice Paul Lam Ting-kwok, SBS, SC, JP and other distinguished guests.

A total of 61 law firms and 324 lawyers received awards. Apart from the Individual and Law Firm awards (Gold, Silver and Bronze), a number of Distinguished Awards and Special Awards were presented.

In 2023, a Special Award for serving “People Facing Housing Issue” was set up to encourage members to address this special concern of our society. Furthermore, the inaugural Students Award designed for law students were introduced in 2023. It is hoped that the students’ contributions to the community at an early stage will have a lasting impact, nurturing them with a lifelong commitment to serve others as they embark on the journey to become a lawyer. For this edition, 57 law students received awards.

The awardees of the Distinguished Awards and Distinguished Achievement Awards were selected by a judging panel comprising members from various sectors. Panel members for the Distinguished Pro Bono Awards included Ms. Winnie Chiu, The Ombudsman; Mr. Chris Chong, Director of Legal Aid; Ms. Ada Chung, Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data; Mr. Ivan Luk, Executive Director (Enforcement) of Equal Opportunities Commission; Ms. Gilly Wong, Chief Executive of Consumer Council; Mr. C. M. Chan, President and Chairman of Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Committee of The Law Society; Mr. Nicolas Chan, Consulting Member of Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Programme of The Law Society; Mr. Alan Schiffman, Chairman of Pro Bono Committee of The Law Society; and Mr. William Tong, Member of Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Committee of The Law Society.

Panel members for the Distinguished Community Service Awards included Mr. Chua Hoi Wai, Chief Executive of Hong Kong Council of Social Service; Ms. Helen Hsu, Executive Director of Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups; Ms. Melissa Pang, Chairperson of Agency for Volunteer Service; Mr. Stephen Yau, Chief Executive of International Social Service Hong Kong Branch; Mr. Ip Shing Hing, Past President and Member of Pro Bono

and Community Work Recognition Committee of The Law Society; Mr. Eric Cheung, Consulting Member of Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Programme; and Ms. Sharon Tam, Member of Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Committee of The Law Society.

## RECREATION AND SPORTS COMMITTEE

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The Recreation and Sports Committee (“RSC”) aims at providing a whole range of recreational activities and sports which assists and encourages members to lead a balanced life within demanding work routines and to foster friendship with fellow members and other professionals. RSC convened six meetings in 2023.

There are 14 sports teams and nine recreational groups under the Recreation and Sports Programme (“Programme”), an annual programme under RSC. They are:

**Sports teams:** Badminton, Basketball, Cycling, Dragon Boat, Hiking, Football, Golf, Running, Snooker, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, Tenpin Bowling, and Volleyball

**Recreational groups:** Bridge, Chinese Calligraphy, Cookery, Food and Wine Appreciation, Dancing, Live Band, Martial Arts, Photography, Singing, and Yoga

To encourage members to stay active during the difficult times of the pandemic, 50% discount on the Programme enrolment fee has been offered to members since 2020. For those who joined the 2022 Programme, their 2023 memberships had been automatically renewed at no cost.

As the society gradually returns to normalcy, all RSC activities including year-round trainings, practices and classes organised by the RSC sports teams and recreational groups have fully resumed. The highly anticipated Members and Family Fun Day (“Fun Day”), Swimming Gala and Recreation and Sports Night also returned in physical format after a hiatus during the pandemic.

Out of concern for the safety of members’ children, the Fun Day has been held online over the past three years. In April, the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the Fun Day finally returned to the sports ground with around 400 members and their children taking part in over 90 track and field events and game booths. Participants were also invited to dress up as heroes to echo with this year’s theme of “Step Up and Be a Hero” and compete for the Best Dressed Competition Awards.

The long-awaited Swimming Gala took place on 20 August. More than 50 children of our members and their family members returned to the pool and participated in 50 exciting races, including individual competitions and family relays.

The Law Society’s annual flagship event, the 14<sup>th</sup> Recreation and Sports Night returned on 10 November. The event carried the theme of “The Silk Road” and was participated by over 600 guests. Committed to giving back to the community, The Law Society took the opportunity of the networking event to radiate positive energies to members and the wider

community by joining hands with The Law Society’s charity partners, Agency for Volunteer Service and Special Olympics Hong Kong, to make use of this well-attended event to raise awareness and foster community engagement by creating a positive impact on the lives of those in need, and to promote respect for all athletes participating in local and international competitions. The fun-filled night with its many enjoyable activities created meaningful and joyful experiences for all attendees. Celebrating cultural exchange, community involvement and support for athletes, the Recreation and Sports Night left a lasting impression and inspired future inclusive events.

The Law Society is a member of the Recreation and Sports Club for Hong Kong Professional Bodies (“RSCP”), a platform enabling and encouraging members to foster collaboration with members of six other major professional bodies in Hong Kong, namely Hong Kong Bar Association, Hong Kong Dental Association, Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Hong Kong Institute of Architects, Hong Kong Medical Association and Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, on various sports grounds and occasions. The Law Society had the privilege of hosting the 16<sup>th</sup> Joint Professional Golf Tournament and RSCP Volleyball Tournament in 2023. In addition to hosting these two RSCP events, many of The Law Society’s sports teams demonstrated exceptional talent and achieved remarkable results in the various RSCP competitions held throughout the year. Their outstanding performances not only reflect their commitment and passion but also contribute to the overall success and positive image of The Law Society.

## **WORKING PARTY FOR ADMISSION CEREMONY FOR NEWLY ADMITTED SOLICITORS**

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The Working Party for Admission Ceremony for Newly Admitted Solicitors was established under the Standing Committee on Member Services to organise the Admission Ceremony for newly admitted solicitors to celebrate this milestone with fellow solicitors, mentors and family members. The Admission Ceremony aims to reinforce the values of a solicitor as an advocate for the rule of law, to allow newly admitted solicitors to mingle, and to introduce them to The Law Society.

The Ceremony for Solicitors Admitted from 2020 to 2023 was held at the High Court Building 15 September, bringing together recently admitted solicitors, including those who might not have the chance to have their admissions moved in the customary manner owing to the pandemic, to celebrate their achievements with their mentors, family and friends. The ceremony, which was joined in-person by distinguished officiating guests including the Chief Justice, Secretary for Justice and Deputy Secretary for Justice, was followed by a cocktail reception at which young solicitors reunited with their classmates and met new friends in a relaxed atmosphere and also met Past Presidents of The Law Society and senior members for experience sharing.



## WORKING PARTY FOR IN-HOUSE LAWYERS

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The Working Party for In-House Lawyers is tasked to study the long term strategies to enhance connections between in-house solicitors and private practitioners. The Working Party, which comprises members from both the in-house sector and private practice, had its first meeting in January 2021.

The Working Party conducted a survey in November 2021 to gather information and ideas on demographics of in-house lawyers in Hong Kong, their experiences and feedback on The Law Society’s activities, their interest to interact with members in private practice and vice versa, and ways to enhance their communication with The Law Society. Based on the results of the survey, the Working Party had identified some of the needs of the in-house community. The Working Party is working on a report focusing on long-term strategies to strengthen the services of The Law Society to in-house lawyers/potential in-house lawyers.

## WORKING PARTY ON HISTORICAL ARCHIVE

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The Working Party on Historical Archive (“WPHA”) is tasked to recommend a policy for the establishment of an archive for The Law Society so that materials and information of historical value can be preserved and made accessible systematically. It will also make further recommendations on the compliance and implementation of the archival policy whenever necessary. WPHA convened two meetings in 2023.

### *Changing Times, Steadfast Purpose: The Law Society At 115*

In celebration of the 115<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Law Society, the Working Party started its 115<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book (“115A Book”) Project in early 2022 with an aim to produce an anniversary book covering the history of The Law Society from 1907 to 2022. After over a year of tremendous efforts and hard work, the 115A Book entitled *Changing Times, Steadfast Purpose: The Law Society At 115* was published as an e-book via The Law Society website after a soft launch event on 26 July, gathering many Past Presidents, Law Society officials, WPHA members and those who have made significant contributions to the 115A Book.

The 115A Book consists of The Law Society’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary book entitled *The Law Society of Hong Kong 1907-2007: Celebrating a Centenary* as well as new chapters chronicling the accomplishments and historical moments of The Law Society and the legal profession from 2007 to 2022.

Considering that the 115A Book serves as a valuable historical record of the legal profession in Hong Kong and the achievements and contributions of our members throughout the past 115 years, The Law Society has also arranged for the publication to be printed to provide future generations of solicitors with a tangible resource to learn about the past. The printed 115A Book has been made available for members to purchase since 10 November.

The Working Party was also tasked to produce a Chinese version of the 115A Book. Translation is currently under progress and the Chinese version is expected to be launched in 2024.

### **Tribute to our Senior Members: Oral History Project**

The Oral History Project (“Project”) was launched in late 2020, where very senior and significant members of the legal community, including members who have been admitted to The Law Society’s Roll of Honour, Past Presidents and those who are among the most senior members of The Law Society (in terms of their respective admission dates) were interviewed to provide unique insights into their memories, lives and professional careers. In 2023, Past President Mr. Michael Lintern-Smith (2004-2005), who was admitted to The Law Society’s Roll of Honour in 2020, and Past President Mr. Stephen Hung (2014-2016), both notable figures in the legal profession, were interviewed under the Project. The video recordings of their interviews as well as those of others are made available on a webpage dedicated to the Project entitled “Tribute to our Senior Members: Oral History Project”.

## **WORKING PARTY ON RETENTION OF TALENT**

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The Working Party on Retention of Talent aims at gauging views on and formulating ideas to attract talent to join the profession and retain talent in the profession.

The Working Party convened one meeting in 2023 to continue studying the factors affecting the profession in retaining talent with reference to existing statutory rules and common practice, and considering ways to encourage talent to join and stay in the legal profession/industry.

## **WORKING PARTY ON THE LAW SOCIETY APP**

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The Working Party on The Law Society App was formed in 2021 with the aim of overseeing the performance of the App and ensuring that its contents are up-to-date. The Working Party is also involved in making recommendations on the App feature updates and enhancements, or alternatively whether a revamping exercise is required. Reviews of existing functions and forthcoming developments were being conducted for the App. The Working Party will continue to listen to members’ suggestions and improve the functionality of the App so as to enhance its user-friendliness for members.

## **YOUNG SOLICITORS’ GROUP (“YSG”)**

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YSG was established to serve the needs and interests of members with less than five years’ post-qualification experience and trainee solicitors. Its mission is to facilitate and assist the career and personal development of the younger generation of the legal profession by offering diversified services and activities that are of interest to, and beneficial to, young members and trainee solicitors. YSG also serves as a platform for interaction between trainee

solicitors, junior and senior members of the profession, and law students. YSG convened six meetings in 2023.

To encourage and engage young practitioners and trainee solicitors to develop solutions to address realistic legal issues or current hot topics in law, YSG organised The YSG Think Tank 2023, a competition first launched in 2022, where participants worked in teams to showcase solutions relevant to a selected theme through presenting their proposals to a judging panel for a chance to win a prize. The 2023 competition, with the theme of “How should the AI Technology be Regulated within the Legal Profession”, attracted the participation of six teams comprising young members, trainee solicitors and, for the first time, law students, who designed their problem statements and presented their solutions to the judging panel on the Pitching Day on 24 June. The Champion went to Team “David 2.0” for conducting a comprehensive research on relevant legal provisions and rules and proposing the adoption of a holistic approach to regulate AI from “on boarding AI service provider”, “onboarding clients” to “onboarding legal practitioners”.

The CONNECTED Mentorship and Buddy Scheme, a flagship programme of YSG, provides an opportunity for trainee solicitors (mentees) to meet senior members (mentors) and junior members (mentees) and establish lifelong friendship. Following the lifting of all social distancing measures at the beginning of the year, the 2023 programme attracted over 280 participants, more than double of the figure in 2022 when there were restrictions in organising physical activities. The kickoff event for CONNECTED 2023 was held on 14 April, at which 150 participants met their CONNECTED group members in person and took part in a group game where they were invited to write down anything they know about The Law Society’s office bearers for a chance to win a prize. The second event was held on 23 September, where professional coaches from the Flying Disc Federation of Hong Kong, China, provided participants with basic training of frisbee skills and techniques, and organised mini group games and scrimmages at the Ultimate Frisbee Experience Day.

YSG brought back its Welcome Reception for Trainee Solicitors after four years on 15 November to welcome first-year and second-year trainee solicitors at The Law Society’s Function Room. Over 100 trainee solicitors took the opportunity to meet members of the Council, Standing Committee on Member Services and YSG, who shared their experiences and practical career advice with the next generation. Participants were also introduced to YSG’s initiatives and a wide range of other Law Society activities including recreational and sporting events and member benefit programmes.

The Meet & Greet - Trainees & New Members Friday Lunch also returned in February 2023. Newly qualified solicitors and trainee solicitors were invited to meet members of the Council, Standing Committee on Member Services and YSG Members at casual lunch gatherings on Fridays. A total of six lunches were organised in 2023.

To better embrace our future lawyers, YSG arranged the following for law students during the year:

- Introduced the Mentorship Programme for Law Students to provide law students with the opportunity to establish long-term friendship with practitioners of various levels of seniority before they embark on their legal careers. Over 60 mentors (qualified or trainee

solicitors) and 100 mentees (Law Society Student Members) participated in the inaugural programme and were divided into small groups, each consisting of one to two mentors and three to four mentees. Participants were encouraged to interact with their groupmates through self-arranged meetups or activities, which would be conducive to the personal growth and career planning of law students.

- Organised three career talks for students of the three local law schools:

<b>University</b>	<b>Date</b>
The University of Hong Kong	25 September
City University of Hong Kong	28 September
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	13 November

- Participated in the 2023 Hong Kong Law Fair at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on 9 September together with over 50 law firms and legal institutions to promote the Law Society Student Membership among law students and those who were interested in pursuing legal studies or a legal career. Members of the Recreation and Sports Committee also attended the Law Fair to encourage law students to enrol in the Recreation and Sports Programme to enjoy the benefit of work-life balance and expand their social circle.
- Invited students of major law schools on the Mainland with an interest in developing a legal career in Hong Kong to sign up for the Law Society Student Membership to help them familiarise themselves with the Hong Kong legal profession and acquire useful information that could help them adapt to a new environment, thereby attracting fresh talent to the profession.

To foster closer relationship with other young professionals, YSG jointly organised and participated in the following events with the young groups of other professional bodies, including Hong Kong Bar Association, Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Hong Kong Institute of Planners, Hong Kong Chartered Governance Institute, Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors and Hong Kong Institution of Engineers:

- Joint Professional Networking Drinks (20 April)
- Joint Professional Wargame (28 October)
- Joint Professional Christmas Party (13 December)

To offer young lawyers the opportunity to contribute to Law Society committees, YSG introduced the Sit-In Programme for Members of the YSG (the “Sit-In Programme”) under which YSG members were assigned to various committees as Observers to take part in their meetings and to learn more about their work and operation, with an ultimate aim to help them transition to other Law Society committees. The Sit-In Programme was launched in two phases, and upon completion of Phase II in early 2023, YSG was invited to review the Sit-In Programme to explore how to better achieve its objectives.