

## **Report of the Chairman of the Worcestershire Medico-Legal Society for 2016-7**

I think that I can report on a successful year in 2016-7. Our objective is to cover not just medicine as such, although this is obviously a main feature of our programme, but to look at health care in the light of social care and education too. This reflects the current emphasis on, so far as possible, looking at these three services as an integrated whole.

The talks were generally reasonably well attended with an average of about 15-20. They covered a wide spectrum and were:

**Medico-Legal Aspects of Contraception and Abortion-** Dr. Sam Rowlands

**Hate Crime** - Kathy McAteer, Chair, Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and Kai Prakash, Lead for Hate Crime, West Mercia Police

**The Care of Military Veterans: how different are they from other patients?** Dr. Jonathan Leach

**Forensic Odontology: The Coroner, the Victims and the Courts.** Dr. Rupert Parsons.

**Mental Health and Crime** –Ms Amanda Blakeman – Deputy Chief Constable West Mercia Police.

We have continued to build up links with the University of Worcester and I have held very productive meetings with them. I also spoke to the first-year students on their LLB about the Society and one of them, Laura Taylor, has joined our committee. It is gratifying that students from both the Law School at HOW College and the School of Law at the University are regular attenders at our meetings and we have asked the students to let us know of the topics which they would find useful.

On the subject of membership, I must stress once again that our individual membership is in fact slowly declining – this is a worrying trend and so I do urge any of you here tonight who are not members to consider doing so. The consequence of this decline is that the society is in fact being financially sustained by fewer and fewer people. This cannot go on.

One thing which would help is if we were a registered charity as we could then claim gift aid on some of the subscriptions of members. During the year I submitted a revised clause to the HMRC Charities Branch setting out our objects and they seemed happy with this.

(Note: This was then put to the AGM in November 2017 and was approved by the members and this will then form the basis of an application to HMRC for charitable status).

May I thank all of our committee members for their constant support and for being such a fertile source of ideas for speakers. The committee members are: Dr. Tony Cole, Dr. Kelvin Laidlaw, Dr. Jonathan Leach, Dr. Helen Taylor, Susan Jarvis, Gill Porter, James Somerville Erica Wassell Laura Taylor and Sherri Ogston-Tuck. James Somerville is standing down from the committee and I would like to thank him most warmly for all that he has done for our society and especially for the way in which he has acted as a link with the legal profession locally.

The President of Yorkshire County Cricket Club used, by tradition, to go on for ever. I shall not do that but I would like to continue to see the project with the University of Worcester carried through to fruition. Lesley Smallman is happy too to stand again as your Secretary and Treasurer but we shall be looking at some date to hand over!

May I end by thanking you all for your support, our excellent speakers for without exception being so interesting and, on the personal level, so friendly and above all Lesley who is a real gem as a secretary/treasurer and does all the hard work!!

John Duddington

October 2017.