



## Land Registry User Group

### Minutes of Meeting

**Date :** Wednesday 27 July 2021  
**Time :** 11.00 am  
**Venue :** MS Teams only

**Present:** Nicholas Arculus, Land Registrar, (Chairman)  
Stephen Castle, Corlett Bolton (SC)      Graham Kirkpatrick, Dandara Group (GK)  
Carol Young, M&P (CY)  
James Kennaugh, Mann Benham (JK)      Alex Poole-Wilson, Cains, (APW)  
Alex Mitchell, LVW Law Limited (AM)      Martin French, Land Registry (MF)  
Martin Paterson, (MP)      Stephen Castle, Corlett Bolton (SC)  
Nigel Lewney, Land Registry (NL)      Holly McGarrigle (Cains) (HM)  
Edward Clague, Central Registry      Cameron Pringle (Pringle Law) (CP)  
Ruth Ledger (RL)      Ruth Ledger (Pringle Law) (RL)  
Zita O’Kelly      Lexi Dernie (LD)  
Michael Miles (Corlett Bolton) (MM)      Jeff Jepson

### Apologies:

Paul Shimmin, AGC  
Jeanette Caster, Mann Benham  
Juan Moore, IOMLS (JM)

### 1. Welcome, introduction and apologies.

The Chairman welcomed users to the first meeting of LRUG for 2021. Receipt of apologies was noted from those unable to attend.

### 2. The minutes of the meeting of 14 December 2020 were approved.

The Chairman confirmed that the “Green Island polygon issue” was resolved in the sense that a solution had been agreed to the symbology and language to be used. A project to revise all titles on which the old symbology features would be added to the Land Registry work schedule. The Chairman was not able to commit to a delivery timescale for this.

### 3. Matters arising from or carried forward from the meeting of 14 December 2021.

- 1) Manx Utility burdens. [On hold]
- 2) Statement of practice relating to priority searches [On hold]
- 3) Guidance on streamlining and improving App F & G submissions on the new system. [On hold]
- 4) Review of leasehold Office copies [On hold]

#### **4. Land Registry Update:**

##### **(a) Workflow statistics and (b) Workload**

NL provided an overview of the busy period the Land Registry was experiencing. There was a discussion about the progress of the plan to externalise the Land Registry reporting figures so that users and the public could see our workload. Via Teams one aspect of our existing reporting tool was showcased to the meeting. Its shortcomings were discussed. Members expressed a continuing interest in having Land Registry reported on in this forum. In the first 6 months of the year we had registered 1953 applications and had received 1883 applications.

##### **(c) User feedback**

No performance issues were raised. Generally members felt that the Registry team were keeping onto of the application roll although there were occasions where some applications were taking surprisingly long. The Chairman advised that some of the applications which had been accepted electronically during the lockdowns had recently been identified as having been assigned to the wrong workflows and had accordingly not been actively processed for over a month. This had been identified in file audits and was now no longer a life issue. The delays had not affected the legal priority given to these applications.

##### **(d) Property market update from Members**

The Land Registry were experiencing high volume. Members suggested this would continue.

Members advised the Land Registry that the property market was still very active and that all property classes were fast moving in terms of volumes. The sector is experiencing a sellers' market with values slightly raised and all property classes in demand. Members advised the Land Registry to anticipate a continuing high demand for Registration services.

#### **5. Notice of Tynwald decision in response to the Report of the Constitutional and Legal Affairs and Justice Standing Committee on Adverse Possession.**

The Chairman provided details of the (at the time) unofficial Tynwald report of the proceedings around this paper. This will be a major work stream for the Land Registry in the coming years. All proposals will be consulted on in due course.

#### **6. Notice of consultation on the Exempt Information regime.**

The Chairman advised members that the secondary legislation required to introduce an exempt information regime was currently being worked on jointly between chambers and the Land Registry and would be consulted on in due course.

#### **7. Practice Directive on Notice to the Registrar of Appeals to the Staff of Government under section 7 of the Act.**

The Chairman informed Members that the Staff of Government (Appeal Division) had directed the Land Registry to issue a practice directive requiring notice of

appeal to be served to the Land Registry. The draft had been circulated to members. The Chairman expressed gratitude to GK and others for his input in its preparation.

#### **8. Online Priority searches trial.**

The Chairman demonstrated the online Priority Search application system. It is quick and easy to use and has been trialled by a number of law firms. Volunteers were sought for other firms who wished to take part in the trial. The Chairman aspires to take this live, albeit as a life beta, in the near future. The Chairman sought to reiterate that there is no longer any question of the Land Registry not being to provide timely responses to priority search applications and these really should be conducted in almost all transaction situations. The current rate is under 10%.

#### **9. The draft office copy process. Further discussions.**

The Chairman acknowledged that the increasing transparency brought to the registration process had identified a couple of shortcomings in Land Registry internal working. These had now been addressed. The Chairman reiterated that the draft process is intended to ensure we have captured all the instructions of the applicants. It is not a vehicle for outsourcing quality assurance back to the submitting advocate. Indeed, this was undesirable. On the other hand, it is not the case that applicants can expect applications to be further altered when having received a draft output they realise they have omitted to submit a form or apply for something they had intended to but had not.

#### **10. Public counter opening times and service levels.**

A discussion took place about our continuing service levels at the public counter. The Chairman outlined how all our services and those of the Deeds Registry were now accessible remotely in a way that they were entirely inaccessible 2 years ago. The public counter has effectively become a public as opposed to professional area now. This has led to a large change in our working practices. Members were asked to consider whether a reduction in public counter opening times would cause operational problems to them. By the Chairman's assessment there was no vocal opposition to a reduction in hours of opening of the Public counters. The Chairman stated that at present this had not been explored in detail at any level and that it would be brought back to LRUG if it was being considered in future. Generally, Members were supportive of the great strides towards digital working the Land Registry had undertaken. The Chairman recognised that such changes are often as demanding on the user of services as on their provider but hoped in this case this was not true.

#### **11. Future items and other business.**

The Chairman requested future items for the agenda to be submitted in the normal fashion to NL or himself.

#### **12. Date and time of next meeting.**

The next meeting was scheduled for 15 September 2021 at which meeting the Chairman hoped to be able to introduce his successor in role.