

**MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH SENTENCING COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE  
Thursday 5 August 2021  
By videoconference**

**Minutes**

**Members present:** Summary Sheriff Paul Brown  
Hannah Graham  
Krista Johnston  
Lesley Weber

**Secretariat:** Ondine Tennant (Secretary)  
Stuart Ritchie (Communications Officer)  
Richard Smith (Business Manager)

**1) PROCEEDINGS**

1. The Chair opened the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Sheriff Andrew McIntyre.

**Item 1.1: Draft minutes of last meeting**

2. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 May 2021 were approved.

**Item 1.2: Progress of actions**

3. An update on actions from previous meeting was provided to members.

**Item 1.3: Private papers**

4. The committee agreed not to publish the following papers: 2.1; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4.

## **2) GUIDELINES**

### **Item 2.1: Communications update - Guidelines**

5. The committee noted paper 2.1 which provided an update on communications around the guidelines currently in development, in particular communications on the finalisation and launch of the process and sentencing young people guidelines. Members were updated on some further potential areas of activity not yet included in the plan.
  
6. The committee also discussed the work of the Sentencing Council for England and Wales and areas of potential overlap. It was agreed that the committee should explore engagement opportunities with that Council going forward.
  
7. The committee noted Sheriff Fleming had provided an interview to the Evening Express on 4 August.

***AP1: Secretariat to share Sheriff Fleming's interview with committee when provided copy***

***AP2: Secretariat to contact the Sentencing Council for England and Wales on behalf of the communications committee in order to explore engagement opportunities going forward***

## **3) COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA**

### **Item 3.1: Further information about sentencing on the website**

8. The committee was provided with an update on the proposal of information about sentencing statements and appeal determinations on the Council's website.
  
9. The committee agreed that the first instance court should be included as a column heading.

10. The committee agreed that the offence should be described with the citation and in lay terms. The secretariat advised that they would create a list of high level categories for this column.
11. The committee agreed the process would be that after an opinion is added to the list a link to it would be provided by tweet to the public.
12. The secretariat advised that historical decisions and appeals of particular interest would be added as an ongoing project.

**Item 3.2: Social Media policy**

13. The committee agreed to the establishment of a Social Media policy and asked the Secretariat to develop a draft policy to be circulated to the committee. There was some discussion of the current Twitter policy at Paper 3.2A

***AP3: Secretariat to draft new social media policy and circulate to committee for consideration.***

**Item 3.3: 2021 Communications Plan**

14. Members of the committee noted the 2021 communications plan.

**Item 3.4: Communications Report**

15. The committee noted that in the year to end of July there had been around 6,000 visitors to the public website each month.
16. The number of followers on twitter is now over 2,000.
17. The Sentencing process guideline hearing has been added to the videos on our YouTube channel.

#### **4) COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA**

##### **Item 4.1: Engagement**

18. The committee noted that:

- the Secretariat is continuing to engage with groups around the Business Plan and the Sentencing young people guideline.
- the Secretariat attended the CYCJ Diversion from prosecution forum in July.
- Sheriff Fleming has been invited to speak to the Glasgow immigration judges about sentencing.

19. There was some discussion of the proposed research showcase event and whether that model might be expanded to include guest speakers in future. It was agreed to consider the matter further at a later date.

#### **5) AOCB AND NEXT MEETING**

##### **Item 5.1: AOCB**

20. Ondine noted that this was Stuart's last meeting as Communications Manager. The committee thanked Stuart Ritchie for his work over the past few years and wished him luck in his future endeavours. Stuart advised he would be present at the August workshop and would be assisting the Secretariat and Council until his replacement begins.

##### **Item 5.2: Date of next meeting**

21. The date of next meeting of the Communications Committee will be discussed by correspondence.