



The Dorset Law Society  
Est. 1835

## Matthew Billingsley



As a local solicitor, I truly believe that thriving local law societies are the bedrock of the legal profession throughout the country, allowing solicitors and other legal professionals to work with the national Law Society and improve links with colleagues across the whole profession.

The Dorset Law Society has been a part of the local law profession since 1835, making it one of the oldest local law societies in the country. Due to its venerable age it even predates the national Law Society in London! We also have the privilege of being able to utilise the old county coat of arms, which is a positive way to acknowledge the Society's link to the county and local community. As we cover central, west and north Dorset, we naturally have strong links to Dorchester the county capital, whose legal history ranges from 1685 to date. Our archives also date back to the mid-nineteenth century, which are on permanent loan to the national Law Society library.

Over the years that the Society has existed, our ethos has developed into representing the interests of the profession in the county and promoting professional standards amongst members and the legal profession generally. Speaking personally, I became involved with the Society in order to promote the impact of the profession on the wider public. Although many of us work for different firms, I hope that many of you would agree that the pace of change in the profession is likely to accelerate. Being part of the Society affords the chance to become part of an institution that promotes the legal profession as a whole rather than individually.

The Society has a proud history of supporting members through events which the Society run, ranging from arranging professional development events to social events which legal professionals from any level of a firm can enjoy. These have ranged from chocolate tasting to wine tasting, and for those of a more cerebral bent we hope to provide the opportunity to attend talks on topics facing COLP/COFAS and cybercrime. In particular, the annual dinner of the Society dates back a number of years and was very well attended at our most recent last May. We are looking forward to growing this event in the years to come!

As the Society has traditionally been based in Dorchester, my opinion is that there is a perception that things move at a 'slower pace' in the countryside. I believe that we as a Society, and those members who join us, offer something that larger societies do not; a real local perspective. Often we deal with clients who have used the same firms for generations, which offers us a unique insight into local matters in sometimes very rural parts of the county. This is an opportunity to develop close relationships with clients that allow us to really understand the issues facing them in order to act on their behalf in the most beneficial way.

If anyone wishes to join or has any questions about the Society please let us know at [enquiries@dorsetlawsociety.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@dorsetlawsociety.co.uk) and I look forward to seeing you at future events. ■

**Matthew Billingsley**

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