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FOIL elects first barrister as president

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Stephen Hines, Consultant at Taylor Rose TTKW, has been elected as the new President of the Forum of Insurance Lawyers (FOIL) in the body's 25th anniversary year, the first barrister to take the reins.

Stephen steps up from Vice President to succeed DWF's Nigel Teasdale who has steered FOIL through the post-Brexit vote landscape over the last year. Stephen qualified as a solicitor in 2009, though later moved to the Bar – being called in 2014 and subsequently establishing CityGate Chambers in 2017.

As in the majority of the years across the quarter-century FOIL has operated, Stephen's Presidential term is set to be dominated by costs. Lord Justice Jackson's fixed costs reform is to be introduced across the Fast Track and the lower reaches of the Multi-Track, and a Ministry of Justice consultation to streamline the costs process is expected.

But costs won't be the only focus over the coming year; the industry is coming to terms with a new wave of technologies, including blockchain, cyber-risk and artificial intelligence – with FOIL involved in the big picture issues, as well as the finer details of how the technology will actually work in practice. The legal and insurance landscapes are set to evolve significantly over coming years; the approach being taken now laying the foundations.

Commenting on his appointment, Stephen said:

"I intend to build on the excellent work Nigel has performed over the last year, and am very keen to get started on tackling the challenges, and making the most of the opportunities that my presidential year will bring. Although there is a great deal of legislative change and reform of claims, the key challenge the industry faces is to ensure that, wherever possible, the approaches taken to all the promising developments are joined up. As a barrister with an active practice, I hope to bring a fresh perspective to these issues and to leading FOIL in the year ahead.

“Looking forward, I will help FOIL to continue developing its influence in the London market against the backdrop of post-Brexit uncertainty, whilst the organisation makes bold expansion moves into the Channel Islands and Eire.”

Commenting on Stephen’s appointment, FOIL Chief Executive Laurence Besemer said:

“I’m delighted with Stephen’s appointment as the new FOIL President in a time when truly radical change is ahead for the legal, insurance and business communities. We will continue to work with our members and their clients to prepare for the opportunities that come with change, as FOIL expands into new territories and new markets with strong leadership”.