

# IPIM meeting 16 May 2024: Minutes

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*Venue:* Mewburn Ellis, City Tower, 40 Basinghall St, London EC2V 5DE

*Timing:* 1 pm – 4.30 pm

**Present:** James St Ville (meeting chair), Clair Curran (IPIM Secretary), Gordon Harris (IPIM Treasurer), Andrea Brewster (IP Inclusive Lead Executive Officer), Ese Akpogheneta, Robert Andrews, Julie Dunnett, Lesley Evans

**Apologies:** Alicia Chantrey, Michael Silverleaf (IPIM Chair)

## 1 HR update (standing agenda item)

All is going well; Andrea very much values the support provided by Anne Burgato and Helen Smith.

Their salary reviews are due in June, to take effect with the new budgeting year on 1 August 2024.

Clifford Chance “LIFT” intern Jessica Anderson will be with us for four weeks from 3 June 2024. Sara Belazregue from Imperial College London continues to help us, on a voluntary basis, with *Summer of IP* projects.

**Action:** Andrea to prepare salary review recommendations for IPIM’s approval.

## 2 Financial update (standing agenda item)

There was a brief discussion of the profit & loss report for the last six months (showing comparisons with the two preceding half years). Cash flow remains healthy and spending is in line with the current budget. We continue to ring-fence a £13,000 contingency fund within our cash assets.

A couple of large donations are expected this month or next, but fundraising efforts need to continue through the last few months of this budgeting year: see agenda item 6.

## 3 Review of progress on 2023-25 business plan objectives

Progress has been made in all areas.

Allyship continues to be key to all our activities and has been the subject of, or at least referenced in, numerous events. Helen is working on a set of allyship guidelines with input from the six communities. Andrea will continue to prioritise this.

Andrea is also keen to prioritise work on EDI data gathering over the next half-year, in particular the creation of a “toolkit” containing both a template survey and associated guidance. This is an important but often tricky area for our supporters. We will continue to work with other organisations within the IP and wider legal sectors, including CIPA, CITMA, The IP Federation, IPReg, the IPO and potentially also InterLaw Diversity Forum, who have recently been in contact regarding their work in this area. CIPA and IPReg are running their own surveys this year, which will provide valuable benchmarking data for the sector and have been aligned with the intended IP Inclusive template.

In the context of data gathering, we will also seek qualitative information about our Charter signatories’ EDI activities and successes, as well as about IP Inclusive’s contribution to those. In line with the business plan, Andrea hopes to conduct a survey of signatories in late 2024/early 2025, building on the one run in early 2022. This will be used to generate a fresh impact report and in turn to support fundraising efforts (see agenda item 6). It could also be the basis of a (light-touch) annual process for signatories to reconfirm their Charter commitments, account for and share their EDI activities, contribute to IP Inclusive’s plans, and update their contact details – as envisaged in the business plan.

On hybrid working, Andrea will continue to liaise with the communities and networks regarding specific aspects of the topic to address in our events and resources. It is often mentioned in events that tackle wider, or related, themes, and a webinar planned for World Mental Health Day in October will explore the impact of new (including hybrid) working models on wellbeing. Andrea and Ese will also look into running an event on the impact of hybrid working for trainees and other early-career IP professionals; this would fit well with business plan objective 2.4 to increase support for that group and could be a joint project with IP Futures and with trainees at CITMA, CIPA, IPSoc and the IP Bar. Further early-career support will come from the intended “EDI starter pack”, which Helen is creating.

In terms of the remaining high-level business plan objectives:

- A good number of our events during the last nine months have been either in-person or hybrid, with associated networking opportunities; several events have either taken place in, or are planned for, the regions.
- Preparations for this year’s *Summer of IP* campaign, organised through the Careers in Ideas task force, are progressing well; we expect it to be even more successful than last year’s and to have a significant impact on awareness of, and access to, the IP professions among currently under-represented groups.

The skills and experience to which IPIM has access through its members will be kept under regular review, in light of the business plan priorities, to inform its succession planning.

**Actions: Ese and Andrea to liaise over a potential event on the impact of hybrid working for early-career IP professionals.**

#### 4 Government report on D&I in the workplace

The 20 March 2024 government publication “Report on the Inclusion at Work Panel’s recommendations for improving diversity and inclusion (D&I) practice in the workplace”<sup>1</sup> was discussed. It was felt that IP Inclusive should not comment publicly on the document, in particular in the current political climate, IPIM’s constitution<sup>2</sup> requiring it not to engage in political activities. Nevertheless, it was recognised that the report contained some sensible conclusions that aligned well with IP Inclusive’s work, in particular regarding the benefits of “meaningfully diverse” workplaces (Guiding Principles 1 and 2) and the value of recognising and sharing effective practices (Guiding Principle 5). The meeting agreed with the report’s underlying premise that EDI activities should be cost-effective and shaped by sound evidence of their impact. IP Inclusive should therefore be ready to discuss and where appropriate endorse these principles in its interactions with stakeholders.

Greater prominence could be given, in delivering on our business plan objectives, to the continuing relevance and commercial importance of EDI. A plan emerged to incorporate our 2025 annual meeting into a larger flagship event addressing these issues, with high profile speakers and attendees (in particular senior players) from across the IP professions.

**Action: Andrea to ask Allen & Overy about hosting such an event in their London office, following the success of this year’s annual meeting there.**

#### 5 Lead Executive Officer (LEO) role

Andrea flagged that although the LEO is currently contracted to work 20 hours a week for IPIM, she frequently works closer to 30 hours a week. There was some discussion about how this might be managed in future, potential solutions including to increase the amount of support we employ and/or to extend the LEO’s contracted hours (for both of which there would be budgetary implications: see agenda item 6).

The issue will be kept under review, it being important for succession planning that the LEO role be quantifiable, manageable and properly supported. Andrea felt there was no need for immediate action but that the issue could become important during the next budgeting year.

She did however express concern that she is not always able to respond as quickly or enthusiastically as she would like to enquiries about potential new projects or collaborations. This could result in IP Inclusive missing valuable development opportunities and/or erode its value as a collaborative venture to which all IP professionals can contribute. IPIM members offered their assistance in fronting such new enquiries.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusion-at-work-panel-report-on-improving-workplace-diversity-and-inclusion/report-on-the-inclusion-at-work-panels-recommendations-for-improving-diversity-and-inclusion-di-practice-in-the-workplace>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://ipinclusive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/210607-new-ipim-constitution.pdf>

**Actions:** In future Andrea will, as appropriate, direct new enquiries to IPIM members to explore and if necessary progress, particularly when she lacks the time or resources to pursue them quickly herself.

## 6 Fundraising

The meeting papers detailed IP Inclusive's fundraising activities over the current budgeting period (from August 2023) and how they had impacted on donations, as well as a list of Charter signatories that had donated in this and the previous two budgeting periods. A large number have not donated this year; many have never done so. In some cases this may be because they represent a smaller IP team within a larger corporation with already-committed budgets, or in some because charitable trust funds limit their ability to donate to organisations other than registered charities.

To date we have raised just over £58,500 of this year's £88,000 target; this is not an immediate problem (see agenda item 2) but is clearly not sustainable longer term.

The meeting discussed a number of options for increasing donations, including (a) maintain the current approach but improve its effectiveness, (b) charge Charter signatory subscriptions and/or for access to events and resources, and (c) restructure as a registered charity or "charitable incorporated organisation" (CIO).

For the time being, option (a) was preferred. Our intended steps for improving the effectiveness of future fundraising efforts will include:

- i. Personally reaching out to individual Charter signatories.
- ii. Better "story telling" in our fundraising requests, highlighting IP Inclusive's achievements and value with case studies, success stories, testimonials and the like.
- iii. Making it easier for individuals to donate, in particular at in-person events and also potentially via the website.

The survey referred to in agenda item 3 will assist with (ii) and can also be used to gather information about Charter signatories' preferred contribution methods. The flagship event proposed in agenda item 4 could be particularly useful for (iii).

There were mixed views on registering as a charity. Further information about the feasibility of such a change, and its likely impact on fundraising, will be sought before revisiting the idea.

**Actions:** ALL to help contacting individual signatories that have not yet donated this year; Andrea to coordinate.

**Andrea to investigate, with Anne, systems to allow event attendees to make contactless donations.**

**Andrea to ensure the next Charter signatories' survey includes questions on organisations' preferred contribution methods (including the impact of IP Inclusive registering as a charity**

and the possibility of annual commitments), as well as questions that could yield case studies and testimonials to evidence IP Inclusive's value.

Later in the year, James to investigate with Counter Culture (a law firm specialising in the incorporation and administration of smaller charities) whether and how they could help IP Inclusive restructure as a charity or CIO.

## **7 Additional formal issues**

### **7.1 Register of interests (standing agenda item)**

**Actions:** Gordon and James to notify Andrea of recent changes to their interests.  
ALL to keep under review and inform of updates when appropriate.

### **7.2 Renewal of LEO contract**

The meeting agreed that Andrea's contract for provision of services as IP Inclusive's Lead Executive Officer should be renewed for a further year from 1 July 2024.

**Action:** Andrea to liaise with Michael to renew the LEO contract from 1 July 2024 to 1 July 2025.

### **7.3 Management of new RBS bank account**

It was agreed that Anne Burgato, as an employee in our Executive Team, should be authorised to help manage the IP Inclusive Management business current account held with The Royal Bank of Scotland plc (account number 21486127, sort code 83-06-08). Terms of reference will be created governing the nature and extent of Anne's access to the account – which will include effecting payroll and other administrative transactions – and its oversight by the Lead Executive Officer and IPIM Treasurer.

**Action:** Lesley to draft terms of reference governing employee access to the IPIM bank account.

### **7.4 Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 18 June 2024, 4 pm (online).