

## Sophie Weller



called: 2005

clerk:

Sophie was called to the bar in 2005 and joined Chambers in 2006 following the successful completion of her 12 month pupillage. Her supervisors were David Matthias QC, Robin Green and James Findlay. Sophie accepts instructions in all areas of Chambers practice and has a particular interest in public, human rights, planning and local government law.

Sophie read for the BCL at Oxford from 2003 to 2004 with a particular emphasis on public, employment and discrimination Law (Distinction/1st class).

Sophie was a stipendiary lecturer in constitutional law at Wadham College, Oxford during her BVC year. Sophie is a member of Gray's Inn and was awarded a Prince of Wales Scholarship in 2004. She was graded outstanding on the Bar Vocational Course in 2005.

### Licensing

*"a good service and the clerks are crucial to that. They are very good; if you need someone they will sort it out for you without fuss." (Chambers and Partners 2013)*

*"populated by individuals who are "extremely responsive, good at meeting tight deadlines and excellent at*

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*finding solutions to difficult problems." (Chambers and Partners)*

## Who we are

The licensing team is nationally recognised to be at the forefront of advising, training and educating across the whole field of licensing, including alcohol, entertainment, gambling and taxi licensing. The team leader is Philip Kolvin QC, who is Patron of the Institute of Licensing, and who is well known as a writer, educator and strategist in the field.

## Advising

We have already considered the issues, and have the answers at our fingertips. We advise: licensing authorities; police; the leading industry operators; trade associations and campaign and community groups. We are also qualified to take work on a direct access basis.

## Policy and strategy

Our members have developed a particular expertise in helping clients with long term strategic goals. For example, we have been closely involved in the development of cumulative impact policies with authorities from the largest to the smallest. We have worked with casino licensing authorities to formulate the procedures and processes for the casino licensing competition under the Gambling Act 2005. We have designed systems and processes and formulated applications for many thousands of premises, and have worked with major trade associations on responses to national legislative changes. In doing so, we use our cross-sectoral knowledge and team-building expertise to develop long term solutions to attain our clients' goals.

## Litigating

Members of Chambers have been involved in some of the leading cases on gambling, public entertainment and alcohol licensing over the last few years in courts at all levels. We understand the needs of our clients and fight to win. We have been known to lose licensing cases, but when we do we sit down with the client and plan how to win next time around. We also aim to resolve issues: we understand the benefits of compromise and will advise the clients on alternative ways of achieving their objectives.

## Training

The team has trained or lectured hundreds of licensing authorities and trade representatives under the Licensing Act and the Gambling Act, and developed courses on many issues, such as licence reviews, committee hearings, offence investigation and trial preparation. We design bespoke courses for individual clients and conduct large-scale seminars. We do formal lecturing, role play, mock trials, discussion groups, pub quizzes and brain-storming: our job is to entertain while we inform. Our members regularly chair or

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contribute to commercial conferences and academic courses.

## Writing

Members of Cornerstone Barristers have been responsible for writing or contributing to major licensing texts, including: Gambling for Local Authorities: Licensing, Planning and Regeneration (InstituteofLicensing) Licensed Premises: Law and Practice (Tottel); and numerous articles in professional journals.

## Promoting excellence

Our members set out to drive professional development in the field. Our activities have included working with theInstituteofLicensing, helping to establish a course for licensing professionals atWestminsterUniversity, chairing a cross-sector committee for a BII qualification in managing the night time economy, and leading a board to develop the new Purple Flag accreditation. This helps us understand the needs of stakeholders in the field, and allows us to give advice from a broad perspective.

## Partnerships

Licensing has become but one element of an integrated system controlling the leisure and night-time economy involving planning, health and safety and environmental issues. As a leading local authority set, Cornerstone Barristers has the experience and the resources to meet the regulatory needs of the key stakeholders in this field, and to advise licensing and police authorities as to their responsibilities as modern regulators.

## Client service

We are renowned for friendly, responsive, hands-on service. We understand that our clients work to budgets and can supply expertise at all levels. You will be given a named clerk to deal with, and our assurance that your communications will be handled promptly and to the best of our ability. We repeatedly find that first time clients become long-term clients.