**UKAWJ – a brief history**

In 2002 a number of UK judges attended the sixth biennial conference of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) in Dublin and the seed was sewn for the formation of the UK Association of Women Judges (the UKAWJ).

The inaugural meeting was held in spring 2003. A caretaker committee was set up under the leadership of Dame Brenda Hale (as she then was) which took responsibility for drafting a constitution and dealing with the practicalities before the first annual general meeting was held in March 2004. At that meeting the constitution was approved and officers and committee elected.

The UKAWJ is affiliated to the IAWJ and our members have attended IAWJ biennial conferences in Australia, Korea, Panama, Tanzania, the USA and Argentina. In 2012 the UKAWJ hosted the IAWJ conference in London which was extremely successful. The Association has provided sponsorship for judges from countries who would otherwise struggle to raise the funds to attend this important biennial event. As a result, we have had the opportunity to meet judges with very different experiences from our own and to give advice and assistance when it has been requested. Members of the Association have been involved in projects to provide training to judges in Pakistan and initiatives in association with the Judicial College in Nigeria, Bahrain and Dubai (amongst others). We also provide a link for visiting judges from other jurisdictions who want to meet up with women judges in the UK.

Founded in 1991, the IAWJ is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation that brings together judges from all levels of the judiciary worldwide, creating a powerful network of people united by their commitment to equal justice and the rule of law. The IAWJ is committed to addressing issues of gender-based violence, human trafficking, early and forced marriages, corruption, and discrimination in employment, inheritance, education, and health services.

The UKAWJ puts on a conference each year which is attended by members of the UK judiciary and by some colleagues from within the wider region of Europe and the Middle East. It has been invited to participate in consultations on a number of issues including pensions and salaried part time working. Outreach events have been held in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Membership is open to any person who holds or has retired from a permanent or salaried or fee paid judicial post.