

THE BRITISH WILLS AND PROBATE AWARDS 2020

Speech by Karen Babington, Director at The Practical Vision Network

The British Wills & Probate Awards 2020

On behalf of myself, Chris and the Practical Vision team we would like to thank you for tuning in to watch our awards this afternoon.

Last year I commented on what a painful year it had been for probate practitioners. It's fair to say that I could never have predicted the challenges our industry were to face in 2020.

I have heard first-hand from so many of you, the harrowing stories which have reduced even the most resilient of you to tears. Not only do you help individuals and families to sort out their affairs, much of this is delivered with empathy and kindness despite any challenging circumstances you may have in your personal lives.

A wise man predicted one thing in his speech last year which did come true. Dave Newick from our headline sponsor Arken forecast the industry embracing new technology, and that is certainly an aspect which has accelerated during recent months. My thanks go to sponsor Arken for their unwavering determination to supporting the awards for the third time this year.

It's also important that I thank our champagne sponsors Executor Solutions, and all our category sponsors who stood side by side with us throughout the year to bring this ceremony to you this afternoon. They unanimously felt that the awards should continue to take place for 2020, and this support was greatly appreciated at times when everything felt a little wobbly!

For ourselves, and our sponsors it's been rewarding to continue with the awards, for some much needed light relief and recognition that so many of you have earned, and continue to earn.

From a personal perspective I have missed meeting up with so many of you. So it's been fantastic to see so many of you registering to join us this afternoon who attended the awards ceremony last year, and our Wills and Probate Summit held much earlier in the year. Also may I extend a warm welcome to those of you who we haven't met in person previously – this afternoon should give you a flavour of the way we act as a catalyst to bring the sector, both regulated and unregulated, together.

Whilst the James Bond film, aptly named "No Time to Die" has been postponed, we are lucky enough to have our own two Bonds in the room!

Ian Bond is watching this afternoon and will no doubt be entertaining 4 children, writing a blog and tweeting from his office in Solihull – all at the same time. And they say men can't juggle!

I have singled Ian out for his role as Chair of the Law Society wills and equity committee, fuelling Today's Wills and Probate breaking news, usually I note - in the early hours of the morning.

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Thanks go to Ian, and our other judges Paul Saunders, Gill Steel, Lakshmi Turner, Alex Holt, Matthew Lagden, Rita Leat, Jonathan Jacques, Catherine Baksi, Carrie Caladine, Sue Carter, Stuart Simpson and Lisa Watts. We added an extra layer of scrutiny to this years entries to include a telephone interview and so a huge thank you for the time you took out of your busy days during the summer months.

You can see them featured in our awards brochure which is downloadable from the website, as well as our shortlisted firms for each category. And please join the conversation on social media at hashtag [BWAP Awards2020](#).

Our second Bond needs no introduction at all. Welcome to the admirable, warm-hearted and witty Jennie Bond who joins us as host for the third year, and to introduce our category sponsors and announce the winners of the British Wills and Probate Awards for 2020.

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