



THE INTERNATIONAL CONSTRUCTION LAW CONFERENCE

protocol was in place for remote hearings for all jurisdictions of the High Court. There were only a small number of trials adjourned in the TCC which were heard in vacation or re-listed for early 2021. Other than that, all hearings went ahead as originally listed save that they were remote, usually by video link.

She added that new cases in the TCC increased by 6% in the first 6 months of this year. That is on top of the overall increase the previous year of 20%.

Since the beginning of July, the courts in London have been offering hybrid hearings or full physical hearings in court where it is appropriate in agreement with the parties.

Mrs Justice O'Farrell concluded her keynote by saying:

"I have been very impressed by the co-operation and flexibility shown by the parties, by their legal representatives, by the experts and by the court staff to ensure that the wheels of justice could keep turning. I think we have benefitted from learning how to use technology, for example this conference, to improve the efficiency and cost of legal proceedings in general without compromising justice. We do recognise the value of continued physical hearings and physical meetings where appropriate but I think this has served to demonstrate the resilience and the agility of the courts in England & Wales generally, and in London in particular. The Courts in London and, in particular, the TCC, are ready to welcome parties from all over the world to resolve their disputes."

Click here to listen to recordings from the International Construction Law Conference

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLW9PMIdnRPOFUCQgigsF-Q8zKrpjxrfMq>

The International Construction Law Conference took place on 10 September.

Initially intended to be a fringe event during the second London International Disputes Week, like many of 2020's events the Conference changed format in response to Covid-19. The result was a virtual 1-day conference uniting international construction law practitioners from 24 leading law firms, chambers and expert consultancies, along with a number of senior in-house lawyers and industry experts. That alone was an unprecedented piece of co-operation. The entire day was hosted and managed on a virtual basis by Kings College London who stepped in when an in-person event was no longer possible. 3,450 delegates from around the world signed up to watch and during the day between 400 and 1,000 people were tuning in at any one time.

The keynote speech was provided by Mrs Justice O'Farrell DBE, Judge in Charge of the Technology and Construction Court ('TCC'). The TCC is part of the Business and Property Courts of England and Wales ('BPC') introduced in 2017. In London, the BPC is based in the Rolls Building and comprises the commercial court, admiralty court, and the chancery division in addition to the TCC.

Mrs Justice O'Farrell included reference in her keynote to how the TCC has responded to Covid-19.

She explained that on 23rd March 2020 when UK lockdown was announced, the TCC issued template orders and draft letters to be sent to all the parties for remote hearings. Within a few days a

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