Personal Finance Society
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Biographical notes

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Vanessa Barnes BSc (Hons),
FPFS Chartered Financial Planner

Vanessa Barnes has been an IFA for over 30 years. She spent 10 years with a national IFA before starting her own directly regulated firm in 1996.

Vanessa is a Chartered Financial Planner and leads a firm of all female IFAs. Vanessa has long been an advocate for professionalism within the industry, leading by example and encouraging colleagues to take CII exams well ahead of the introduction of regulatory requirements.

Vanessa is a founder signatory to HM Treasury's Women in Finance Charter. She has been profiled in the History of Parliament Trust Vote 100 commemorative album showcasing the achievements of women since they first won the right to vote. At the recent Women in Finance awards, Vanessa was a finalist in the IFA of the year category.

Sarah Lord FPFS, RLP
Chartered Financial Planner

Sarah started in the industry over 15 years ago and has had a variety of experience having initially worked for Scottish Equitable as a Business Development consultant before making the transition to a financial adviser 10 years ago. She led Killik & Co's Wealth Planning team for 7.5 years until 2017 when she sought a new challenge and joined Mazars LLP as a Partner. Her focus at Mazars is to develop and grow the Private Client operation in London.

Sarah has achieved both Fellowship of The Personal Finance Society and Chartered Wealth Manager status through the CISI and is passionate about raising the level of professionalism within the Financial Planning industry. Having spent 4 years working in the Middle East, Sarah is recognised as an International Financial Planning specialist.

Sarah was Chartered Champion for the London region from 2011 to 2014, elected to the Insurance Institute of London Financial Service Committee in 2012 where she continues to serve and to the Insurance Institute of London Council in September 2014 for a 3-year term.

Adam Owen
DipPFS, Certs CII (MP & ER)

Adam's career in financial services is in its third decade and during this time he has held advisory roles within direct sales and the IFA sector and provided technical support to both DA firms and Networks. He was a founding director of support provider EQI Consultancy and more recently has held a variety of senior compliance and supervision positions. As the Chairman of three Trailblazer Apprenticeship development projects he has a keen interest in developing careers within the financial services sector and encouraging new entrants to the profession.

Currently, he has a portfolio of positions including executive and non-executive roles focusing on developing careers in the profession. A CII, PFS and NSAFS accredited trainer, Adam designs and delivers live and internet-based revision courses for financial services professionals as well as specialising in soft skills training delivery.

In his spare time, Adam is the plays guitar in a Manchester based covers band and enjoys racing a vintage yacht.

Jonathan Rees
MA (OXON)

Jonathan is an expert in public policy focussing on regulatory issues and promoting the consumer interest. He is currently an independent Director of the Lending Standards Board (which provides regulation and standing setting for banks credit lending to consumers), a Director of Ombudsman Services (a not-for-profit company providing independent complaints resolution for consumers in energy, telecommunications and retail sectors), a Director of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (resolving student complaints) and of the Employers Network on Equality and Inclusion (the leading body promoting equality best practice). He was for six years a Trustee of Citizens Advice (a top 10 national charity providing advice for people needing help and support) and the NACAB Pension Fund.

Prior to this he worked in the Civil Service for 35 years with a strong focus on strategy, regulation, change management and partnership working. His last role was as Director-General of the Government Equalities Office from 2008 to 2013. In this period he saw through a major overhaul of equalities legislation with the 2010 Equality Act, set up new partnerships to promote equality in the workplace, and developed the policy on same sex marriage.

After graduating in modern history from Jesus College Oxford, Jonathan worked in over 10 Government Departments both in Whitehall and overseas. Posts included three years in the No 10 Policy Unit advising successive Prime Ministers on strategy, seven years in Brussels dealing with European negotiations (both in the European Commission and in the Foreign Office), spells in the Home Office, Cabinet Office, BIS (dealing with consumer and competition policy) and the Health and Safety Executive. Married with two children in their teens, he lives in Oxfordshire and in his spare time enjoys sport (tennis, cricket cycling and skiing) and travel.

Caroline Stuart
FPFS, Chartered Financial Planner

Caroline began in financial services when she joined Royal London in 2000. Moving on from there to become a paraplanner in a small financial adviser in 2003, Caroline is now Head of Technical Solutions at DB Wood, a financial planning and investment management company based in Newark on Trent. In her role, Caroline is involved in a range of areas such as training for the team, drafting and/or updating client facing literature and reviewing practices and processes to make sure clients always receive high quality service. Caroline is also one of the firm's Pension Transfer Specialists. However, Caroline is first and foremost a paraplanner, with her work centred predominantly around financial planning and paraplanning.

Caroline finds being a paraplanner a varied, challenging, and rewarding career. Raising the profile of financial planning and in particular, paraplanning, is hugely important to her and she is keen to promote and help develop the profession wherever possible.

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