

Stephen Connolly



Call 2003



Clerks

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Memberships

- Lincoln's Inn
- Northern Business & Property Bar Association
- Law Society (Non-Practicing Solicitor)
- Chancery Bar Association

Education

- University of Buckingham, LLB
- St Thomas More High School, Preston

Commercial

Stephen is an exceptional commercial barrister. He is highly respected and specialises in high value and complex disputes. He has over 30 years' experience in the field of commercial litigation, commercial fraud and property litigation and is recommended as a leading practitioner by both Chambers and Partners and The Legal 500. He appears regularly unled against Leading counsel. His practice comprises:

- Shareholder and company disputes
- Partnership disputes
- Commercial contract disputes
- Commercial fraud
- Professional negligence – solicitors, surveyors and accountants
- General commercial litigation
- Arbitration, mediation and other forms of alternative dispute resolution

Stephen is renowned for his hard working and no nonsense approach, for the pragmatic and strategic advice that he provides and for his ability to relate to his clients and to communicate his advice to them in an unstuffy, clear and practical manner.

He appears regularly in the Business & Property Courts and in the Court of Appeal.

Commercial cases

Jusan Technologies Limited v Uconinvest LLC [2025] EWHC 704 (Ch) – Acted for the Respondent (led by Paul Chaisty KC) in successfully defending the claim of the Applicant to rectify its own shareholders register with retrospective effect so as to remove the Respondent on grounds that the directors of the Applicant had acted ultra vires their powers in registering the Respondent as a shareholder. The case gives rise to important questions as to the ambit of section 40 of the Companies Act 2006 so far as shareholder registration is concerned and as to the scope and exercise of the Court’s discretion under section 125 of the Companies Act 2006 to grant or to refuse rectification of a company’s shareholders register.

Burdett v Burdett [2025] EWHC 480 (Ch) – Acted for the Respondent in successfully defending a petition brought by the widow and executor of a deceased shareholder under section 994 of the Companies Act 2006 in relation to a quasi-partnership company and involving multiple allegations of forgery, fraud, misrepresentation, improper use and disposal of company assets and improper filings at Companies House.

Uconinvest LLC v Jysan Holdings LLC [2024] EWHC 1532 (Ch) – Acted for the Claimant (led by Paul Chaisty KC) in successfully resisting an application to stay the proceedings in favour of arbitration and in obtaining fresh Freezing Order relief to a value of US\$8.4 million following the initial Freezing Order being set aside for material non-disclosure.

Akbar v Ghaffar [2024] EWHC 50 (Ch) – Acted for the Claimant in striking out the defence of the Defendant to the Claimant’s £4 million fraud and fraudulent breach of trust claim.

Akbar v Ghaffar [2023] EWHC 1275 (Ch) – Acted for the Claimant in successful resisting an application of the Defendant to set aside £4 million Proprietary and Freezing Orders on the grounds of alleged material non-disclosure. Application dismissed with indemnity costs.

R v R (2023) – Acted for the Claimant in a £5 million proprietary estoppel claim regarding beneficial ownership of extensive commercial farm premises. Settled on the eve of trial on terms favourable to the Claimant.

G v N (2023) – acted for the Defendants in defending multi-million pound breach of warranty and fraudulent misrepresentation claim and in counterclaiming for unpaid deferred consideration. Settled following mediation and prior to hearing of the Defendant’s application for summary judgment.

Diamond Bus v Transport for West Midlands [2023] EWHC 2099 (Comm) – Acted for the Claimant against Leading Counsel in complex pre-action disclosure application concerning the Claimant’s claim that they had been under-paid substantial sums through the mis-calculation of concessionary fare refunds.

O’Brien v Phipps [2023] EWHC 1153 (Ch) – Acted for the Claimant against Leading Counsel in a multi-million pound breach of trust claim arising out of a failed business relationship. The Claimant’s claim was successful, with tracing and proprietary injunctive relief granted against the Defendant. Permission to appeal refused by the Court of Appeal.

Gattward v Kestrel Lodge (2023) – Acted for the Claimant in a niche case between two commercial holiday park owners as to the meaning of the expression “caravan” within the terms of a restrictive covenant, as to whether or not the Defendant was in breach of that covenant and in the use of their holiday park. The narrow construction of the Claimant was preferred and injunctive relief to restrain further breach was granted.

Clements v Frisby [2023] EWHC 320 (Ch) – Acted for the Defendant (led by Giles Maynard-Connor KC) is defending a £125 million claim brought against a high-profile fashion and internet entrepreneur in relation to the establishment and ownership of his business. The claim was dismissed as being a fraudulent claim and permission to appeal was refused.

Clements v Frisby [2022] EWHC 3124 (Ch) – Acted for the Defendant pre-trial of a £125 million claim for further and extended disclosure on the basis of a waiver of privilege. A relevant and important case as to the test for and scope of waiver of privilege in the context of PD57AD.

Edhem v Edhem [2022] UKUT 243 (LC) – Acted for the Claimant in First Tier and Upper Tribunal, Property Chamber proceedings against her Defendant son to rectify the register by setting aside the Transfer of a £1 Million plus residential property that had been forged at the hand of the Defendant. 8 days of trial and a 1 day appeal, followed by Freezing Order relief against the Defendant.

C v C (2022) – Acted for the Petitioner in a Section 994 Petition (value circa £2 million) which settled at mediation following successful resistance of an application to strike out the Petition on the grounds that a buy-out order against the majority (being the principal relief sought) would never in the circumstances of the case be made.

Campbell v Tyrrell [2022] EWHC 423 (Ch) – Acted for the Second Defendant in the successful defence of a claim for sale at an alleged undervalue (£1.5 million). The case provides useful guidance as to the adequacy of business declarations for CCA purposes, as to where the burden of proof lies in relation to such declarations and as to Unfair Relations.

Moody v Jones [2021] EWHC 3443 (Ch) – Acted for the Claimant in partnership proceedings concerning a valuable (circa £4 million) and strategically important Grade 2 Listed Building in Central Manchester. The Claimant was successful at trial (10 days) and, in addition to securing possession and control of the building, was successful in obtaining findings of dishonest assistance and knowing receipt against a number of Defendants in relation to their treatment of the historical rental income from the property.

D v T (2019) – Acted for the Claimant bus company in a substantial (£1 million plus) and statutorily complex claim against a regional transport authority for repayment of under-paid and wrongly calculated concessionary fares. Settled at mediation on terms favourable to the Claimant.

P v D (2018) – Acted for two of four Defendants against Leading Counsel in opposing £15 million fraud claim and in prosecuting a £2 million deferred consideration claim. Applied successfully for reverse summary judgment so as to strike out the fraud claim and obtain judgment for the deferred consideration.

B v K (2018) – Acted for one of five Defendants in opposing a substantial fraud and breach of duty claim. Applied successfully to strike out the claim and successfully resisted the appeal from that strike out.

O v B (2017) – Acted for the Petitioner in a Section 994 Petition (value £1.5 million). Successfully had the Respondent's Points of Defence struck out for serial non-compliance with orders of the Court and leveraged that position to achieve confidential and substantial settlement on the eve of trial.

Eden v Parker [2016] EWHC 3302 (Ch) – Acted for the Claimant in a 3 week trial in two co-joined actions arising out of a joint venture for the purchase and development of commercial properties.

MO v CB (2016) – Acted for the Petitioner in s.994 Petition against fellow 50% shareholder in and the directors of successful trading company arising from the wrongful diversion of business to parallel company. The Respondents conceded liability on the eve of trial and consented to a purchase order at an undiscounted value, with the trial on quantum to follow later in the year.

Raymond v Young (2014 first instance 2015 Court of Appeal) – Acted for the Claimants in a 16-day nuisance and harassment trial. Stephen provided advice and representation at all stages and was successful in obtaining and, in the Court of Appeal, maintaining a claim for ‘stigma’ damages for damage caused to the value of the Claimants’ property by the nuisance and harassment of the Defendants.

VC v J (2015) – Acted for the Claimant in proceedings against its former managing director for misuse of confidential information and breach of covenant claiming losses in excess of £1 million. Proceedings began with Anton Pillar order against the former MD. Followed by series of substantial contested interim applications with former MD bringing unfair prejudice petition in response. Ultimately settled ahead of trial at mediation.

Hy-Fly v Salisbury (2015) – Acted for the Claimant in equitable fraud proceedings seeking to recover substantial sums that had been paid to the Defendant as deposit monies for the purchase and construction of commercial wind turbines which never materialised. Following trial and on the eve of hand down of judgment favourable terms of settlement agreed.

Arthur Doodson (Brokers) Limited v Whitham and Waring (2013) – Acted for the Claimant in obtaining urgent interim and subsequent final injunctive and springboard relief against former senior employees outside their restrictive covenant period arising from their misappropriation and misuse of confidential client information belonging the Claimant.

C&S v G4S (2013) – Trial of a preliminary issue as to the entitlement of an assignee of the benefit of Keyholding security contracts to rely upon limitation of liability clauses in those contracts as a defence to claims of negligence against them.

West Midlands Travel v Aviva Insurance (2012 first instance 2013 Court of Appeal) – Acted for Aviva Insurance in a test case as to the correct measure of damage to be applied for the loss of use of a public service vehicle and in establishing that the longstanding case of *Birmingham Corporation v Sowsbery* no longer represented good law. Whilst the claim was modest in isolation, its ramifications are wide ranging and will save the insurance industry upwards of £50 million a year.

LG v CTD (2013) – Acted for the Claimant in a contested and highly sensitive multi-million pound partnership dispute. Stephen provided advice and representation at all stages from the beginning of the dispute down to settlement the day immediately before trial due to have commenced.

A v B (2013) – Acted for the Claimant is a multi-million pound claim arising from the unlawful termination of A’s motor franchise by B. Settled at mediation in December 2013 on confidential terms.

X v Y (2013) – Acted for X in four separate but related actions arising from her employment and subsequent dismissal as the managing director of Y. The claims included shareholder, director and employee claims and were valued at in excess of £20 million. Settled at mediation in November 2013 on confidential terms.

Recommendations

“Stephen is probably one of the best juniors at the Bar. He has a very good all-round practice and a range of specialisms within commercial litigation, which makes him stand out in the market.”

“Stephen really understands what solicitors want from counsel; he is incredibly supportive and involved.”

Chambers and Partners 2025

“Stephen is the ultimate all rounder. He knows what solicitors want from counsel, he is clever, very well respected by the judiciary, and fantastic on both paper and at advocacy.”

The Legal 500 2025

“Stephen is resilient and user-friendly and makes himself available. His work is at a very high quality.”

Chambers and Partners 2024

“Stephen is sure on his legal arguments and prepares to develop them carefully but with force in his skeleton arguments and before a judge. He is an advocate to have in your corner for a case heading for trial, and he is not distracted by new matters as they unfold and remains calm under pressure.”

The Legal 500 2024

“His communication is excellent. He is really thorough and hard-working. He is a formidable opponent. Stephen is a force to be reckoned with.”

“Stephen is pragmatic in his advice and very clear in his plan of operation.”

“Stephen is incredibly bright and incredibly commercial.”

Chambers and Partners 2023

“Stephen quickly gets to the nub of issues and is able to focus on the points that really matter. He gives clear views and delivers his messages to the client in a very user-friendly way. He also thinks outside the box and is prepared to consider all potential options at any stage.”

The Legal 500 2023

“His attention to detail is phenomenal and he’s also someone who quickly builds a very good rapport with clients. He’s very unassuming, extremely bright and very accessible despite being a senior barrister.”

Chambers and Partners 2022

“Stephen’s work, both written and spoken, is impressive. His submissions are well expressed and persuasive and he is very good on his feet.”

The Legal 500 2022

“An outstanding advocate with an extremely sharp analytical brain.”
“He has a calm, measured approach and gets to the commercial side of the issues.” “His advocacy is top-draw and he has a solicitor background so he has the ability to empathise with clients and understands their challenges.”

Chambers and Partners 2021

“An outstanding advocate with an extremely sharp analytical brain. He’s succinct in his advice and doesn’t sit on the fence.”

“He’s practical, commercial and an incredible trial advocate. His attention to detail is second to none, which ultimately is what makes him such effective counsel.”

Chambers and Partners 2020

“An exceptional advocate – he really gets into the nitty gritty of the papers and leaves no stone unturned. His cross examination skills are as good as I have seen. His client handling skills are superb.”

The Legal 500 2021

“A good commercial barrister.”

The Legal 500 2020

“He is an outstanding advocate with an extremely sharp analytical brain. He is succinct in his advice and does not sit on the fence.” “His attention to detail, ability to talk the client’s language and his robustness are first-rate. He is able to cut through ancillary issues and get to the heart of the matter, something which is key in delivering an excellent result for the client.”

Chambers and Partners 2019

“A tough negotiator with a calm manner.”
The Legal 500 2018/19

“I’m always impressed by his ability to grasp technical matters and he is very client-friendly as well.” “He is a very able and pugnacious litigator.”
Chambers and Partners 2018

“A first-rate legal mind.”
The Legal 500 2017

“He’s quite tenacious, very bold and technically very good.” “Very good in court and has excellent paperwork.”
Chambers and Partners 2017

“An excellent advocate, who is particularly effective in injunctions and interim relief applications.”
The Legal 500 2016

“He’s brilliant on his feet. He’s a really good advocate. He fights the client’s corner – a force to be reckoned with.”
Chambers and Partners 2016

“Barrister with renowned advocacy skills who practices in commercial and property disputes.”
Chambers and Partners 2016

“His practice includes shareholder and company disputes, partnership conflicts and professional negligence.”
The Legal 500 2015

“Specialises in high-value and complex disputes.”
The Legal 500 2014

Beyond the Bar

Beyond the Bar, Stephen is a Governor of his old High School, a cyclist and an occasional watcher of Preston North End.