

Introductory speech

by

Victoria Russell (Chairman, Livery Committee)

at the Lord Mayor's Address to the Livery

25th November 2020, Mansion House

Good afternoon, everyone! Thank you for Zooming in today.

Welcome to the Lord Mayor's Briefing. It may look a little like a Covid Briefing, but the closest we will get today to 'Hands, Face and Space' is the Glovers, the Barbers and the Air Pilots....

My name is Victoria Russell and I'm the current Chair of the Livery Committee. I'm a liveryman member, and am Past Master of the Arbitrators and the Constructors, and a liveryman of the Solicitors.

The Committee was originally formed in 1864 to oversee the arrangements for Common Hall but its remit today goes considerably further than that.

It provides a link between the Livery and the Corporation, in particular the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs. It is a conduit for the sharing of information, a forum to discuss issues of common concern and a useful channel of communication.

We publish regular newsletters and run several courses – the regular City Briefings, the Masters and Wardens course, which many of you will have attended, and, with Nigel Pullman, the Livery After Dinner speaking course. Our courses were attended by over 500 people last year.

As part of our communication strategy, we have a new website, www.liverycommittee.org. We want this to be the definitive source of accurate and useful information, both for those already involved in the livery and for the general public, complete with a knowledge sharing platform. It launched in September and is already proving very popular.

The Livery Committee has no budget. I am therefore extremely grateful to all the companies and guilds which have contributed to the costs of the website and also to the Corporation, which has made a generous donation. Thank you!

I must also publicly thank David Barrett, who has spent many hours not just providing content for the website but also dealing with all the payments.

Please help us keep the website relevant and up to date by sending us your news stories and details of upcoming events. We really value your input and it's a great opportunity for you to tell a wider audience what you're doing.

During the last 12 months, we have decided on some changes to the Livery Committee. We will reduce its size by a quarter, from 20 to 15. Members will have more clearly defined roles and responsibilities. We have reinvigorated our constitution and refreshed our strategy. We are currently out to consultation on these changes, which we will bring to Common Hall in June.

Our members are all drawn from your companies. We are there to help you, if you would like us to, and to assist in addressing issues of concern to us all.

Our recent work has included the Diversity Charter, which I sent you all earlier this year. We are now focusing on a revised job specification for the Non Aldermanic Sheriff, detailing the experience, knowledge, skills and qualities which they are expected to have in order to be a key member of the civic team. This is a role which has changed significantly in recent years.

We continue to work closely with the pan livery initiative; four members of the Livery Committee are on its steering group, including Sir Charles Bowman, its Chairman, and we have a closely collaborative relationship.

This year we have also refreshed the Livery Liaison Scheme. Each liveryman on the Committee is the designated point of contact for different companies and guilds for matters where we might be of support or assistance. I wrote to all the Masters, Prime Wardens and the Upper Bailiff about this in October but if you're not sure who your allocated contact is, please look at the list on our website.

I thank the Livery Committee for their support, especially Peter Nelson, the former Assistant Town Clerk, who is our Committee advisor and generously gives his time pro bono. We benefit enormously from his immense wisdom and experience.

I will now hand over to the Lord Mayor, following whom there will be speeches by Sir Charles Bowman and John Barradell. There will be then be time for Q&A.