

Diversity issues for Livery Companies

Background

Most Livery members will consider that Livery Companies (or their Livery Company) should be open and welcoming organisations that have a purpose and social relevance to the twenty first century. How that manifests itself will vary with each Livery Company. This paper is intended to explore some of the issues that have been recently raised and might usefully be discussed by a Livery Company, the Court or Wardens as a prelude to acknowledgement, acceptance or action – as seems fit.

This paper is not prescriptive about the word diversity but will use the term to mean the widest range in any context. More recently diversity and the perception of how diversity and/or its lack impacts on others has become a challenge to Livery Companies. The historic background of Livery Companies, their initial purpose and source of funds as well as current actions are all intertwined and complex and may be open to criticism. Alongside other institutions Livery Companies would be well advised to consider these matters by way of reflection and understanding. This paper seeks to consider these issues.

Financial investments and the history of the Livery

Some Livery Companies have historic funds or assets dating back many centuries and acquired by donations from their membership. Some may be linked to businesses and trades that are now socially unacceptable, immoral or illegal. A Livery Company should review its assets and assess the provenance and review how they should consider these assets and their use. The history of any Livery Company needs to be understood including how others may perceive past actions and involvement.

Charitable donations

Charitable funds should be subject to the same scrutiny of provenance as other financial investments. How they are dispersed says a lot about a Livery Company. The Livery's formal charitable donations policy should be reviewed in the context of relevance and alignment to its original and current aims. There should be a diverse set of charity trustees or charity committee in order to give a good perspective on and scrutiny of donations. The charities to whom funds are given should be scrutinised as to their diversity and aims.

A clear policy as to funding might include some general points of principle. See the Association of Charitable Foundations which has provided some Covid-19 Good Practice Funding Recommendations which are easily applicable to all funding situations. They may seem a bit excessive for some smaller Livery funds but are worth reviewing for any general guidance.

Supporting the craft, trade or profession

All Livery Companies commenced with a close link to a trade or profession and some retain this or indeed require professional links in order to be a Livery member. Those links vary with each Livery Company as to their strength and extent. Where direct or indirect assistance is given to individuals or institutions it would be appropriate to consider that help and review how far it assists those most disadvantaged or underrepresented and seek to redress any imbalance. A Livery Company can act to promote a wider professional diversity and address barriers, if any exist. For example the Goldsmiths' Company initiated an online Survey Monkey aimed at asking Black British jewellers about their experiences in order to help shape the actions that the jewellery industry should take to improve access training and support.

Membership

Where a Livery is not tied to a profession or trade or family background then the members can be drawn from a wider variety of backgrounds. However even Liveries with a limited membership can still seek to have a more diverse membership. Adherence to the aims of the Livery and the City is important (as it would be in any organisation). To date barriers in respect of gender have been largely overcome but other barriers may exist that are not always appreciated. If the Livery is committed to a membership from a more diverse (in every sense of the word) background then it needs to take steps to overcome the barriers.

Barriers to membership:

1. Opportunity and then knowledge of and an introduction to the Livery (most Liveries require a sponsor). This can be overcome by spreading the net wider and being more extensive in the search for members who even without a sponsor can still attend an interview or interviews and serve some interim period of association before being granted freedom.
2. Financial. A fine (entry fee) and then the annual quarterage alongside the cost of events that can be prohibitive to some (eg younger people with less well paid jobs). This can be overcome by offering lower costs to younger people or a subsidy. Also cheaper events of a less formal kind can be arranged. All need to be done with sensitivity so as not to cause affront.
3. Variety of events. Whilst formal Livery events appeal to current members the Livery needs to be flexible and surprisingly the Livery can respond well to change – eg Covid 19 Zoom meetings have proved popular to many. Formality including expensive clothing etc can be a barrier to overcome with a variety of events of different price and kind and timing.
4. Welcome. It is important that all the Livery continue their time honoured warm welcome to everyone attending. For some, a formal dinner can be daunting. Cliques of members are not helpful.

External facing matters and perception

The external perception of any organisation can be misleading and no Livery Company will want to be misrepresented in public or by its members. The Livery is visible in its own communications (eg website, press releases and social media); in the public arena (for example via the Lord Mayor and City of London Corporation); through its own profession or trade and through its affiliations and links to schools, further education or military. Livery Companies may want to own that profile and their reputation. These aspects need curation and care and will need to be managed by the Livery Company in order to prevent damage or upset. A review of this aspect would be helpful.

Detailed actions to be considered

By acting in a way that is more inclusive a Livery Company can speak volumes. The following list will seem a bit long but includes ideas of what might be addressed:

1. Create a diversity and inclusion policy for the Livery Company. Consider if the Livery needs training or expertise to help in this or in certain other areas of work (eg charitable giving).
2. Make a formal commitment to diversity and inclusion – see the draft Diversity Charter provided by the Livery Committee below or the Solicitors' Livery Values Statement set out below.

3. Set up a Diversity and Inclusion subcommittee (eg Constructors have set one up by way of an example).
4. Ensure diversity inclusion and disadvantage are considered in giving charitable donations, sponsorship or assistance. See the ACF principles set out below. External help might be needed to bolster charitable trustees or committees or additional training might be helpful.
5. Analyse the membership by reference to the protected characteristics in order to see clearly the current membership profile. Consider areas that might need to be worked on to encourage a wider membership. Create an action plan to do this.
6. Review financial and charitable investments and other assets and report back to the Livery as to any steps to be taken.
7. Review the history of the Livery Company to understand this and the historical context. Consider a public statement about this on the website. See text below by Sir John Cass's Foundation.
8. Consider events, locations and speakers that are more diverse.
9. Ensure that the venue for every event is accessible for all. Consider an accessibility audit of any premises and of the operations and communications of the Livery Company. For example some typefaces and scripts as well as backgrounds are less legible and should be avoided. Adapting for those with disabilities is essential.
10. Consider all events in the context that for some people (members or guests) the location, format and refreshments provided might cause issues. Any catering provided should accommodate all dietary or religious requirements; religious services or observance will vary and the formality or dress code might be off putting.
11. Invite guests (of the company or individual members) that are more diverse. For example guests from military affiliates, charities, trade, professional or other organisations supported by the Livery.
12. Follow up with younger people with whom the Livery is in contact – eg scholars or prize winners. Make a positive effort to invite them to relevant events or organise separate events appropriate to their likely interests. Consider an active apprenticeship scheme.
13. Introduce a mentoring scheme to help younger members understand the Livery and promote their engagement and interest. Informal or formal training or help might be needed for many members at different stages in their Livery life (eg making speeches or chairing meetings).
14. Ensure any process considering members for promotion, committee membership or roles in the Livery is non judgemental and open minded about proposing people to participate.
15. Consider the composition of any Court, committee, group, interview panel or photograph and seek to ensure it shows a balance from the Livery or take steps to include external or other people (where possible).

16. Consider all organisations with whom you are connected and consider if they meet the standards that you are going to set for the Livery or challenge them if appropriate – including professional advisers, affiliates, trade bodies, suppliers, charities, military, schools, fellow Livery Companies and the City Corporation. Review all such contacts and ask them about their diversity and inclusion policy. Note that some Liveries, charities and businesses have a policy on Modern Slavery (see below).
17. When advertising for staff, ensure a wide net is thrown to ensure diverse candidates are included and take active steps to advertise in a wider variety of locations, websites etc..
18. Review the website and all other publications to ensure that the external face of the Livery Company reflects its wider engagement and review the language and tone used in all internal and external publications and papers. A specific statement may be helpful (see Goldsmiths’ Company website information mentioned below).
19. Consider a communications plan that promotes the Livery Company and its actions – eg the Solicitors’ Livery have run a series of tweets about individual members who demonstrate the diversity of their Livery members. Be aware of areas of potential criticism and risk and have a communications strategy ready to meet any such external challenge.
20. Create an action plan and a risk matrix that covers all those areas that the Livery wishes to endorse and ensure that this is agreed by the Court and regularly monitored and updated.

USEFUL EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Livery Committee Diversity Charter for Livery Companies/Guilds

We believe that attracting a wider pool of talent to engage with our Livery Company/Guild will assist in building a City of London fit for the future.

To support this, We, the Court of the _____ will:

- 1) Whilst being conscious of capabilities, consider the gender (sex) and ethnic mix of the Court, when voting on appointments to the Court.
- 2) Whilst being conscious of capabilities, consider the gender (sex) and ethnic mix of committees when voting on appointments to committees.
- 3) Consider how the public image of the Company/Guild is perceived in photographs and on social media, when attending City or Livery Company events.
- 4) Seek to introduce new people, from diverse backgrounds, to the Company/Guild, for example, through invitations to functions, as speakers or guests etc.
- 5) Consider the diversity of candidates when proposing them for the Freedom of the Company.
- 6) Look out for talented people, from diverse backgrounds, who could make a contribution to the work of the Company/Guild and encourage them to consider joining.

Signed by the Master: _____

Date: _____

ACF funding principles

1. Funders should provide additional and tailored funds to support groups, who have historically been excluded or found it difficult to access funding.
2. Build trust and acknowledge unequal power relations. Take steps to reduce barriers to access, involvement and fairness in decision making.
3. Application processes should be simplified, accessible, and non-discriminatory. Where needed, costs of ensuring access and inclusion should be funded.
4. Invest direct in organisations led by people with direct lived experience of injustice or inequalities, as they have community reach and trust.
5. When you fund mainstream organisations, ask for evidence of how they work alongside trusted grassroots and specialist organisations in the local community.
6. Have a clear outreach strategy using different communication channels. Work with umbrella groups and equality organisations, who can provide support.
7. Address unconscious bias in grant making. Ensure funding staff receive appropriate training to reduce risk of discrimination against marginalized groups.
8. Consult and meaningfully involve representatives of communities in funding decision making process. Do this through open and transparent dialogue, listening and responding appropriately.
9. Ensure decision-making panels meaningfully include people with lived experience and experts who can reach into specific communities and issues.
10. Ensure that payment models work for smaller and specialist lived experience organisations. This should include payment in advance, flexibility on overheads, core or unrestricted funds where possible.
11. Ensure that funding addresses legacy, and support grantees to build resilience for the future by funding infrastructure.
12. Ensure the requirement for evidence and data of need, does not prohibit funding for marginalized groups.
13. Use eligibility criteria that are not prohibitive. Adapt your expectations and criteria to the context of these groups e.g. governance, financial information.
14. Use accurate and non-harmful representations of people and communities in your language, imagery, data, stories, and fundraising campaigns.

Modern Slavery Statement – Haberdashers’ Livery

The Master and Wardens of the Haberdashers' Company and the Charitable Foundations for which we are Trustee (The Aske Charity, which includes the Haberdashers' Aske's schools at Elstree and the Haberdashers' Aske's Federation Trust), are strongly opposed to slavery and human trafficking. We strive to act ethically and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place within our organisation or our supply chains.

The Company's Values Statement – Solicitors’ Livery

The Company seeks to reflect the best of the history and tradition of the City and its institutions, and prides itself on being a modern organisation too. While it values and honours the best of the past, it also aims to embrace change, and to be forward looking. A vital part of this includes promoting a diverse and inclusive membership.

Our open culture is welcoming. Members, potential members, and their guests should always feel comfortable, valued and included, irrespective of their background, sex, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, age, and disability.

Our core values are integrity, collegiality and charity.

Statement about historic assets – Sir John Cass’s Foundation website

June 2020: As a Foundation, we acknowledge some of the wealth gained by Sir John Cass was through means of slavery and human exploitation. We have a duty to our beneficiaries and our community to address this legacy. We have already made the decision to remove the statue of Sir John Cass from the facade of our offices on Jewry Street and have made the below statement regarding the name of the Foundation. ...contd <https://sirjohncassfoundation.com/>

Statement about diversity – Goldsmiths’ Livery Company

There is no place for racism, or any other form of discrimination, in our Company or the Goldsmiths' Company Charity. We are committed to diversity, equity and inclusivity, as stated in the new Company Strategy (published 14 February 2020), and to solidarity with our BAME colleagues and communities.

Following events in this country and elsewhere sparked by the appalling and senseless killing of George Floyd, the Goldsmiths’ Company and the Charity have been reviewing efforts to address diversity, equity and inclusion within our organisations, and in the craft and trade we support.

We know we have much to do to achieve better in these areas. All this will require sustained commitment and substantive change, going beyond statements of intent and quick fixes. And it will involve collaboration with other partners in an industry-wide effort.

Until relatively recently in the long sweep of our history, the members of Livery Companies were mostly male and almost exclusively white. When we look at the membership of the Goldsmiths’ Company today, we are making progress on gender*. We have never asked our members or staff to self-identify by ethnicity, and we have no data on ethnic diversity. But we don’t need the data to tell us that we are not yet anywhere near where we want to be in having a membership and staff that reflect the diversity of the City of London, our home for nearly seven centuries.....contd.

<https://www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk/company/today/news/2020/06/24/addressing-diversity-goldsmiths-company/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT WORK OF LIVERY COMPANIES

Survey of black jewellers carried out by the Goldsmiths' Livery November 2020

<https://www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk/company/today/press/survey-black-jewellers/?edit&language=en>

Bespoke Diversity Charter by the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF GOLD AND SILVER WYRE DRAWERS

Diversity Charter

The Worshipful Company of Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers is rightly proud of its historical approach to diversity from its first Royal Charter in 1623 to the present day. Achievements include; admitting women from as early as 1701; in the early 19th Century being the first Livery Company to admit members of the Jewish faith; being the first Livery Company to have an African from Sierra Leone who was due to become Master in 2012 had he not sadly and unexpectedly retired due to seriously ill health in late 2010. Today, the company has a very disparate and diverse membership of all ages and backgrounds.

The Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers therefore fully supports the City of London's encouragement of the City Livery to adopt and promote a policy of awareness with regard to diversity. The company will:

- 1) Continue to be conscious of capabilities and consider the gender and ethnic mix of the Court and Committees when voting on appointments.
- 2) Continue to be conscious of how the public image of the Company is perceived in photographs and on social media, when attending City or Livery Company events.
- 3) Continue to seek to introduce people, from diverse backgrounds, to company functions.
- 4) Continue to look out for talented people, from diverse backgrounds, who could make a contribution to the work of the Company and encourage them to consider joining.

Finally, our Coat of Arms is a strong symbol of diversity and harmony from the very foundation of the company with its motto, "Amicitiam Trahit Amor" or "Love Draws Friendship".

Signed by the Master: Michael Gunston

Michael I Gunston

Date: 16th November 2020

Diversity Charter on website of Innholders' Livery Company

https://www.innholders.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Innholders-Diversity-Charter_Dec20.pdf

Article by Merchant Tailors about gender diversity in historic company

<https://www.merchant-tailors.co.uk/news/Freeman-Ellen-Langwith>

Lecture at Gresham College by Professor Richard Drayton 28 October 2019 on links between the City of London and the slave trade

<https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/slavery-city-of-london>

Created and collated by Alderman Alison Gowman

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