



Report from the F&L Committee Meeting on Tuesday 21 May 2024

Members Attending: IPM Paul Nash (Chairman), David Adams (Master), Sandra Raine (Renter Warden), PM Steve Hodgkinson, Snr. Asst. Janet Rivers and Asst. Mala Rao

In attendance: The Clerk

Apologies: PMs David Alexander and Robert Burgon, Charles Brooks (Upper Warden)

Item 1. Matters Arising:

- The Court had approved the appointment of Lvy. Julie Spinks as a Court Assistant
- The Court had approved the appointment of Debbie Abergil as our new Clerk. Adrian Mumford would become our self-employed Bookkeeper/Financial Assistant
- Provisional orders of 60 commemorative planters had been received, 30 from the Plumbers' company and 30 from the Gardeners' company. Firm orders would be confirmed by the payment of a £100 deposit, with £100 paid on completion. The surplus, c£100 a planter, would be used to offset the cost of the Coronation Planters
- The Court had formally confirmed the affiliations with No 1147 Sqn Air Cadets and 23 Army Cadet Detachment (Royal Engineers). They would mount a joint Guard of Honour at our Summer Festival on 3 July
- The WebOffice SLA was still awaited and would be raised again at the next users-group meeting
- The redevelopment of Carpenters' Hall would not commence before the end of 2025, by which time we would need to have found alternative office accommodation. The Clerk was actively seeking alternative premises. One potential option was the Vestry basement at St Magnus-the-Martyr and the Master, Wardens, Clark and F&L Chairman would be visiting after this meeting

Item 2. Company Matters:

- Livery Size. The recorded full livery membership had dropped to 399 because a reconciliation had discovered that named Corporate members were being erroneously named as Liverymen. There would be 12 clothings at the July Court, so there would still be a net gain during the year
- Mentoring. A revised Court succession plan was presented following requests from a couple of Court Assistants to defer
- Strategic Actions. The F&L strategic actions were prioritised. Some were felt to be more operational and will be revisited at the next meeting
- Dress at the Annual Banquet. Following a wide-ranging discussion it was agreed "white-tie" would be retained for the immediate future. The "Retention Working Group" of the Membership Committee was considering a survey of members and this would be included

Item 3. Admission Fee:

- The Admission Fee had only increased by £15 to £95 since it was introduced some 10 years ago. It no longer met the administrative costs it was designed to cover. New members also benefitted from a free meal for them and their partner after clothing. After much discussion it was agreed to recommend to Court an increase to £200. NB, this separate from the monthly

donation members are invited to make to the Charity, which replaced the original large upfront payment on admission

Item 4. Other Fines:

- Fines on appointment to the Court, and as Renter Warden and to Master had not been revised for at least 18 years, while quarterage had more than doubled in the same period. . They were paid in accordance with the Company Ordinances “to the uses and maynetenance and reliefe of this Companye”. It was agreed to recommend to Court:
 - Court Assistants’ fine to increase from £200 to £300
 - Wardens’ fine (paid only once on becoming Renter Warden) to increase from £300 to £400
 - Masters’ fine to increase from £400 to £500

Item 5. Company Archivist

- Company Treasures. The list of treasures will be featured in a new photo gallery on the website together with lists of Court members, officers and captioned Court photos going back two decades
- Digitising More Company Archives. The cost was currently prohibitive, potentially until the Company policy on the use of reserves had been agreed. Clarification on the progress of the transcription of earlier Court records would be sought
- Company Barge Banner. The Company Archivist would seek a quotation to restore the barge banner, which was in very poor condition. It most likely dated from 1911 being commissioned for the Coronation Luncheon held in the Guildhall. We would also explore the idea of approaching the Repair Shop TV programme to ask to repair it. The Repair Shop programme was located in the Court Barn at Singleton, which the Plumbers’ Company had paid to be constructed for its use by the Plumbers’ Museum Workshop Trust until relocating to Amberley
- Plumbers Hall Blue Plaque. The Court had agreed the proposal to seek approval for a Blue Plaque to commemorate the site of the Company’s pre-1639 hall. Vintner’s Company approval was needed, but progress with the Corporation was stalled

Item 6. Communications:

- The annual communications programme had been updated
- Std. Gary Lester had volunteered to be Asst. Webmaster
- Communications would be a routine item on all committee agendas
- Lvy. Dalton would prepare a simple guide to posting items on social media
- Lvy. Jason Clark would work with Master David Adams on “A Day in the Life of the Master” video and look at promotional videos connected with PPDS members
- Asst. Reynolds was working on new website hosting arrangements
- Hard copy publications would be limited to the Annual Report, annual calendar and occasional ad hoc items

Any Other Business:

- Climate Action Plan. Court Asst. Rao agreed to take the lead on the F&L committee
- Almoner. Lvy. Daphne Barber had accepted the role of Company Almoner in succession to Lvy. Caroline Walsh
- Event Reporting. Concern over delays to reports onto the website would be discussed at the Social Committee

Paul Nash
Chairman
28 May 2024