



**Minutes of the Social Committee Meeting
held at the Carpenters' Hall and on Zoom
on Thursday 23rd May 2024 at 1130**

Present: Charles Brooks (Chairman/Upper Warden), Senior Steward Philippa Stary (PS), Stewards John Wilson (JW), Chris Saunders (CS) and David Pearson (DP)

In attendance: The Clerk.

1. Apologies and Welcome:

Apologies were received from the Master and from Stewards Kevin Thomas (KT), Melville Gumbs (MG) Gary Lester (GL), and Jacob Ball (JB).

2. Previous Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2024 were approved and signed (with a correction that RW Raine was not in attendance).

3. Matters Arising

3.1 PS reported that work is proceeding in the Communications sub-committee and has written a job description for the Webmaster with Asst. Reynolds.

3.2 PS is creating a template for writing reports to go on to the website. It was agreed that while social events would continue to be written up by the Steward responsible for the visit, other Liverymen should be identified to write-up Company events so that different voices are heard. Names would be considered at Social Committee meetings and approaches made by the Clerk/Chairman.

3.3 It was agreed that the Webmaster should be invited to be 'in attendance' at all meetings of the Social Committee.

4. Creating a Company climate action plan

Asst. Reynolds's paper, 'Developing our Climate Action Plan' which received Court approval in April was tabled. The Clerk explained that Asst. Reynolds is seeking to have a representative from each committee to see what climate impacts may be relevant in respective committees with a view to Climate Action becoming part of the DNA of the Company. In terms of the Social Committee, there may be opportunities for abating environmental impacts.

ACTION: DP volunteered to be the Social Committee rep.

5. History Group

The Chairman gave the background to the History Group which had formed in the early 2000's, running one or two events a year and linked into the Social Committee but had become rather dormant around a decade ago. The new Hon Archivist, Asst. Michael Cooper is keen to reinvigorate the History Group on the basis that it is controlled centrally by the Social Committee, and has offered to act as Secretary.

Members of the committee were happy, in principle, to play host to the History Group again but to be careful to ensure that history events are complimentary to the Master's programme and do not detract from it. It was agreed that Asst. Cooper is invited to be in attendance at meetings to link history visits in to the social programme.

6. Review of events since the last meeting of the Committee

Thursday 29 February: 'Leap Day' dinner at Mar I Terra

There were about 30 in attendance for this well organized and enjoyable informal event. The only matter arising suggested that there is clarity about drink arrangements at any similar future event.

Friday 15 March: UGS service and lunch

This was a Company event, the lunch at Carpenters' Hall after the service being well received.

Tuesday 19 March: Museum of the Home

Although the attendance was a little lower than might have been expected (20), it was a good event, being well organised by PS and appreciated by those attending. There was a view expressed that slightly lower attendances may be for reason of several events in close succession

Monday 8 April: Annual Banquet at the Mansion House

There were just over 200 in attendance numbers probably reduced for the tube/rail strike and close proximity to the Master & Clerks' lunch (which had a record attendance). The large cohort of Stewards were thanked for the various valuable roles undertaken. Of those attending, only 52 were liverymen which was disappointing; thanks were expressed to three Liverymen who between them accounted for over 50 guests.

JW expressed a view that more would have attended if they did not have the considerable extra expense of the 'white tie' requirement. The Chairman favoured a single-question survey of Liverymen to understand the current view and whether there was a move to 'white tie preferred' which is increasingly used in other Livery Companies. It was recognized that great care is needed in the framing of the question(s) asked although referred to the F&L committee for consideration.

Two actions were agreed after further discussion:

ACTION: Most agreed that the music formula was rather tired so the Clerk would organise alternative music service providers for 2025, sourcing ideas from other Clerks.

ACTION: Freemen to be allowed the privilege of access to the booking system for up to 12 months after becoming a Freemen, the vast majority being clothed within a 12-month period.

Tuesday 30 April: Court and Master & Clerks' Lunch at Carpenters

This was a large event and overall went well, enjoyed by 124 attendees. There was one important problem in that there was no place setting for a top-table guest as set out on the table plan.

ACTION: A Steward to accompany the Clerk's Assistant in setting out place settings at all future events with a table plan.

A second problem was that the UW was on his own to welcome visiting Masters and Clerks at the top of the stairs for at least 10 minutes.

ACTION: All those in receipt of the timetable circulated by the Clerk in advance to check timings and do everything possible to adhere to them.

Lastly, the table for the sale of merchandise was not as prominent as it might have been.

ACTION: Seek to increase visibility of the merchandise table at future events.

Monday 13 May: Plumbers Lecture at Carpenters

The feedback on the new model - mindful that the Annual Lecture was primarily under the Ed & Tech Committee - was positive, the exception being that several of the 80 attendees would have liked food provided. The Chairman suggested making an arrangement with a local restaurant for a set menu after the lecture which was considered to be a very practical idea. A separate booking system was also recommended.

5. Forthcoming events.

Saturday 25 May: Reigate Priory Cricket Club (RPCC), Reigate
The lead steward is DP and there are 43 booked to attend.

18-20 June: The Master & Mistress Plumber's Break on the Isle of Wight
The Master reported that this is fully booked (50 Liverymen and partners) and that all the plans are in place.

3 July: Court and Summer Festival at Haberdashers' Hall
There are expected to be 12 clothings and a military award so a good number of stewards are asked to be in attendance.

Tuesday 10 September: Crossness Pumping Station and Engines Trust, Abbey Wood, London
KT has plans well in hand. It is hoped that a flyer can be ready to send in mid-late July.

Monday 16 September: Plumbers Table at Ironmongers
PS is lead on this event and the committee was pleased to agree that PS continues in this role after finishing as Senior Steward.

Wednesday 18 October: Installation Day
As ever, a full compliment of Stewards is helpful at this event. PS agreed to do the website write-up.

6. Events in next Master's Year, 2023-24

The Chairman has decided on four social events for his year as Master:

- A visit to the Kennel Club Art Gallery in Clarges Street with sit down lunch
- The Greenwich Royal Observatory in March with lunch at the Cutty Sark and possible optional visit to the National Maritime Museum. (DP to be lead Steward)
- The London Metropolitan Archive to see the Royal Charter and other material relating to the Company: this will probably be linked with the History Group.
- A morning visit Wiltons Music Hall and on to HMS President for lunch (JB to be lead steward).

The Masters weekend will be 17-19 June 2025 in North Hampshire and may include the National Rifle Museum in Bisley, with an informal lunch.

A visit to the London Proof House at the Worshipful Company of Gunmakers for a tour and lunch remains a possibility if a date can be arranged.

Dates for all events will be fixed before the next meeting of the Social Committee.

7. Any Other Business

The Chairman reported that Lvy Patty Grant had offered to be a Steward and this was welcomed. He suggested that all Stewards keep ears/eyes open for other potential candidates.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1325.

2024 meeting dates all at Carpenters' Hall

Tuesday 17 September at 1100

Wednesday 4 December at 1400 (followed by the Carol Service)