



Report from Court Meeting held at Carpenters' Hall on Tuesday 30th April 2024 at 1015.

Members Attending: The Master (D Adams), Upper Warden (C Brooks), Renter Warden (S Raine), Immediate Past Master (P Nash), Past Masters, Brunner, Lockyer, Cartwright, Paterson-Fox, Gale, Hodkinson, Stary, Burgon, Woolf and Rumley, Senior Assistant Rivers and Assistants Rao, Shouler, Wheeler, Cooper, Reynolds and Wellman.

In attendance: The Clerk.

Apologies: Past Masters, Rae, Moir, Alexander, Hamilton, Sneath, Wadsworth and Jones, and Assistant Wingrove.

Item 1: Matters Arising [from minutes of last meeting]

- **Coronation Planter:** It was delivered to Sandringham on 11th April and photos are on the website. The Gardeners' Company did the planting. The thanks of the Court would be conveyed to Liverymen Cheesman and McCourt for their exceptional work.
- 60 small lead planters had been provisionally ordered (around 30 from each of the Plumbers and Gardeners' Companies). These would be available from the Summer onwards.
- **Cadet Affiliations:** The IPM visited both 23 Army Cadet Detachment (Royal Engineers) based in Islington and No 1147 RAF Cadets in Barking. Presentations to the best cadet from each group will be made at the Summer Festival and they will jointly provide the Carpet Guard. Both cadet affiliations are keen to visit the Plumbers Workshop at Amberley.
- **Company Treasures:** The Hon. Archivist, Asst. Cooper, reported that around 90 images of treasures have been selected, captioned and will soon be on a new section of the website.

Item 2: The Master's Report

Highlights of engagements were attending the 15th anniversary of Medical Detection Dogs hosted by HM the Queen; the 'Learner of the Year and 'Female Skills' Finals for young plumbers (supported by several senior members of the Company); social events which had all been well organised by Stewards; two visits to the Guildhall to support new Freemen for their Freedom of the City of London ceremonies and a Chamber of Commerce workshop with Sir Paul Nurse.

Item 3: Committee Reports (see separate individual committee reports but of particular note)

- **Freedom and Livery Committee**
- The Court agreed that Lvy. Julie Spinks be invited to join the Court (in October).
- The Court unanimously approved the new clerk, after due process and interviews, will be the present Finance Assistant, Debbie Abergil. And the present Clerk will become the Finance Assistant. This will take place towards the end of the year. This saved around £11,000 in recruitment agency fees.

- Work is progressing on the Plumbing Professionals Development Scheme (PPDS) training and mentoring programmes. The Master thanked Asst. Shouler and Lvy. Tranter for their excellent continuing work on the scheme. The Court approved that members would become Honorary Freemen of the Company.
- Hon Archivist, Asst. Cooper gave a report on the plan to have a blue plaque to commemorate the site of the Company's pre-1639 hall. The next step is approval of the Vintner's Company. In parallel progress with the Corporation has been slow but we have the support the Vintry Ward Alderman, Sir Andrew Parmley.
- Court succession has altered: Asst. Poulton has move back to 2036, Asst. Flatt back to 2031 and Asst. Cooper forward to 2028
- Asst. Cooper presented a paper on Records Management which has been adopted. PM Lockyer asked about the long-term accessibility and security of digital records. In discussion it was felt that it may be necessary to keep both digital and paper records of such things as Court minutes.
- PM George Banks and Past Steward Ian Smith have both resigned due to ill health. Both will be kept on the Livery list without charge.
- **Finance Committee**
- The creation of a Capital Reserves Policy has progressed with a paper by Steward Kevin Thomas (a member of the Finance Committee): It links a draft policy to the development of regular longer-term financial forecasts. More work is required but it's a welcome development. The policy is expected to inform work on a 'root and branch' review of income and expenditure.
- The recommended increase in the admission fee (from £95 to £250-£500) was discussed. Views were: if too high, it may deter some from joining the Company through to a very low admission fee may not give a sense of valuing the Company.
- **Membership Committee**
- The Committee noted the recent and welcome surge of new applications and the second annual Induction Event with the Master and Wardens for recently joined Liverymen on 17th September in the Guildhall.
- There are now six Corporate members and a wine tasting event at Vintners Hall had been arranged for 13 June. A revised model of Corporate membership is being considered aimed at a larger number of smaller organisations at a lower annual cost.
- On 25 March the PPDS had an on-line introductory workshop for the volunteer mentors and a second is being planned. Several of the first cohort of PPDS members are due to attend the Annual Lecture and the application process for the next cohort would shortly commence.
- **Education and Technical Committee**
- The Trailblazer scheme has been disappointing due to low take up from industry and training institutions. The current general state of plumbing training was felt to be poor, although some initiatives in Government, for example, mandated CPD, offer some promise for improvement.
- The UK will host the World Plumbing Conference in 2026 for the first time since 1990. Planning has already started with the Renter Warden (who – if elected – will be Master in that year) to see how the Company can have a presence at this significant event.
- **Social Committee**
- A new Risk Assessment form that will be completed before each event by the responsible Steward. The number attending the Annual Banquet remained a little down on pre-Covid levels at just over 200 although this may have been due to the train and tube strike that had been planned for the day.
- **Investment Committee** No update as only 6 monthly from advisors and none since January Court.

- **Charity Trustees**
- Grants of over £42k have been pledged and approved already and the target for distribution in 2023/24 is £78k.
- PM Hodgkinson (presently Vice Chairman) had been reappointed for a further term of five years from October 2024. Lvy. Carol Joseph has been appointed as trustee from May 2024 and Asst. Reynolds as trustee from October 2024 (noting that the UW stands down in May).

Item 4: Plumbing Museum and Workshop Trust (PMWT), Amberley

- The consolidation of remaining material at the Singleton site and its accommodation at Amberley is still a challenge and will be included in a Trustees Strategy Planning Day on 23 May. There had been a successful visit of veterans with the Master to Amberley. And the need for more volunteers was also highlighted.

Item 5: Pan-Livery initiatives

- The Company is represented by Asst. Cooper on the Pan Livery Pro Bono group (PLPBIG) and he suggested we may wish to consider if we can facilitate pro bono advice on plumbing and heating for charitable purposes.
- There are now around 100 Livery Companies in the Livery Climate Action Group (LCAG). This is being driven by Asst. Reynolds, assisted by Lvy. Patty Grant and they have set out a Plumbers' 'Climate Action Plan': Each committee will establish targets and measurements for their areas of activity, leading to an integrated Company-wide plan by October 2024.

Item 6: Any Other Business Time did not allow this.

Item 7: Livery Admissions and Freedom Ceremony

- The following Freemen of the Company were clothed as new Liverymen: Donald Barron, Sean Conboy, Paul Hibbert, Maria Netley, Mark Pellicena, Roger Pinney, Peter Rowland and Peter Smith.
- LCpl. Jitendra Limbu and Cpl Jason Trotman received their awards were each made a Freeman of the Company.

Janet Rivers
Senior Court Assistant
10 June 2024