

## **Summary of the Christmas Court 2020**

The Christmas Court meeting was held on the 7 December via Zoom. All but one of the Court were in attendance. It was the first meeting chaired by the new Master, John Pulford, who welcomed Kanan Barot and Nanette Young in their new roles as Third and Fourth Wardens and the four new Court Assistants, Nick Bush, Ron Cruickshank, Sue Ells and Andy Miles, and also, Colette Stone, who attended as an observer. The meeting opened with an advent reflection from our Chaplain, Revd Helen O'Sullivan.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer, Chris Sutton, presented the management accounts which indicate that the Company should break even during this year. The Annual Accounts for the year ended June 2020, have been approved by the Independent Examiner, and it was agreed that these would be signed by the Immediate Past Master and Clerk. The Treasurer advised there were sufficient funds that loans made by those Court Assistants who had stood down from Court might now be repaid. The Clerk and Treasurer are to liaise and make arrangements for the repayment.

### **Membership**

The Chair of the Membership Committee, Kanan Barot, provided an update on the activities regarding Membership together with proposals for engagement and growth for the coming year. At the November Admissions Ceremony we welcomed three new freeman, one liveryman and one person who had re-joined, bringing the total number of paying Members to 175. It has become clear that some of those, who express an interest, find that membership of the Company isn't actually a good fit for them. In order to help clarify matters, as well as also encouraging those who might otherwise not see any potential for membership, the Committee have continued development of the Member Specification. CA Sue Ells proposed the draft Member Specification with a request for comments from Court, prior to its final production for approval and roll out.

### **Governance Calendar – Update**

IPM, Denise Fellows, presented an update to the Governance Calendar which has been refined by a small working group. The introduction of the Calendar was approved and the IPM and Clerk will produce a detailed schedule and calendar to ensure the timely production and distribution of all papers for future meetings. The process will be regularly reviewed to ensure challenges and issues are raised and addressed in a timely fashion and that all activity aligns with the wider Company strategy and the long-standing desire to be a vibrant modern Livery Company. Further consideration will be given to reviewing the sub-committee structure to ensure it aligns more closely with the five pillars of Fellowship, Education, Philanthropy, City Livery and Governance that under-pin the Company.

### **Master's Report**

The Master presented his first report to Court which included highlights from events attended both within the Company and externally and touched on the activities within each of the pillars of our Company. Highlights included the induction of new Court Assistants which all agreed had been much easier to organise over Zoom, allows us to efficiently gather together a group of busy people, without having to travel. The Master was particularly proud that at the recent briefing from the Lord Mayor our Company received two mentions, the first for our project Securing Future Prosperity and the second for our involvement in the pan-livery steering group work. Past Lord Mayor Alderman Sir Charles Bowman, Chair of the Pan Livery Steering Group described Second Warden Bob Harris as the 'mastermind' behind the recent survey of philanthropic giving by Livery Companies. The Master also

formally recommended the appointments of CA Nick Bush as Director of CMCE and PM John Corneille as Chair of the Nominations Committee and these were approved.

#### **Wine Committee**

PM Patrick McHugh, Chair of the Wine Committee, presented the annual report on the activities of the Committee and the status of the wine cellar. It was agreed that the Wine Committee continue to be fully engaged in all Company events and consideration be given to the possibility of identifying a new primary supplier of wine.

#### **Office Relocation**

The Company will need vacate Skinners' Hall in July next year as the building is to be refurbished. The Clerk presented a paper on the current thinking and plans for relocation and it was agreed that the Clerk and Officers progress discussions regarding the available options and costings and submit recommendations for agreement to the Spring Court.

#### **Any Other Business and Matters Arising**

The Court received an update on Securing Future Prosperity, an active project which aims to establish a platform that enables members of City Livery Companies to harness their wealth of knowledge and experience through guidance on a pro bono basis, to help millennials and close millennials restore their businesses to prosperity. The recommendations to progress were approved.

First Warden, Steve Cant, gave an update on the Charitable Fund Review the reporting stage of which are nearing completion. The final report of the Review has been published and is available on the Company website together with a supporting PowerPoint presentation.

The meeting closed with best wishes to all for the season and hopes for better things in 2021.