



Freedom Applications Committee

- Date:** THURSDAY, 7 JULY 2016
- Time:** AT 2.45pm OR AT THE RISING OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
- Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOM - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL
- Members:** Mark Boleat (Ex-Officio Member)
Simon D'Olier Duckworth
Alderman Peter Hewitt
Hugh Morris (Ex-Officio Member)
Michael Welbank (Chief Commoner, Ex-Officio Member)
Alderman Sir David Wootton

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NB: Part of this meeting could be the subject of audio visual recording

**John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive**

AGENDA

Part 1 – Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
3. **ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL**
To note the Order of the Court of Common Council, 21 April 2016, appointing the Committee and approving its terms of reference.

For Information
(Pages 1 - 2)
4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**
To elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 29.

For Decision
5. **MINUTES**
To agree the public minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2016.

For Decision
(Pages 3 - 6)
6. **FREEDOM APPLICATIONS - REVIEW VETTING PROCEDURE**
Report of the Chamberlain.

For Information
(Pages 7 - 10)
7. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**
8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
9. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION - That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Part 2 – Non-Public Agenda

10. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**
To agree the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2016.

For Decision
(Pages 11 - 14)

11. **RECEIPT OF TWO FREEDOMS**
Joint report of the Chamberlain and the Comptroller and City Solicitor.
For Decision
(Pages 15 - 18)

12. **MULTIPLE NOMINATORS FOR FREEDOM**
Report of the Chamberlain.
For Information
(Pages 19 - 20)

13. **FREEDOM BY SPECIAL NOMINATION - LIST OF POTENTIAL RECIPIENTS**
Report of the Chamberlain.
For Decision
(Pages 21 - 28)

14. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

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Agenda Item 3

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| MOUNTEVANS, Mayor | RESOLVED: That the Court of Common Council holden in the Guildhall of the City of London on Thursday 21st April 2016, doth hereby appoint the following Committee until the first meeting of the Court in April, 2017. |
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FREEDOM APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

1. **Constitution**
A Non-Ward Committee consisting of:-
 - two Aldermen nominated by the Court of Aldermen
 - one Member of the Policy and Resources Committee, appointed by that Committee
 - the following ex-officio Members:-
 - the Chief Commoner
 - The immediate past Chief Commoner until the election by Common Council of his or her successor
 - The Chief Commoner designate once elected by Common Council
 - the Chairman and a Deputy Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee (or, in their absence, a nominated representative of each Member)
2. **Quorum**
The quorum consists of any three Members.
3. **Membership 2016/17**
Sir David Wootton, Alderman
Peter Lionel Raleigh Hewitt, Alderman

together with the Members referred to in paragraph 1 above.
4. **Terms of Reference**
 - (a) To examine and report back on any applications for the Freedom referred to the Committee by the Court of Common Council.
 - (b) To consider informally any non-livery nominations that may be referred to it, prior to their submission to the Court of Common Council.

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FREEDOM APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE Tuesday, 9 February 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Freedom Applications Committee held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 9 February 2016 at 3.15 pm

Present

Members:

Alderman Sir David Wootton (Chairman)
Mark Boleat (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Billy Dove (Chief Commoner, Ex-Officio Member)
Alderman Peter Hewitt
Hugh Morris (Ex-Officio Member)

In Attendance

Simon Duckworth
Edward Lord

Officers:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Peter Kane | - The Chamberlain |
| Michael Cogher | - Comptroller and City Solicitor |
| Paul Double | - City Remembrancer |
| Murray Craig | - Chamberlain's Court |
| Angela Roach | - Principal Committee and Members Services Manager |

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2015 were approved.

4. FREEDOM OF THE CITY

The Committee considered a resolution of the House Committee of Guildhall requesting that consideration be given to the introduction of a salary sacrifice scheme in order to assist staff with the fees for the Freedom.

Members were advised that the Establishment Committee had also considered the suggestion and it had concluded the cost of administering such a scheme would outweigh any benefit and therefore it was not supportive. The Freedom Applications Committee supported the Establishment Committee's view.

RESOLVED – that the House Committee of Guildhall be advised that as the cost of administering a salary sacrifice scheme would outweigh any benefit, this

Committee was not supportive of the introduction of a staff salary sacrifices scheme to assist staff with the fees for the Freedom.

5. GUIDANCE FOR NON-MEMBERS INCLUDING LIVERY COMPANIES

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain concerning the circulation of guidance on the Freedom process for non-Members including the Livery.

Reference was made to ambassadorial Freedoms which emerge via the Livery and to the importance of the Remembrancer being consulted on nominations involving Ambassadors and senior politicians. It was therefore suggested that the Guidance be amended to include a reference to the City Corporation being consulted on nominations of this nature before the individual was approached.

RESOLVED – That:-

1. the Chamberlain be requested to amend the Guidance to include a reference to consulting with the City Corporation on more prominent nominations such as Ambassadors and senior politicians; and
2. the approval of the final wording of the Guidance be delegated to the Chairman prior to it being circulated to non-Members.

6. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no items of urgent business.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

MOTION – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act: -

Item Nos.

Paragraph(s) in Schedule 12A

9-10

1

9. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2015 were approved.

10. FREEDOM BY SPECIAL NOMINATION

The Committee considered and agreed a report of the Chamberlain submitting a composite list of potential recipients of a Freedom by Special Nomination (FSN).

11. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The Chairman referred to a question he had received on the control mechanisms in place for Freedom nominations.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There were no items of urgent business for consideration whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting ended at 3.55pm

Chairman

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| Committee(s) | Dated: |
| Freedom Applications Committee – For Information | 7 July 2016 |
| Subject: Review of the Vetting Procedure for applicants to the City Freedom by Redemption without the Intervention of a Livery Company | Public |
| Report of: The Chamberlain | For Information |
| Author: Murray Craig | |

Summary

The Committee has asked for a review of the vetting procedure introduced in April 2015 whereby candidates applying for the freedom were vetted prior to them attending an interview and to pay the fee. The intention was to protect the reputation of the City of London and to ensure that candidates who could cause potential embarrassment are not admitted.

Recommendation

It is **recommended** that the contents of this report are considered and discussed.

Main Report

1. The enhanced vetting procedure comprises of an online check under each applicant resulting in an additional tier to the process of applying for the freedom. The results of the checks are not disclosed to the applicant unless a problem is found and then the nominators are contacted. Each check is based on free online information in the public domain that may flag some of the following concerns, which seek to protect the reputation of the City of London:
 - Inappropriate or extremist personal views
 - Links or appointments to an organisation or company, with any improper history or bankruptcy
 - Links or membership the applicant may have to any inappropriate or extremist groups
 - Any impending court orders or arrests

A short pro forma of checks (shown below) is completed for each applicant with a maximum timeframe of 15 minutes per search. The search time is limited as it is possible to spend a lot of time accessing many links and webpages without certainty that they relate to the applicant, or that any useful information may be found.

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|--|--|
| Full Name: | |
| Address: | |
| Reference: | |
| Date Application Received by: | |
| Heard at Court Date: | |
| Search Date: | |
| Nominator Name 1: | |
| Nominator Name 2: | |
| Google – Name search: | |
| Google – Address search: | |
| Facebook: | |
| Twitter Advanced Search: | |
| Linkedin search using keywords: | |
| Disqualified Directorship - Companies House | |
| Issue(s) of concern: | |
| Other comments: | |

A number of searches under each category above are performed until a match to the individual can be found or ruled out. Firstly, basic details such as name and address are searched via Google. In order to assist these searches, keywords found in the application form such as the applicants e-mail address, name of employer or occupation are used.

Under the category 'Google address searches' information is often found (based on registered addresses) on individuals company directorships or other company appointments. Once a company name has been obtained, searches are performed on the company which can provide a review of the company and its conduct. A search is also performed on the individual using the Companies House Disqualified Directorship database.

Social media accounts are included in the vetting search – Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn (accounts found on other social media sites will be investigated if found via Google). Social media accounts are searched for in a variety of ways: firstly by using the social media websites own search tools which filter by various search criteria. If no matches are found, a secondary search is carried with Google using keywords. This can yield different results, or narrow the search. The intuition of the search user also aids the vetting process: e.g. an online image can be considered a likely fit to an individual by matching it against their age or occupation. Often, the same Images of an individual are displayed across more than one social media site, and this can also help to identify the applicant.

2. The advantages of the enhanced vetting procedure are as follows:
 - Potentially unsuitable candidates are spotted early in the process and not after they have been admitted to the Freedom
 - Enables an analysis of the background of candidates to be completed.
 - Protects the reputation of the City

- The knowledge that applicants are being vetted might make nominators less casual in their approach to nominating.
3. The following are observations on the experience of vetting carried out by the Chamberlain's Court staff some of which may be considered to be disadvantages:
- It is time consuming.
 - In a year only two potentially unsuitable cases have been identified out several hundred people vetted.
 - Any applicants guilty of wrong doing are likely to hide any record of this which can be done relatively easily on the internet.
 - Many candidates are mature in years and often do not have a presence on social media.
 - Common names can produce large numbers of results. First names provided on application forms are often not those used on social media.
 - Vetting is slowing down the application process; it takes longer to apply now what with the checking and then the submission of a monthly report to the Freedom Application Committee. This can have consequences if nominators want to put through a candidate speedily to coincide with a specific date for the ceremony.
 - The vetting process has generated a tier of extra administration.
 - There is no disciplinary process attached to nominating someone unsuitable. In the two cases so far regarding the case of industrial manslaughter the nominators speedily withdrew the application pending the result of Police inquiries. Regarding the second case of the Councillor being suspended from political activity for a year there continues to be correspondence about the unfair nature of the press report and how the Councillor resigned and then stood for re-election successfully.
 - Information on the internet can be incorrect or unreliable and the COL might find itself at the risk of bad publicity were we to delay a Freedom as a result of information that turned out to be incorrect.

Murray Craig
Clerk of the Chamberlain's Court

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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