

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2015
<b>Subject:</b> Membership of the Benefices Sub Committee	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk	<b>For Decision</b>

### Summary

The purpose of this report is to ask Members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee to consider succession planning for the future membership of the Benefices Sub Committee, by seeking nominations from all Members of the Court of Common Council.

The Terms of Reference of the Sub Committee are: '*to consider matters relating to the City's obligations for its various Benefices*' and this largely relates to the City of London Corporation's right as Patron to present (appoint) Clergy to a Benefice (ecclesiastical office).

Members are also asked to note The Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 and The Patronage (Benefices) Rules 1987, which seek to confine the exercise of Church of England Patronage; i.e. the right to present Clergy, to a responsible person who is an actual Communicant Member of the Church of England or of a church in communion with it.

Therefore, on receiving notice of a vacancy, the City of London Corporation, as patron, is required to appoint an individual who is willing and able to make the declaration of membership and act as its representative to discharge its functions as registered patron. In practice, the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, being a person able and willing to make the declaration, is usually appointed as the City of London Corporation's representative and this practice has worked well.

Members are therefore asked to give consideration to succession planning when seeking nominations to the Benefices Sub Committee. By widening the field of nominees, there will a greater opportunity to build a pool of Members who would be able and willing to make the declaration and therefore eligible to be appointed as the City's representative should the need arise.

#### **Recommendation, that:**

The Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee canvass all Members of the Court of Common Council in order to seek nominations for membership of the Benefices Sub Committee.

## Main Report

### Background

1. At its meeting on 26 January 2015, members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee agreed to waive Standing Order 18 (6) (c); so that the Chief Commoner/existing Chairman of the Benefices Sub Committee could be considered for re-election as Chairman of the Benefices Sub Committee.
2. This Sub Committee comprises 6 Members; 4 being appointed by the Grand Committee and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee are appointed as ex-officio members.
3. The Terms of Reference of the Sub Committee are '*to consider matters relating to the City's obligations for its various Benefices*'; this largely relates to the City of London Corporation's right as Patron to present (appoint) Clergy to a Benefice.

### Current Position

4. Members are asked to note that the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 states that *where the registered patron of a benefice is a body corporate or unincorporate (as is the case with the City) then, on receiving notice of a vacancy in the benefice under the Measure, that body is required to appoint an individual who is able and willing to make a 'declaration of membership', i.e. declaring that he or she is an actual communicant member of the Church of England etc., or is a clerk in Holy Orders, to act as its representative to discharge in its place the functions of a registered patron.* The Patronage (Benefices) Rules 1987 prescribe the forms to be used by the registered patron.
5. The above rules seek to confine the exercise of Church of England Patronage; i.e. the right to present Clergy, to those who are 'actual' Communicant Members of the Church of England or of a church in communion with it and appointment of Members to this Sub-Committee are made in the light of this.
6. The Comptroller and City Solicitor has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

### Options and proposals

7. On receiving notice of a vacancy in a benefice it is the practice of the Sub-Committee to appoint, as the City's representative, the Chairman of the Benefices Sub Committee; ie being an individual who is able and willing to make the necessary declaration of Membership, as set out above.
8. It is within the gift of Grand Committees to widen the scope for nominations to their Sub Committees, to all Court Members, in order to accommodate specialist skills or requirements. Members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee are therefore asked to consider extending an invitation to all Court Members, when seeking nominations to the Benefices Sub Committee. It is likely that this would increase the pool of people willing

and able to make the declaration, and therefore eligible to be appointed to discharge the City's functions as patron consistent with the above Measure.

### **Conclusion**

9. Members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee are therefore asked to give consideration to succession planning when seeking nominations to the Benefices Sub Committee, by extending an invitation to all Court Members. By widening the pool of nominees, there will a greater opportunity to build a pool of Members able and willing to fulfil the 'Declaration of Membership', should the need arise.

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