

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF ALDERMEN
Tuesday, 10 May 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held at
Aldermen's Court Room, Mezzanine Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 10
May 2022 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Alderman Sir David Wootton (Chairman)
Alderman Sir William Russell (Deputy Chairman)
Alderman Ian Luder
Alderman Sir Alan Yarrow
Alderman Sir Charles Bowman
Alderman Sir Peter Estlin
Alderman & Sheriff Nicholas Lyons
Alderman & Sheriff Alison Gowman
Alderman David Graves
Alderman John Garbutt
Alderman Timothy Hailes
Alderman Robert Howard
Alderman Alastair King DL
Alderman Prem Goyal
Alderman Professor Emma Edhem
Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney
Alderwoman Susan Langley
Alderman Bronek Masojada

Officers:

John Barradell	- Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Rhiannon Leary	- Executive Officer to the Court of Aldermen
Gemma Stokley	- Town Clerk's Department
Michael Cogher	- Comptroller and City Solicitor
Caroline Jack	- Executive Director, Private Secretary to the Lord Mayor
Nigel Lefton	- Remembrancer's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor Vincent Keaveny, Alderman Sir Andrew Parmley, Alderman Nick Anstee, Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli and Alderman Gregory Jones QC.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

The Committee considered the minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held on 30 March 2022.

RESOLVED: - That the minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held on 30 March 2022 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

The Chairman took the opportunity to congratulate Alderman Gregory Jones who had recently been invited to join the Lysis Advisory Panel as a paid consultant. It was reported that Alderman Jones had also been appointed Chair of the Infrastructure, Finance and Delivery Steering Group of the London branch of the Institute of Directors as well as to the Provincial Panel of Chairs for Bishops Disciplinary Tribunals appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

4. **GUIDANCE FOR LIVERIES AND GUILDS - CONDUCT OF VIRTUAL BUSINESS - FUTURE POSITION**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk setting out the current practice in respect of the decision-making processes of Livery Companies and Guilds, specifically in relation to the conduct of virtual meetings. The Committee were asked to consider whether certain aspects of the waiver should be made permanent.

The Chairman of the Magistracy and Livery Sub-Committee reported that this matter had already been the subject of some discussion in this forum as well as at previous meetings of this Committee. She added that what was currently in place was a temporary fix introduced as a result of the pandemic and that it was now proposed that elements of this be made permanent. She went on to add one slight correction to the wording of the recommendation, in that it should request that ceremonial business, election, installation or admission of any members or officers conducted by Guild and Livery Companies take place only on a physical basis *within the City boundaries*.

The Chairman of the Magistracy and Livery Sub-Committee also reported that she had been lobbied by the Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers who had highlighted that since going online during the pandemic, their international and non-City based membership had hugely increased. They would now like the ability to keep in touch with them but reported that it may not be possible for some to travel into the City to physically have their Freedom of the Company bestowed upon them and were therefore now requesting some guidance on this matter and questioning whether there was any flexibility in terms of conducting Freedom Ceremonies of the Company virtually – something which the current recommendations did not address. It was noted that the City of London Freedom Ceremonies had now returned to physical attendance with occasional virtual ceremonies still held in exceptional circumstances and a query was made as to whether this example could also be followed for Livery Company Freedom ceremonies. Alternatively, could this be waived for the Tax Advisers only or a decision that only a significant minority/percentage of these

could take place online. Concerns were, however, expressed as to a potential drift towards Livery Companies effectively becoming social clubs which met online only and rarely met in the City.

An Alderman spoke in favour of some flexibility here having now conducted many City Freedom ceremonies online. It was suggested that the position could then be revisited and reviewed in two years' time to assess how this had worked. Another Alderman stated that, whilst he was not against flexibility, he was of the view that this should very much be the exception and not the norm. An Alderman spoke in praise of the fact that the Tax Advisers had such a global reach and had attracted members from across the world, he was of the view that other Livery Companies should be encouraged to do similar as he felt that this was about projecting the 'soft power' of the City abroad and consolidating the emotional and physical connection with the City for Freemen abroad. He concluded that he was therefore less concerned about the physicality of such Freedom Ceremonies given the global nature of networks in today's world.

The Chairman surmised that the Committee were therefore supportive of insisting on physical attendance for central activities but were happy to see more flexibility introduced in terms of location for conducting Freedom Ceremonies for all Livery Companies who might want to request this.

RESOLVED –

- i) that, insofar as the Ordinances or By-Laws of any Company with Livery, Company without Livery or Guild contain restrictive or prescriptive provisions as to the location and timing of: a) committee meetings; b) social and charitable events; c) the binding of apprentices (subject to the requirement for the indentures to be entered within six months of the decision being taken in the Books of the Chamberlain of London) the Court of Aldermen agrees to allow such provisions to be determined by the Guild or Livery company concerned.
- ii) that it be agreed that ceremonial business, election, installation or admission of any members or officers conducted by Guild and Livery Companies take place only on a physical basis within the City boundaries.
- iii) That, with regard to Freedom Ceremonies, some flexibility be introduced as to how these might be conducted, such that a minority of them may take place virtually if requested.

5. APPOINTMENT OF SECOND ALDERMAN TO CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Chairman reported that the Court of Common Council had consented, at their last meeting, to the Court of Aldermen having a second appointment to the Corporate Services (formerly Establishment) Committee. He reminded the Committee that Alderman Sir Charles Bowman had already been appointed to the Corporate Services Committee.

The Chairman went on to propose that Alderwoman Susan Langley be appointed as the Court of Aldermen's second appointee due to her professional background and expertise.

RESOLVED – That, Alderwoman Susan Langley be appointed to the Corporate Services Committee alongside Alderman Sir Charles Bowman.

6. **ALDERMANIC ELECTIONS AND RELATED DATES OF COA MEETINGS**

The Chairman highlighted that there were currently three Aldermanic elections on progress that would see five candidates contest the election in the Ward of Cordwainer, two in the Ward of Aldersgate and two in Cornhill. The Committee were reminded that these elections would take place on Thursday 26th May. Thereafter, it was intended that a special meeting of the Court of Aldermen would be convened in order to swear in any newly elected Aldermen. It was also likely that further letters of resignation would be received at a future, special meeting of the Court which would trigger a second round of Aldermanic elections set to take place in July. It was envisaged that another special meeting of the Court of Aldermen would then need to be scheduled for 18 July in order to trigger any remaining rounds of Aldermanic elections for 2022.

An Alderman commented that a question had been raised at the last meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee to highlight that the current Aldermanic elections were not advertised on the Speak for the City website in the same way that Common Council elections had been. He questioned whether there was any update on this matter. It was reported that there was further work being undertaken on this by the City's Election Engagement Manager and that the current candidates had now been contacted to provide profile information and photographs for this purpose. It was hoped that this information would go live in the coming days. It was clarified that the names of candidates for each Ward were, however, already available on the City Corporation's own webpages.

RECEIVED.

7. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LIST**

The Committee considered the Outstanding Actions List which had been updated since the last meeting on 30 March 2022.

The Chairman noted that many of the items listed were concerned with what the Court of Aldermen did, how these things were done and the training required around them. He reminded the Committee that, at its last meeting, it had agreed to extend the age at which Aldermen retire by convention to age 75. This had been agreed on the basis that a Working Party would be established to look at the terms of office and tenure of Aldermen going forward. At the same time, it was recognised that there were also other workstreams progressing in the form of the Future of the Mayoralty Working Party who had submitted a report for consideration in non-public session today and a forthcoming Strategy Morning in September. The Chairman therefore questioned whether these matters might be better dealt with as a single workstream under the purview of the Future of the Mayoralty Working Party so

that it might also consider matters pertaining to Aldermanic tenure/terms of office. The Committee were in favour of this proposal and suggested that matters now be progressed on this basis.

RESOLVED: - That –

- (i) the Non-Public Outstanding Actions List be noted; and
- (ii) that completed items be removed from the list.

8. FUTURE WORK AHEAD OF SEPTEMBER STRATEGY MORNING

The Chairman confirmed that a Strategy Morning had been arranged to take place on 6 September 2022.

It was reported that the Future of the Mayoralty Working Party intended to submit a paper for consideration at the Strategy Morning. Further details on the arrangements and agenda for the day would be circulated to all by the Town Clerk in due course.

RECEIVED.

9. FUTURE GENERAL PURPOSES, NOMINATIONS AND COURT OF ALDERMEN MEETING DATES

The Town Clerk reported that it was the intention that dates for future meetings would return to being set up to two years in advance and that these would be discussed with the relevant Chairmen over the Summer recess period such that dates for the whole of 2023 and provisional dates for 2024 could be secured in diaries at this point.

In response to a question, the Chairman reported that it was entirely within the gift of the Court of Aldermen to consider whether meetings on a Tuesday morning were still the best option.

In terms of wider Aldermanic events/commitments, it was reported that Officers were discussing a mechanism under which Mansion House, Remembrancers and Town Clerk's events could all be brought together in one place and easily consulted by all Aldermen.

RECEIVED.

10. COL COMMITTEES FOLLOWING THE APRIL COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL MEETING

The Chairman referred to the information circulated by the Town Clerk ahead of the meeting detailing which Committees now had Aldermanic representation following appointments made at the April Court of Common Council meeting. He stated that it was helpful to have this information brought together in one document.

In response to a question regarding the recording of any outside bodies that Aldermen also sat on by virtue of holding the office, the Chairman reported that there was a central list of Outside Bodies and their representatives kept by the Town Clerk. The Committee asked whether this information could also be

drawn together such that the aggregate of all Aldermanic commitments could be set out within one document.

The Chairman went on to refer to the list of all Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs that had also been circulated by the Town Clerk. He highlighted that this was a live document and could be recirculated to future meetings when the election cycle would be complete. The Chairman also took the opportunity to congratulate Aldermen Gregory Jones on his recent election as Deputy Chairman of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

An Alderman made the point that membership of the various Aldermanic Sub-Committees was also not registered on the City Corporation's webpages at present. He questioned whether this could be amended such that a true representation of all work undertaken by the Court of Aldermen could be more visible. The Town Clerk reported that, historically, those meetings which took place in private had not been included here but that this could be revisited if it was the wish of the Court.

RECEIVED.

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

There were no questions.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no additional, urgent items of business for consideration.

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED - That, in accordance with the Court of Aldermen's Disclosure Arrangement (Standing Order 25), the public shall be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen have determined, having had due regard to the Disclosure Arrangement, that disclosure should not be permitted.

14. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held on 8 February 2022 and approved them as a correct record.

15. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Committee received the list of Forthcoming Events produced by the Events Team at Mansion House and the Remembrancer's Department.

16. NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Three questions were received.

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

The Committee discussed matters arising from the most recent meeting of the Future of the Mayoralty Working Party.

The meeting ended at 12.22 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Gemma Stokley
gemma.stokley@cityoflondon.gov.uk