

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF ALDERMEN**  
**Tuesday, 17 September 2024**

Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held at  
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 17 September 2024  
at 10.00 am

**Present**

**Members:**

Alderman Sir William Russell (Chairman)  
Alderman Sir Charles Bowman (Deputy Chairman)  
Alderman Sir Andrew Parmley  
Alderman Sir Peter Estlin  
Alderman Alastair King DL  
Alderman Timothy Hailes JP  
Alderman Robert Howard  
Alderman & Sheriff Gregory Jones KC  
Alderman Professor Emma Edhem  
Alderman Bronek Masojada  
Alderman Alexander Barr  
Alderman Christopher Makin  
Alderman Tim Levene  
Alderwoman Jennette Newman  
Alderwoman Martha Grekos  
Alderman Simon Pryke  
Alderwoman Elizabeth Anne King, BEM JP

**Officers:**

Ian Thomas, CBE	- Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Greg Moore	- Deputy Town Clerk
Michael Cogher	- Comptroller and City Solicitor
Caroline Al-Beyerty	- The Chamberlain
Katie Foster	- Remembrancer's Department
Caroline Jack	- Executive Director, Private Secretary to Lord Mayor
Gemma Stokley	- Town Clerk's Department
Rhiannon Leary	- Executive Officer to the Court of Aldermen

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor, Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli, Alderman Vincent Keaveny, Alderman Alison Gowman, CBE, Alderman Prem Goyal, OBE, Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney, Alderwoman & Sheriff Dame Susan Langley and Alderman Kawsar Zaman.

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 16 July 2024.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Appointments** (page 6) – The Town Clerk reported that the Court of Aldermen's proposed external nominee to Emanuel School had since been appointed directly by the Trust to another existing vacancy in their own right. This therefore left the Court's nomination still vacant. The position had been offered to all Aldermen with no expressions of interest received to date. This would now therefore be advertised to all members of the Court of Common Council within the standard vacancies letter for October alongside details of the specific skills that the School were currently seeking. A final decision on the nomination would then be made at the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen.

**Chairman's Congratulatory Remarks**

The Chairman congratulated Alderman Emma Edhem for having been made Professor in Practice for Space Economy, Technology & Innovation at Durham University's Space Research Centre, meaning that she therefore now held a dual Professorship at Durham.

It was reported that Alderman Edhem also now sat on the Strategic Advisory Board of Space Aye along with others from the Space Sector, MoD and RAF.

Congratulations were also offered to Alderman Goyal who had been made a non-executive Director of Greengage, a FinTech Company in the City of London.

**RESOLVED:** - That the minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held on 16 July 2024 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. **PRESENTATION - MEDIEVAL ALDERMEN - PROFESSOR CAROLINE BARRON**

The Chairman welcomed Professor Caroline Barron to the meeting who presented on 'The Aldermen of London in 1446'.

Professor Barron referred to the Corporation of London's records on the 'Journals of the Court of Common Council' which were, in fact, the records of the Court of Aldermen. Records of meetings began in 1416 and listed those present as well as meeting dates and the business of the Court which was presented in Latin. Professor Barron went on to share a collection of drawings of Medieval Aldermen, produced in 1446-7 by one of the Heralds, John Roger Lee, who was Clarenceux King of Arms. All Aldermen were depicted holding placards featuring the name of their Ward, the idea being that successive

Aldermen for each Ward would have their own coat of arms added to the placard. An illustration was also produced of the Recorder.

Professor Barron remarked on the two different hat styles shown in the illustrations. She went on to remark that, in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, there was a growing interest in heraldry and in chivalry generally - that this was mostly confined to the gentry and aristocracy but was also spreading to London. At this time, Edward III had also already established the Order of the Garter with the statutes of the order being revised in 1421, directing that the arms of all the Knights of the Order should be placed on the stalls in St George's Chapel. It was reported that the reorganisation of the Knights Garter was the work of William Bruges who produced the 'Garter Book' depicting all of the Knights – it was highlighted how comparable this was with the illustrations of the London Aldermen and the placards they were depicted carrying. The difficulty for the Aldermen at the time was that they tended to move around from Ward to Ward which made these placards difficult to construct and update.

Professor Barron went on to speak of Guildhall Chapel, stating that there had been an idea that each Alderman would have a stall here in the same way that the Garter Knights did in St George's in Windsor. This did not, however, come to fruition for various reasons. The Chapel, completed in the 1440s, became a courtroom after the reformation and lasted until approximately 1840 when it was pulled down.

The drawings of the Aldermen were not kept at the Guildhall and were never in the possession of the Corporation of London but instead remained at the College of Arms. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the illustrations were in the possession of the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Newcastle. His library was sold in 1938 at which point the drawings had already been separated. 16 of the illustrations were purchased by Viscount Wakefield who gave them to the British Library. The other illustrations were in the possession of another gentleman who presented these to the Guildhall Library. The British Library also decided to gift the 16 drawings in their possession to the Guildhall Library, reuniting the collection in the 1930s. They now reside at the London Metropolitan Archives.

Professor Barron focused in particular on the Alderman of Bishopsgate Ward, Thomas Chalton Mercer, who was depicted wearing a straw hat unlike the other Aldermen. She commented that he hailed from Bedfordshire and queried whether this hat therefore reflected an industry there at the time but welcomed any other theories that the current Aldermen might have on this.

Professor Barron reported that biographies of all 25 Aldermen had been constructed, remarking that some were also MPs, making it easier to gather background information on them. All of the Aldermen were married, with the exception of two for whom there was no evidence of this. Not all of the Aldermen left wills making it more difficult to find out about their family life. 17 of the 25 had surviving children, many of these just one surviving child, reflecting the population dip in England at this time. This was in contrast to the rest of Europe where the population had, for the most part, risen again following the Black Death in 1350. All but two of the Aldermen of the time came from outside

of London. Many also came from modest family backgrounds as opposed to dynastic families. The Aldermen at the time hailed from Norfolk, Newcastle, Bedfordshire, Devon, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Suffolk, Cheshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Somerset, Bristol, Leicestershire, Buckinghamshire and Kent. All, however, chose to be buried in London depicting that their loyalties lay here.

Professor Barron concluded by highlighting that she was currently Chairman of the London Records Society who published a volume of records relating to London annually at a cost of approximately £4-5k. This volume, complete with full page illustrations was likely to be more akin to £10,000. All Aldermen were therefore encouraged to become members of the Records Society to help contribute to the costs or encouraged to suggest organisations/charities that might be in a position to bridge the gap in required funding this year.

The Chairman thanked Professor Barron for her presentation and invited questions. The Chairman commented that there was a placard similar to that shown in the illustrations in St Margaret, Lothbury Church in Coleman Street Ward.

An Alderman questioned whether there were any particular periods in history where there was a dearth of information on the Aldermen. He highlighted that a Court of Aldermen 2024 publication was currently in production which would be a helpful snapshot of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Court. Professor Barron reiterated that surviving records began from 1416 and commented that, at this time, the Court of Aldermen was the governing body of the City of London, meeting as often as 3-4 times per week. The Court of Common Council met much less frequently, normally around 3-4 times per year. The 'City's Letterbooks' were more formal records dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, providing further information as to the evolution of the Court of Aldermen. She highlighted that the position of Alderman was originally hereditary but gradually became elective with those in each Ward able to choose these or present a choice of candidates for final decision by the Court of Aldermen. It was reported that the early records of the Court of Aldermen were mainly concerned with details of minor misdemeanours with bigger political issues much more carefully recorded.

Another Alderman commented upon the parallels between the modern Court and that which had been articulated by Professor Barron today. He commented that the current Court of Aldermen also represented a diversity of backgrounds and experience with many hailing from outside of London.

An Alderwoman queried what links the London Records Society had with the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) which were funded and managed by the City Corporation and that both seemed to have the same aims. Professor Barron reported that the London Records Society existed to publish records whereas the LMA was focused on the preservation of records for researchers to consult. In terms of assistance to help publish this material, Professor Barron reiterated that any financial assistance from the Court of Aldermen collectively or from individual Aldermen becoming members of the Records Society would be of great assistance.

In response to a question, Professor Barron reported that the Alderman for Portsoken Ward was depicted in different attire to the others given that he was also the Prior of Holy Trinity.

An Alderman referenced works by Alfred Beavan on the Court of Aldermen and also those of John McEwan. Professor Barron also commended the work of Alfred Beavan in documenting the members of the Court of Aldermen. She added that John McEwan was a post-graduate of hers.

An Alderman queried to what extent any work had been done to look at the early construction of the constitution of the USA and how much it may have been influenced by the City of London. He commented that New York also had Aldermen at one stage and that there appeared to therefore be some parallels. Professor Barron stated that she was not aware of any work examining this particular theory and commented that the French influence on the US constitution was generally well recognised. She highlighted that there were works by Ian Doolittle on the constitutional aspects of the development of the City of London and how this was kept separate from Westminster, the battles won and compromises made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in this respect. The Alderman went on to remark on the shift of power from the Court of Aldermen to the Court of Common Council and queried whether there were any works on this documenting the history of this drift.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Professor Barron for an extremely informative presentation.

In response to a questions around potential funding sources, the Town Clerk reported that this would be the subject of further discussion in non-public session where the Committee would either feel able to take a decision today or request a report to a future meeting before formally doing so.

**5. SHRIEVAL PLAN 2024/25**

The Town Clerk tabled the Shrieval Plan 2024/25 on behalf of Sheriff-Elect Jones and Sheriff-Elect Chalk.

Alderman Jones presented the Plan on behalf of both Sheriffs Elect and highlighted that this had also been drawn up in consultation with the Secretariat Director at Mansion House. Previous versions of the plan had been shared with the Recorder. Alderman Jones thanked the current Lord Mayor, SABTAC and to the current Aldermanic Sheriffs who had provided both oral and written briefings to date which had been incredibly helpful. Alderman Jones commented that both Sheriffs Elect were also very conscious of resource implications in the Shrieval Corridor at the Old Bailey. Some of the proposed events would therefore be sponsored by City law firms and others which would bring in their representatives and their various networks but would also relieve some administrative burden for staff at the Old Bailey in terms of processing invitations and the like.

It was underlined that the primary role of the Sheriffs was to support the work of the Lord Mayor in promoting financial and professional services, noting that the Shrieval year overlapped two mayoralities. It was noted that much of what was planned had been drawn up in consultation with SABTAC. The role was also about supporting the judiciary and these aspects of the plan had been discussed with the Recorder who was very keen for the Old Bailey to be used as a resource for promoting events concerning the rule of law. Alderman Jones referenced various lectures proposed in this vein such as those around the role of legal services in meeting the needs of business.

In terms of relationships, Alderman Jones stated that he was keen to embed his own legal networks into his plans such that subsequent Sheriffs may also utilise these if desired.

It was highlighted that the Old Bailey lunches would continue with mixed and target sector lunches as well as themed lunches included.

Alderman Jones referenced an Old Bailey 'City Side' webpage where content would include available text of lectures and podcasts, as well as introductory short films of the roles of Sheriff, Recorder, Common Sergeant, Judges and the Old Bailey. The aim was that guests to the Old Bailey would be given QR cards with links to the interviews. Alderman Jones made specific reference to a recent podcast from Joshua Rozenberg – 'A Lawyer Talks' which contained interviews with both him and the Honorary Secondary describing the role of Sheriff and why they took up residence in the Old Bailey during their Shrieval year entitled 'Living Above the Cells'.

Alderman Jones also referenced the Shrieval Advisory Group that he had established and who would be tasked with ensuring that the Plan and work to deliver it was well aligned to the objective of promoting financial and professional services as well as provide informal advice and relevant contacts. He added that he was keen to ensure that the wider Court of Aldermen were also engaged with the Shrieval Plan and its delivery, particularly those below the Chair around convening Old Bailey lunches for example.

In terms of charitable work, Alderman Jones mentioned the Sheriffs' Ball and the Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund and planned initiatives here.

An Alderman stated that he had shared the link to the Joshua Rozenberg podcast mentioned with all and commented that it was an exceptionally good piece in terms of showcasing the role of Sheriff. He also commended the alignment of the Plan with the Mayoralty was important and was to be welcomed.

Another Alderman also asked that the Plan consider the introduction of the new Court of Common Council given that all-out elections were scheduled for March 2025.

The Committee indicated that it was broadly supportive of the plan presented.

**RESOLVED** – The Committee received the Shrieval Pan 2024/25.

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 additional, urgent items of business for consideration.

8. **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.

9. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held on 16 July 2024.

**RESOLVED:** - That the non-public minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held on 16 July 2024 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

10. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk This report advising Members of action taken by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the General Purposes Committee of the Court of Aldermen, in accordance with Standing Order No. 46 (Court of Aldermen).

11. **ALDERMANIC AWAYDAY REFLECTIONS**

The Committee took the opportunity to reflect further upon the Aldermanic Awayday that had taken place last week, particularly the key objectives established for each of the three Strategic Working Groups for 2024-25.

12. **ALDERMANIC STRATEGY GROUP THREE UPDATE**

Aldermanic Strategy Group Three updated the Committee on progress on the 'Court of Aldermen 2024' document.

13. **KEY COMMITTEE ISSUES**

Aldermen were given the opportunity to report on recent, wider Committee issues of strategic importance.

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

There were no questions raised in the non-public session.

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

There were 5 items of other business for discussion in non-public session.

16. **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Executive Director, Private Secretary to Lord Mayor provided a verbal update on staffing matters.

**The meeting ended at 12.21 pm**

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Chairman

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