

Report of the Town Clerk to be considered in conjunction with Item 8 –

The Election of Chief Commoner

To be presented on Thursday, 10th October 2019

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of
the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

To elect a Chief Commoner

The job description of the Chief Commoner can be found on the City's website: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/about-the-city/how-we-make-decisions/Documents/Chief-Commoner-Job-Description.pdf>

Two candidates, Ann Holmes and Deputy Brian Mooney, have been validly nominated in accordance with Standing Order no. 18. The candidates were invited to provide information in support of their nomination and the following submissions were received:-

Ann Holmes

For me, the Chief Commoner fulfils two roles. One is concerned with the wellbeing and efficient functioning of the Court. It involves representing and caring for members and helping them achieve the high standards expected of us. The other involves acting as an ambassador for the Corporation. In my view, the roles are equally important and I'm confident that I am well equipped for both.

The vote of thanks I received, after chairing the Barbican Residential Committee, stated that I had an 'exemplary work ethic and affable nature'. These are key qualities in a Chief Commoner. I would also stress my persistence and my ability to handle conflict calmly and constructively, whilst having zero tolerance of any form of bullying or intimidation.

I'm an experienced public speaker, and knowledgeable about the City. I've lived in Farringdon Within - the ward I represent - for almost twenty years, and am a Court Assistant of the Worshipful Company of Cordwainers.

I've served on ten Grand Committees, two of which I've chaired, and am Deputy Chairman of a third. This has given me first-hand experience of the pressure points for both members and officers. I've also served on a significant number of sub committees and working parties. I'm a trustee of our Academies Trust and have served on the governing bodies of two of our independent schools and three of our academies, one of which I chair. I already serve on the Members' Privileges Sub Committee, and the Member Development Steering Group, two of the bodies chaired by the Chief Commoner, and ones which are crucial in giving support and training to members.

I'm ready to embrace the full-time commitment required of the Chief. If elected, I would operate an open-door policy and seek to engage members in setting my priorities.

Deputy Brian Mooney

My goal as Chief Commoner is to stand up for **all** members and to promote the Court and its work to a wider public. I am increasingly concerned about the burden membership places on us; we have more committees than members. We need a balance between what we give and what is expected of us, and we need to understand more fully what we aim to achieve and to explain better what we do. With the upcoming general election, and with an uncertain outcome, this is all the more important. We need a pro-active and experienced communicator as Chief Commoner.

I do not believe any member is opposed to standards, but we should develop a more collegiate approach to upholding them. We need a lighter touch, and we need to trust our members and rely more on common sense.

I have been a member of Common Council for more than 20 years, responding to the needs of my mainly residential ward of Queenhithe and maximising my position to challenge entrenched positions and bring about change by not being afraid to ask awkward questions. I have worked tirelessly as a backbencher, particularly in Planning and Transportation, and I chaired a highly acclaimed state banquet for Irish President Michael Higgins.

After graduating from Oxford (Magdalen College), I spent 30 years as a journalist and manager with Reuters working in more than 50 countries. I was a Pulitzer nominee and an American Press Club award winner for my reporting. I speak near fluent French, Italian and Spanish and basic Polish, Hebrew, Russian, German and Swedish. Since leaving Reuters, I have worked in international PR, published six books and written in The Times, Financial Times and various magazines. I am an underwriting member of Lloyd's. My recreational pursuits include sailing, mountaineering and long-distance walking.