

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF ALDERMEN
Tuesday, 5 December 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held at
Committee Rooms, Second Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 5 December
2023 at 10.30 am

Present

Members:

Alderman Sir Charles Bowman (Deputy Chairman) (in the Chair)
Alderman Sir Peter Estlin
Alderman Alastair King DL
Alderman Alison Gowman
Alderman Timothy Hailes
Alderman Gregory Jones KC
Alderman Prem Goyal, OBE
Alderman Professor Emma Edhem
Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney
Alderwoman & Sheriff Dame Susan Langley, DBE
Alderman and Sheriff Bronek Masojada
Alderman Alexander Barr
Alderman Christopher Makin
Alderwoman Jennette Newman
Alderman Kawsar Zaman
Alderwoman Susan Pearson
Alderwoman Martha Grekos

Officers:

Ian Thomas, CBE	- Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Gregory Moore	- Assistant Town Clerk and Executive Director, Governance & Member Services
Polly Dunn	- Town Clerk's Department
Gemma Stokley	- Town Clerk's Department
	- Executive Officer to the Court of Aldermen
Caroline Al-Beyerty	- The Chamberlain
Benjamin Chen-Sverre	- Chamberlain's Department
Michael Cogher	- Comptroller and City Solicitor
Paul Wright	- Remembrancer
Caroline Jack	- Executive Director, Private Secretary to the Lord Mayor
Valeria Cadena-Wrigley	- Community Safety Manager

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Alderman Sir William Russell (Chairman), The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli, Alderman Sir Andrew Parmley, Alderman Vincent Keaveny, Alderman Nicholas Lyons, Alderman Robert Howard and Alderman Tim Levene.

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 10 October 2023.

RESOLVED: - That the minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held on 10 October 2023 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Chairman's Congratulatory Remarks

The Chairman, on behalf of the Court of Aldermen, offered congratulations to Alderman Christopher Makin who had recently been made a Freeman of the Company of Communicators. He also congratulated Alderman Alastair King who had been appointed as a Trustee of the Royal Regiment of Scotland Trust as well as an Honorary Visiting Professor of Bayes Business School, City, University of London.

4. **APPOINTMENTS: -**

The Committee formally considered and approved the following appointments:

RESOLVED: That: -

(a) Planning and Transportation Committee / Planning Applications Sub-Committee

Alderman Hughes-Penney and Alderman-Elect Pryke be appointed to the Planning and Transportation Committee/ Planning Applications Sub-Committee for the remainder of this civic year in the room of Sir David Wootton and Alderwoman Martha Grekos.

(b) Freedom Applications Sub- Committee

Alderman Robert Howard be appointed to the Freedom Applications Sub-Committee for the remainder of this civic year in the room of Sir David Wootton.

(c) Magistracy and Livery Sub-Committee

Alderman Vincent Keaveny be appointed to the Magistracy and Livery Sub-Committee for the remainder of this civic year in the room of Sir David Wootton.

(d) City & Guilds of London Institute

Alderman Alastair King be appointed to the City & Guilds of London Institute for a period ending November 2024.

(e) Lord Mayor's Show Board

The two new Sheriffs – Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley, DBE and Alderman Bronek Masojada be appointed to the Lord Mayor's Show Board.

5. WARDMOTE LIVESTREAM PILOT UPDATE

The Committee considered a joint report of the Town Clerk and Comptroller and City Solicitor outlining the outcomes of this summer's Wardmote Livestream pilot and seeking views as to whether there was an appetite to pursue broader implementation.

The Deputy Town Clerk introduced the report highlighting that the pilot had been undertaken in response to a request from this Committee. Statistically, the pilot had not appeared to provide value for money in terms of viewing figures for the live event or subsequent voter turnout. The Committee were now therefore asked to consider whether and how to now proceed with this concept. The Town Clerk went on to highlight that, were the pilot to be rolled out for all, there were some logistical difficulties within certain Wardmote venues to note.

An Alderwoman stated that she did not think it financially or democratically prudent to roll out livestreaming for all Wardmotes and was therefore in favour of the recommended option of reflecting on alternative methods of engagement which might be more cost and resource effective instead. She went on to question the validity of the pilot itself stating that this conclusion could have reasonably been reached without this expenditure. She highlighted that, under statute, Wardmotes had to take place the day before polling day when the majority of postal voters would have already cast their votes. Also, in a business Ward such as Castle Baynard, many businesses still unfortunately failed to register or failed to take part in the election post registration and so would have little interest in a livestream.

The Alderwoman went on to refer to the data contained within the report stating that it was a false comparison to examine the turnout for Aldermanic elections in Castle Baynard with the other Wards listed. High turnouts were more commonplace in small Wards as opposed to in large, predominantly business Wards such as Castle Baynard. She added that other Wards had far lower turnouts in the March 2022 all-out elections but these were not reflected here and therefore stated that emphasis had been disproportionately placed on the July 2023 Castle Baynard Aldermanic election.

Another Alderman broadly agreed with these observations. They went on to question whether there was an access control as to who could view the Wardmote livestream whereas, admittance for those attending in person, was at the discretion of the Presiding Officer and these should generally be registered electors. Overall, they were of the view that this expenditure would be better targeted at more effectively engaging with the electorate and improving turnout going forward. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that there had been no access control in terms of online viewings.

An Alderman stated that they had been in favour of the pilot and exploring a potential means by which voter turnout might be increased. However, this had

clearly not proved fruitful and so they too were now in favour of exploring other methods of increasing voter participation.

An Alderman who had served as the Lord Mayor's Aldermanic Representative at the livestreamed Wardmote. They queried the total expenditure for the pilot. They also went on to question how much notice of the livestream had been provided by the Corporation and to whom.

Another Alderman stated that the postal vote numbers in their Ward was significantly larger than those who chose to vote in person on the day and that these voters submitted votes way in advance of any Wardmote. Because of this, Resident Associations in their Ward had arranged to hold hustings in the run up to postal votes being sent out. They went on to query whether there might be a helpful equivalent within predominantly business Wards that would be prepared to help arrange similar or whether the Corporation might fund these going forwards as a more effective means of engagement.

Another Alderman queried what was meant by the recommendation around reflecting upon alternative methods of engagement and what this might look like practically.

The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that whilst £3,000 had been allocated for the pilot, the total expenditure had amounted to £1,928. In terms of communication, the Wardmote livestream had been promoted via the notice of election letter, poll cards and via three separate emails during the statutory election period. He went on to comment that he appreciated the point made around the difficulties in comparing turnouts across different Wards given their varying sizes and components but added that he felt that the Committee were right to support the pilot as a means of testing whether this might positively impact upon voter turnout at relatively low cost. In terms of now reflecting on more effective means of voter engagement, he commented that this would involve further conversations with the Engagement Team but may involve how the City Corporation might encourage hustings or early conversations with candidates around voter engagement for example.

The Chairman requested that a future report setting out potential, alternative methods of engagement be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED - That Members: -

1. Note the content of the report and the findings of the pilot scheme
2. Decide against rolling out the programme and reflect on alternative methods of engagement which might be more cost and resource effective instead.

6. **REVISIONS TO THE MAGISTRACY AND LIVERY SUB (GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF ALDERMEN) COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk & Chief Executive proposing that the terms of reference of the Magistracy & Livery Sub-Committee be amended to bring the practice of electing the Chair and Deputy

Chair into line with that used to elect Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Court of Common Council committees.

RESOLVED – That the Committee agree the proposed changes to the Magistracy and Livery Sub-Committee’s terms of reference.

7. **SAFE HAVENS IN THE CITY OF LONDON**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services seeking support for the delivery of Safe Havens across the City of London Corporation buildings and estates.

The Committee were informed that the City’s Community Safety Partnership (the ‘Safer City Partnership’) had been working alongside the Safer Business Network in order to reduce and prevent violence against women and girls with this being one of the resultant initiatives of their work. Safe Havens (temporary shelters in which people could seek solace/assistance before continuing their journeys) had already been successfully introduced in other local authorities and the City Corporation were now also keen to introduce these in the Square Mile. Where there were suggestions that these be rolled out across the City’s own buildings, it was recognised that relevant training would need to be offered to security and reception staff, it was also recognised that, should Members be supportive of the initiative in general, further consultation would be needed internally to discuss any specific security and wider implications across the different buildings proposed. All of this would need to be satisfactorily concluded prior to any list of Safe Havens being publicised or the initiative being launched.

The Executive Director and Private Secretary to Lord Mayor stated that she looked forward to further conversations as to the practicalities and operation realities of the Mansion House being included within this.

An Alderman queried how the information as to available Safe Havens would be communicated with women and girls in the City in due course. Officers responded that these would be advertised through the City’s licensed premises and via the City’s Safer Business Network partners. Emails to City residents and businesses would also be sent with the scheme also featuring on the City Corporation’s public facing webpages. Those buildings identified as Safe Havens would also display a specific logo marking them as such. The City’s Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) had also indicated their willingness to help advertise the scheme. It was highlighted that it would not only be the City’s own buildings that formed part of the initiative as many others within the Square Mile were also interested in being accredited as Safe Havens.

An Alderman queried why the offering was being targeted at women and girls specifically. Officers responded to state that this particular initiative was being introduced as a response to the disproportionate level of violence against women and girls in particular.

Another Alderman underlined the importance of exploring the practicalities of this with certain, high security venues such as the Central Criminal Court and

Mansion House which was operating as a secure yet welcoming venue but also a private home. They went on to speak of the need for joined up thinking on this matter and a strategic response across the Square Mile.

Another Alderman cautioned that any insurance and health and safety implications for those working in and visiting the buildings earmarked for accreditation would also need to be considered and stressed that these matters should also be encompassed within any eventual training for security/reception staff and facilities managers.

RESOLVED: - That Members:

- Note the report
- Endorse the Safe Haven scheme in principle, subject to further discussions as to the operational practicalities with the specific venues named.

8. LIVERY CLOTH- AWARD OF ANNUAL GRANT

The Committee considered the award of the Annual Livery Cloth grant – a sum of £1,700.

The Town Clerk reported that it was customary for the Committee to consider the awarding of the Livery Cloth Grant at their December meeting each year and that, traditionally, this had been awarded to Providence Row, a relatively small charity helping homeless and vulnerable people in the City. The charity's recent Progress Review detailing how the Court of Aldermen's past funding had been put to good use had been included within the agenda pack for all to read.

An Alderman reported that she had recently taken up the invitation extended to all to visit the charity and had been very impressed with the positive work being undertaken here. She added that they were still very keen to welcome other Aldermen to visit the premises. It had also been suggested that a small group may like to go and help prepare and serve lunch one day to gain first-hand experience of their activities.

Several Aldermen spoke in favour of awarding the grant to Providence Row once again. The Chairman queried why the amount awarded had not been revised upwards in recent years. Others also stated that it would be helpful to have some background to the Livery Cloth Grant going forward. The Chamberlain undertook to look into these matters and report back to the Committee at a future meeting with details of all grants awarded by the Court of Aldermen.

RESOLVED: - That the annual Livery Cloth grant of £1,700 be awarded to Providence Row.

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

There were no questions.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

Vote of Thanks – Staffing of Lord Mayor’s Show

An Aldermen stated that they wanted to make the unusual move of publicly and formally moving a Vote of Thanks to those staff who had been critical in the successful delivery of this year’s Lord Mayor’s Show and moved the following:

That the sincere gratitude of this Committee be extended to all those personnel involved in the organisation, planning and delivery of the Lord Mayor’s Show weekend and Lord Mayor’s Banquet in the face of the particular logistical and public order challenges of this year.

The Show this year took place against a backdrop of increased activism and disruption to public events and coincided with one of the largest public marches to take place in central London. Despite a series of closures to the main underground lines serving the City of London on the day of the event, the route was once again lined with spectators which is testament to the enduring attraction of what remains one of the City of London’s key cultural assets. It is as a result of the meticulous planning and delivery of all those involved that the events were able to take place without incident.

The Committee wishes to record particular thanks to:

- the Pageantmaster Dominic Reid OBE for successfully delivering his 31st Show, and Laura Groutides in his Office for her tireless support;
- Commander Umer Khan OBE and T/Chief Supt William Duffy of the City of London Police for their extensive and diligent planning of the policing operation, and to their teams on the ground who made sure the Show, Remembrance Day and the Banquet were a great success;
- Richard Woolford MBE and the Resilience Team for co-ordinating the overall safety and security of the Show;
- the Environment Department, particularly Ian Hughes, Michelle Ross, Vincent Dignam and Larry Costa and their teams for ensuring disruption from road closures was minimised, and the streets were cleaned and returned to normal as quickly as possible after the conclusion of the return procession;
- the City Remembrancer and all in his office, in particular Bruce Hunt, who this year worked alongside the Pageantmaster; and to Fiona Hoban MBE, Jo-Anne Brown and all the events staff for their delivery of the Banquet;
- Caroline Jack and all staff at Mansion House whose efforts enabled the transition of mayoralty to happen so smoothly, and for their provision of hospitality to those viewing the Show from Mansion House;
- Lt Col Brian Fahy MBE and LONDIST for co-ordinating the military involvement in the Show and for recruiting and training the Marshals who are such an essential part of the integrity of the Show;
- the Communications and External Affairs Directorate in the Town Clerk’s Office, particularly Emily Tofield and all her team, including Sheldon Hind and Andrew Buckingham, for their promotion of the Show on the day and in the weeks running up to it; and
- Anne Pietsch in the Comptroller and City Solicitor’s Office who ensures the obligations of Directors of the Lord Mayor’s Show Ltd continue to be met.

Finally, the Committee wishes to place on record its gratitude to AD Health & Safety who for the first time this year managed the health and safety aspects of the Show alongside the Pageantmaster and City Corporation officers.

The Committee would like to wish all those involved every success as planning for the next Lord Mayor's Show, on 9 November 2024, gets underway.

REOLVED: - That the Vote of Thanks be unanimously supported and that the Town Clerk be instructed to formally record this within the public minutes of the meeting as well as to communicate this with those Officers named.

Collaborative Working

An Alderman queried whether various initiatives being fronted by the current Lord Mayor and his team such as forthcoming Coffee Colloquies could be incorporated within the Aldermanic Rolling Programme of Events circulated by the Town Clerk on a monthly basis so as to ensure that these were helpfully captured in one place versus across various different emails. This would also be an effective means of encouraging the wider Court to involve themselves more in the Lord Mayor's programme with very little additional resource/effort required. They went on to state that it would also be helpful to incorporate the Lady Mayoress' planned events here too going forward to make these more visible to all.

The Town Clerk undertook to liaise with the Lord Mayor's Programme Office on these points and to update the next iteration of the Rolling Programme document accordingly.

Exclusion of the Public

Ahead of the formal exclusion of the public to be considered at agenda Item 11, an Alderman queried under what part of the disclosure arrangement the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of this Committee had decided to exclude the public for the consideration of Agenda Item 13 specifically.

The Chairman commented that this had been determined in discussion with both the Town Clerk and the Comptroller ahead of publication of today's agenda. The Deputy Town Clerk highlighted that the Court of Aldermen's Standing Order number 25 set out the reasoning and rationale as to why things might be considered in non-public session. In relation to agenda Item 13 specifically, the relevant clause set out would be that relating to 'business which would be considered as non-public in an equivalent Court of Common Council (or one of its Committees) and also that relating to information provided under arrangements associated with legal professional privilege.

The Comptroller and City Solicitor emphasised that this was not a Local Authority Committee but that when public session had been introduced in this forum in order to increase transparency, it was recognised that local authority rules ought to be strongly mirrored. He added that the decision as to whether or not to pass the motion for the public to be excluded for certain items was ultimately one to be taken collectively by this Committee. In relation to Item 13 there were three particular issues to bear in mind –the provision of legal advice

which was subject to legal professional privilege, the likelihood that debate would include questions and discussion as to the conduct of individual Aldermen and the need for a safe space to have a full and frank debate on such matters before work was able to then progress and move into the public domain.

The Alderman responded to underline that the arrangements in place for the Court of Aldermen made it clear that there should be a presumption in favour of disclosure and stressed that this should therefore be the starting point for all matters brought to this Committee. They added that the legal privilege referred to belonged to the Aldermen and could therefore be waived. They added that they would therefore like to see the motion as to whether or not to exclude the public for this particular item be formally put to a vote. In relation to the potential for any debate around individual Aldermen, it was highlighted that this would not concern any commercially sensitive information but would be around tenure and the six-year convention generally which was of public interest.

The Committee proceeded to vote as to whether or not to pass the motion to exclude the public set out at Item 11, in relation to the consideration of Item 13 specifically.

Votes were cast as follows:

- IN FAVOUR OF PASSING THE MOTION: 14 Votes
- OPPOSED TO PASSING THE MOTION: 2 Votes

There were no abstentions.

The Committee therefore proceeded to Item 11.

11. 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.

12. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The Committee considered and approved the non-public minutes of the last meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen held on 10 October 2023.

13. THE OPERATION OF THE 6-YEAR CONVENTION FOR ALDERMEN

The Committee considered a report of the Comptroller and City Solicitor on the operation of the convention that Aldermen should retire after no more than six years in office. Following discussion, it was requested that a further report on the matter be brought to the next meeting of the Committee with options for

clarifying the nature and interrelationships of the various conventions and expectations.

14. **THE VOLUNTARY HOSPITAL OF ST BARTHOLOMEW**

The Committee considered and approved a joint report of the Town Clerk and the Comptroller and City Solicitor on the Voluntary Hospital of St Bartholomew

15. **MANSION HOUSE - INCOME GENERATION 2022-23 & HIRE CHARGES 2024 - 25**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the Executive Director & Private Secretary to the Lord Mayor reviewing income generation in the 2022-23 financial year, providing a brief update on the implementation of the Mansion House commercial strategy, recommending future rates to be agreed for the 2024-25 financial year and highlighting other relevant issues.

16. **MINUTES OF THE MAGISTRACY AND LIVERY SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the minutes of the last meeting of the Magistracy and Livery Sub-Committee held on 27 September 2023.

17. **MINUTES OF THE EMANUEL HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the minutes of the last meeting of the Emanuel Hospital Management Sub-Committee held on 19 October 2023.

18. **MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF ALDERMEN TO ADMINISTER THE SIR WILLIAM COXEN TRUST FUND**

The Committee received the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee of Aldermen to administer the Sir William Coxen Trust Fund held on 10 October 2023.

19. **STRATEGY GROUP TWO - INTERNAL PRIORITIES – UPDATE**

Members of Aldermanic Strategy Group Two updated the Committee on their work regarding Internal Priorities.

There was also a brief update from a member of Aldermanic Strategy Group Three.

20. **KEY COMMITTEE ISSUES**

The Committee were updated on relevant key issues recently discussed at Corporation Committee meetings.

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

There were no questions raised in non-public session.

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

There were no additional, urgent items of business for consideration in non-public session.

The meeting ended at 12.24 pm

Chairman

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