ITEM 4

Report of the Town Clerk to be considered in conjunction with Item 4 –

The Election of Chief Commoner

To be presented on Thursday, 8th October 2026

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

To elect a Chief Commoner

Two candidates, **Shravan Joshi, MBE** and **Deputy Deborah Oliver TD**, 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:-

Shravan Joshi, MBE

It would be a privilege to represent my fellow Commoners as Chief Commoner.

The priorities set out below reflect what Members have told me they want from their Chief over conversations these past months. I have listened, hoping to build upon the excellent work of my predecessors.

A counsellor to turn to in confidence. Years of service, chairing Planning & Transportation, remaining active on Policy & Resources and currently Deputy Chair of Investment Committee, have shown me how much depends on feeling supported. I am approachable, keep confidences and would be a steady point of counsel for every Member.

A guiding hand for those who wish to progress. Members aspiring to take on more responsibility deserve help to navigate this complex Corporation and put themselves forward confidently. Not with political advice, but genuine orientation. We welcomed a record number of new colleagues lately, each deserving to feel equipped to do their best. I would push for training programmes that serve the whole Court, including the modern tools that help Members train at their pace.

A reliable representative. The role demands outward facing representation of the Commoners and deep understanding of the Corporation's roles, which can only truly be learnt over time. I would bring my experiences to bear, further enhancing the Corporation's reputation.

An advocate for treating our own with respect. Debate should be robust yet inclusive, without fear or favour, free of the small discourtesies that corrode good discourse. Where disagreements arise, I would mediate where appropriate, holding us all to the standards we deserve.

It is a demanding calendar and I would give the year my focused energy. I put myself forward committed to do the work, to serve the Commoners and uphold the integrity of this Court. It would be an honour to serve each of you.

Deputy Deborah Oliver, TD
Serving You

I am standing for election as Chief Commoner because the role is fundamentally about supporting Members and strengthening the Court's ability to serve the City with confidence, integrity and purpose. It calls for a trusted colleague who listens, offers confidential advice and speaks up when needed. I would bring independence, fairness and a willingness to address difficult questions.

Members need a Chief Commoner, following predecessors, who is approachable, independent-minded, experienced and committed to ensuring every Member feels heard, respected and supported.

Leadership through service

Throughout my career, in military service, public life and voluntary organisations, I have believed leadership is about service: bringing people together, building trust, encouraging constructive challenge and helping teams perform at their best. I bring extensive leadership experience from over twenty-five years as a Territorial Army officer, retiring as a Colonel after command of a squadron, a regiment and a Logistics Group, and receiving the Territorial Decoration. I have senior experience across national organisations, including as an Executive Director of Royal Mail.

My Five commitments to you:

- **Be present and responsive.** I will make time for Members, offer a confidential sounding board and follow up concerns with clear responses.
- **Champion your voice.** I will represent Members fairly and independently, uphold constructive challenge and encourage respectful debate.
- **Support your effectiveness.** I will champion training shaped by Members' feedback, clearer information and action to remove barriers to effective service.
- **Bring the Court together.** I will encourage cooperation across committees and viewpoints, helping colleagues resolve differences and pursue shared objectives.
- **Enable Members to deliver for their wards.** I will work to ensure Members have the information, support and connections they need to represent residents and businesses effectively. By sharing good practice, encouraging collaboration and helping remove obstacles, I will support colleagues in achieving tangible outcomes for those they serve.

Experience to deliver

My Corporation responsibilities span policing, planning, health and social care, communications, member development and charitable funding. I chair Crime & Disorder Scrutiny and Professionalism & Trust and serve as Deputy Chair of the City Bridge Foundation Funding Committee and Health & Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

Above all, I would seek to be a Chief Commoner who listens carefully, acts fairly and works constructively across the Court. I would be honoured to receive your vote.