



A Guide to Joining

(This note deals with membership by Redemption which is followed by most members; membership by Patrimony and Servitude is subject to different rules)

Applications

1. Applicants require a sponsor who has known them for at least five years, and a seconder who has known them for at least three years. Both must be Liverymen. The Clerk can provide a membership list which can be used to identify Liverymen known to prospective applicants. In exceptional cases an applicant unable to provide a sponsor or seconder may be invited to attend an interview. It is suggested that sponsors arrange for potential applicants to attend a livery luncheon or other event in order to experience our fellowship. Applicants should then complete an on-line application form which, once received will be the basis for a discussion with a Senior Member of Court, usually the Master and a Warden for an informal discussion about being a Freeman and Liveryman of the Farmer's Company. For convenience, these meetings have recently been held using Zoom at a mutually agreed time and date. If as a result it is agreed to proceed with an application, the Clerk will circulate the form to members of the Court of Assistants.
2. The completed on-line application form goes to the Clerk, who circulates it to the Court of the Company. If any member of the Court knows of any reason as to why the candidate may be deemed unsuitable they have the opportunity to say so. The Court collectively have the final vote in a secret ballot, after which the Clerk writes to the applicant with the result. The applicant is Admitted as a Freeman of the Company subject to:
 - Completion of a Direct Debit Instruction for "Quarterage" (see below)
 - Payment of a "Fine" (see below)
 - Signing of a Declaration
 - Signing of a Bond with the Wardens
 - Signing of a Data Protection Consent Form
 - A form indicating if they wish to register for gift aid.

This step is required to complete the joining procedures; if it is not, membership lapses.

Freemen

3. Once these formalities are completed, the applicant is a Freeman ("has the Freedom of the Company"). The Clerk sends to new Freemen a Freedom Certificate, an important document. The status of Freeman is an interim stage on the way to becoming a Liveryman, which can readily be achieved within

a year or two. The Clerk provides information as to what is required. Briefly, it is necessary next to become a Freeman of the City of London which is an interesting and historic appointment conducted by the Chamberlain's Court of the City. We have a guidance note giving full details. It does involve visits to the City, and it is important at this stage not to allow this requirement to delay progress within the Company.

Under the Company's Ordinances, Freemen do not take part in the Governance of the Company, may not take any part in the Governance of the City, and if Company events are over-subscribed Liverymen take precedence over Freemen. Admission to the Livery is subject to a limit of 450 on the permitted number of Liverymen.

Liverymen

4. Once Freemen have the Freedom of the City, the expectation is that they will apply for admission to the Livery. This happens at a ceremony known as "Clothing" at meetings of the Court (in March, June and December). The Court meeting is usually followed by a Livery Luncheon at which new Liverymen are welcome to entertain guests. At Clothing, Liverymen receive their Livery Scrolls. Admission to the Livery is subject to vacancy and to the payment of the "Fine".

5. Liverymen will be invited to all events and, if they are interested, may be invited to join the committees that manage the charitable and educational activities of the Company. They can stand for election to the Court and might become Chairmen of Committees, Wardens and Master.

Direct Election

6. Applicants already holding the Freedom of the City of London may be elected direct to the Livery, the procedure being that admission as a Freeman is simultaneous with admission to the Livery on the day of Clothing.

The Cost

7. All members of the Company pay a subscription known as "Quarterage". It is collected by Direct Debit on 1 October annually and the sum is the same for Freemen and Liverymen. The rates of Quarterage is set by the Court. Please contact the Clerk for the current rate. A charitable levy forms part of the Quarterage.) We use Gift Aid on appropriate accounts to increase the value of the charitable levy.

8. Other costs are known as "Fines" are as follows and the current rate of Fines can be obtained from the Clerk:

- For the Freedom of the Company on joining
- For admission to the Livery on progression to Liveryman

There is also a Fine paid to the City of London for its Freedom of £150.

Finally Liverymen successful in election to the Court are required to pay a Fine.

Summary

9. At every stage – Application, Freedom and Clothing – the Clerk provides assistance and guidance. In turn, prospective members and members can assist the Clerk by completing procedures as requested and making payments when due; indeed these are obligations of membership and they are for life – “Once a Liveryman, always a Liveryman”.

For further details contact the Clerk. Please note that email is increasingly the main form of communication.:

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