

Worshipful Company of Lightmongers



FROM FREEMAN TO LIVERYMAN

As explained in the Information for Prospective Members, membership of the Lightmongers takes the form of three stages:

- Admission as a Freeman
- Attaining Freedom of the City of London
- Progression to full membership as a Liveryman

Having been admitted to the Company as a Freeman, the first stage, you should now proceed with the next two stages. You can apply to attain Freedom of the City of London as soon as possible after you have been admitted as a Freeman of the Company. Once you have attained your Freedom of the City of London, please advise the Clerk and he will then arrange for your progression to Liveryman.

The Company Recruitment and Progression Committee, who dealt with your admission as a Freeman, will support and mentor you right through this process.

Freedom of the City of London



This is one of the oldest surviving traditional ceremonies still in existence, believed to have been first presented in 1237.

The medieval term 'freeman' meant someone who was not the property of a feudal lord but enjoyed privileges such as the right to earn money and own land. Town dwellers, being protected by the charter of the town or city, were often free - hence the term 'freedom' of the City.

From the Middle Ages and the Victorian era, the Freedom was the right to trade, enabling members of a Guild or Livery to carry out their trade or craft in the Square Mile.

A fee or fine would be charged and in return the Livery Companies would ensure that the goods and services provided would be of the highest possible standards. In 1835, the Freedom was widened to incorporate not just members of Livery Companies but also people living or working in the City or those with a strong London connection.

Today most of the practical reasons for obtaining Freedom of the City have disappeared. It nevertheless remains as a unique part of London's history to which many people who have lived or worked in the City have been proud to be admitted and it is still closely associated with membership of the City Livery Companies.

Attaining your Freedom of the City of London

Application

To apply for Freedom of the City as a Freeman of a Livery Company is, in the vast majority of cases, known as applying by 'redemption'. In particular circumstances it is also possible to apply by Patrimony or by having served as an apprentice with the Company.

You can contact the Chamberlain's Court, which you can do by either email or telephone, stating that you wish to apply by 'redemption' (or Patrimony or as a Company apprentice

Email: Court.Assistant@cityoflondon.gov.uk Telephone: 020 7332 3055 or 020 7332 1008. The Chamberlain's Court is open weekdays 10.00am to 3.30pm.

Applications are now made online by submission of an application form, and the Freedom Fee, which is known as the 'fine,' is paid by BACs transfer: the fine is £170.00.

You are eligible for Freedom of the City if you are above the age of eighteen years; not an undischarged bankrupt and not having been convicted of a criminal offence. Applicants need not disclose convictions that are spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. If in doubt check with the Chamberlain's Court.

Documents required for this application are:

- Livery Company Freedom Certificate or photocopy;
- Full Birth Certificate/Adoption Order. A full Birth Certificate shows the names of parents and exact place of birth; a short one does not. It can be obtained from the General Register Office or local office where your birth was registered;
- A woman using a married surname should take their Marriage Certificate/divorce order;
- If you are using a name other than that registered on birth/adoption/marriage certificate you should take an official document showing changes e.g. change of name deed, passport or drivers licence.

Certified translations are required of documents not in the English language.

All documents apart from the Company Freedom Certificate are returned immediately. It is advised therefore that you also take along a photocopy of your Company Freedom Certificate.

If your name is on the Ward List (City of London Electoral Roll) there is no fee and only one appointment at the Chamberlain's Court is required, but you must state 'Ward List' when making your appointment.

Should you have any queries concerning your application for the Freedom of The City of London, you should contact the Chamberlain's Court on the details shown above.

Once your application visit has occurred your application (unless a Ward List application) will be submitted to the next Court of Aldermen for approval. Your attendance is not required at that. Subject to approval you will receive a letter from the Clerk of the Chamberlain's Court inviting you to make an appointment for your Freedom of Admission Ceremony.

The Freedom Ceremony

The second personal visit is for the Freedom ceremony, which takes place in the Chamberlain's Court at Guildhall. This is usually conducted by the Clerk of the Court or his Assistant. They take place each working date between the hours of 10.00am and 3.30pm. Friends and family, including children, are most welcome and although there is no special dress code, it would be sensible to dress smart but not formally, such as a suit for men, or equivalent for ladies, to reflect the special nature of this event.

Whilst it is a very traditional ceremony with, as you might expect, a degree of formality, you will be made to feel very relaxed as the aim is for you and your guests to enjoy it. There is nothing to be concerned about.

The Beadle escorts you, your nominators, and guests to the Court. You are invited to read the 'Declaration of a Freeman' and to sign the Freeman's Declaration Book. The Copy of the Freedom, a parchment document with your name inscribed upon it, is presented to you by the Clerk, together with a copy of the 'Rules for the Conduct of Life', which date from the mid- 18th century. The right hand of fellowship will be extended to you, and you will be greeted as a 'Citizen of London'.

Declaration of Freedom

"I (names in full) do solemnly swear that I will be good and true to our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth the Second; that I will be obedient to the Mayor of this City; that I will maintain the Franchises and Customs thereof, and will keep this City harmless, in that which in me is; that I will also keep the Queen's Peace in my own person; that I will know no Gatherings nor Conspiracies made against the Queen's Peace, but I will warn the Mayor thereof, or hinder it to my power; and that all these points and articles I will well and truly keep, according to the Laws and Customs of this City, to my power."

EU citizens may substitute "Our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth the Second" for "Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second"

Progression to Liveryman

Having received your Freedom of the City you can now move to the final stage to become a full member of the Company, admission to the Livery of the Company.

Once you have received your Freedom of the City, please let the Clerk of Lightmongers know and ask to be considered for election as a Liveryman. The calendar can then be arranged so that your name can be put to the Recruitment and Progressions Committee for progression to Liveryman who will make a recommendation to the Court.

Once approved, you will be invited to attend the Livery Admission Ceremony at the Court, held at Tallow Chandler's Hall, to sign the Roll of Liverymen and to receive your Livery Certificate. Both you and your partner will be invited to join the Court at its Court Dinner, at your own cost, a very nice evening and otherwise only open to Court Members, those being admitted as Freemen and those being clothed as Liverymen. Your partner will also be invited to enter the Court Room with you to see you become a member. Attendance of partners is by no means a requirement, they may well not wish to join you, of course. Court meetings are usually held in February, May, September and November and at the one in November partners are not invited as it is the Annual Meeting for members only.

Now a Liveryman

As a Liveryman, you are eligible to serve on one of the Company Committees. After two years as a Liveryman, you are also eligible to be elected on to the Court as a Court Liveryman and then progression to Court Assistant and ultimately through the main offices to Master.

As with most things in life, the more you put in, the more you get out and as a full member you can fully enjoy the dinners and events held in the wonder that is the City of London.

Contact and more information through the Clerk

Mark Houghton- Clerk

The Worshipful Company of Lightmongers

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