

Court Report: Wednesday, September 16th @ 11:30 by videoconference.

The first item of Court business was to clothe Liveryman Zoe Morgan. Liveryman Zoe now has the distinction of being the first to be virtually made a Freeman and then virtually clothed as a Needlemaker

The major decision taken was to defer the Installation of the Master-elect Philip Law until 30th September 2021 as a direct result of the impact of COVID-19 and the recent HM Gov restrictions on social gatherings, which meant the usual Court dinner and more importantly, the Installation Dinner had to be cancelled. After a great deal of consideration and following consultation with the Master, Wardens and Senior Past Master Derek Foster a proposal was put before the Court and agreed unanimously. Andrew Whitton will remain in office as Master for a further year, with Philip Law as Senior Warden and John Mill as Junior Warden, together with Junior Warden-elect, Michael Foulkes supporting him.

The Governance Advisory Group presented the Terms of Reference for Committees, Investment Oversight Group and Guide for Committee Members, which were all approved and adopted.

Also approved was a proposal from the Fellowship Committee to create a process for extending Livery Freedom to deserving Bursary and Prize Winners and Apprentices.

Our Clerk, Fiona Sedgwick, the Beadle, John Oakley, together with the Hon. Treasurer Assistant Simon Bentley and Hon. Almoner, Jill Cox were all unanimously re-appointed for a further year with the thanks of the Master, Wardens and Court for their hard work and efforts on behalf of our Company.

Reports from the Committee were tabled and the highlights appear below:

Fellowship Their work continues behind the scenes to provide monthly Webinars, following a particularly successful virtual Magician and Wine Tasting evenings, together with Newsletters, Twitter and Facebook updates. A review of our website is ongoing as we shall be faced with a “forced” upgrade by our current supplier.

Membership Another first. A videoconference interview took place with a candidate, who was recommended to the Court, who approved them for membership.

Functions Sadly there have been no functions and unlikely to be any in the near future apart from the Annual Service, which is currently (subject to HM Gov change) due to take place on 1st October as scheduled.

Industry Funding for a further 2 Arkwright Scholars were proposed and approved by the Court, bringing the number we support to 4.

A proposal to pay over funds to City & Guilds was also approved (the funds we grant will be matched by City & Guilds to support learners in an agreed area engineering qualifications).

A report on Forge Mill Needle Museum was given, which has been closed since 20th March, with staff furloughed. Both JoAnn and Chas are now back ensuring the Mill is working (one day per week) and an initiative is in place to try and link the Royal School of Needlework and Arkwright with the Museum, when it eventually re-opens.

Nominations The Master reported that the Committee have the task of replacing Liveryman Vic Flintham, who due to pressure from his publisher, has resigned from the Charity Committee. Past Master Pamela Goldberg has kindly agreed to take the Chair for the forthcoming year.

Charity Chairperson Vic Flintham report was adopted together with that of Past Master Pamela Goldberg, which recommended grants for:

- Royal School of Needlework – Stitch Bank
- HMS Trent – crew welfare on their initial voyage
- King Edward’s School, Witley – a further bursary partnering with Royal
- National Springboard Foundation
- City University – School of Nursing (Hardship Fund)
- The Charity Liaison Role description was tabled and agreed by the Court

Finance & General Purposes Past Master Colin Tiffin reported that our finances continue to be sound, but with the continuing uncertainty caused by COVID-19 caution will continue to be a watchword.

The Hon Treasurer Role Description was tabled and agreed.

The Master hosted a briefing meeting for all Liverymen on Thursday 17 September: 45 Liverymen attended by ‘zoom’. Highlights included:

- **Report back from the Court meeting:** the day before: in particular the decision to defer the Installation of the Master-elect Philip Law until 30th September 2021 as a direct result of the impact of COVID-19 and the recent HM Gov restrictions on social gatherings. Andrew will be Master for another year!
- **Briefing from Nick Macrae on the Company’s Charity support:** highlighting the success of prize winners at the Royal School of Needlework, our sponsorship of a student at the City of London School for Girls (*Sharwa Molla*) and our new partnership with HMS Trent. Sharwa joined the meeting and told us how pleased she is to be back at school after all this time!
- **Briefing from Ken Allen on Industry Committee initiatives:** support for the Needle Museum at Redditch (new video and Royal School of Needlework covers for the ipads) and our Arkwright scholarship awards. Both our Arkwright scholars joined the meeting to tell us how much our support has made a difference: *Keon Kalani* has come up with some great ideas to improve prosthetic limbs and is planning an engineering degree at Loughborough. *Tiffany Ogweng* has completed a computer science course and hopes to continue her studies at Imperial London.
- **Briefing from the Hon Almoner, Jill Cox** on her role and support for Liverymen during the pandemic. Jill is in touch with a number of our Liverymen and this is very much appreciated. Jill is working with the Fellowship Committee on initiatives to keep in contact with all Liveryman, particularly newer members of the Company.