



THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF FARMERS

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 in order to experience our fellowship. Applicants should then contact the Clerk confirming their wish to join and enclosing a biography. The Clerk will arrange an opportunity for them to meet the Master and Wardens for an informal discussion about being a Freeman and Liveryman of the Farmer's Company. If as a result it is agreed to proceed with an application, the Clerk will provide a form for completion.

2. The completed application form goes to the Clerk, who circulates it to the Court of the Company. The Court requests that applications are completed fully and legibly and in black ink. The members of the Court vote in a secret ballot at the next Court Meeting, 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

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 joining package including the latest Newsletter, List of Members and information on the role of Livery Companies in the City of London. Also included is the 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 Freeman 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 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 Freeman and Liverymen. Quarterage is £365, including a charitable levy of £95 (in the year of joining Quarterage may be adjusted). We use Gift Aid to increase the value of the charitable levy.

8. Other costs are known as “Fines”. These are as follows:

- For the Freedom of the Company on joining £550
- For admission to the Livery on progression to Liveryman £360

There is also a Fine paid to the City of London for its Freedom of £100.

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

Note: Sums quoted are those applying in 2017/18. They are increased periodically.

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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