



**Minutes of the Social Committee Meeting
held at the Carpenters' Hall and on Zoom
on Monday 3rd March at 14.30**

Present: Sandra Raine (Chairman/Upper Warden), Charles Brooks (The Master), Senior Steward Kevin Thomas (KT), Stewards Gary Lester (GL), David Pearson (DP), Melville Gumbs (MG) and Mike Patton (MP)

Patty Grant (PG) and Maria Netley (MN) via Zoom

In attendance the Clerk, Debbie Abergil (DA)

1. Apologies and Welcome

Apologies had been received from Stewards Jacob Ball (JB), Chris Saunders (CS), John Wilson (JW).

2. Previous Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2024 were approved and signed.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 New Stewards

New Stewards Maria Netley (MN) and Mike Patton (MP) were welcomed.

3.2 White Tie Feedback

The Chair confirmed this year's Banquet will be white tie. The Chairman had carried out research into the cost of white tie hire and of the banquet. The findings indicated that costs in relative terms had not risen. There remains a need to look at why members are not booking. Asst Damon Reynolds is working on a survey, and the findings of the research will be forwarded to Damon. The vast of majority Committee members present indicated a preference for white tie.

4. Review of events since the last meeting of the Committee

Wednesday 4 December: Carol Service at St Magnus the Martyr

The Chairman thanked GL for a fantastic job – 70 guests were welcomed, and feedback was excellent. GL has further ideas for next year to reduce costs. There was a discussion about advertising the event earlier and encouraging the membership to look at the website more often. A suggestion was made that a version of the calendar of events could be made downloadable directly to members diaries.

January 15, 2025: The London Proof House Home of the Gunmakers Company

The event was sold out with 22 tickets sold plus the Clerk and Proof Master were invited to join the group for lunch. JB was thanked for an excellent job. The Gunmakers Clerk had quipped that this was the first time that Plumbers had turned up on time and on the right day!

January 22, 2025: January Court Saddlers Hall

The January Court lunch was down on numbers and undersold – the contract was for 80 diners but only 73 seats were sold. The Chair will present a paper to court suggesting that the January Court Lunch be

restricted to Court, Stewards and invited guests e.g. new Liverymen clothed at preceding Court. This would allow for use of smaller and less expensive Halls. The matter was supported by the F&L committee. If the Court agree the Chair can look at a new venue for next January. This will also provide a longer gap between the Ladle Dinner and the Banquet which might increase attendance at those events and the Plumbers Table. There is was an appeal for more Stewards to be available as if some of them have guests it is difficult to both host and work. The possibility of fewer social visits is also under review.

February 4, 2025: The London Archives

The Master thanks CS and GL for another brilliant visit which worked well with two groups either side of lunch (19 in the morning and 13 in the afternoon). The groups were very well looked after, and special thanks were offered to Senior Assistant Michael Cooper who selected exhibits for the visit.

February 10, 2025: The Plumbers Table at Ironmongers

Philippa Stary (PS) was thanked for another excellent event and managing to accommodate members who turned up without booking. PS had printed place cards that included menu choices. The Plumbers had a party of 36 and with very few other bookings almost exclusive use of the room. The Stewards will try the Founders lunch to see if that would work as an alternative.

February 22, 2025: Clay Shoot

20 members and guests spent the day at Bisley for a very popular event which was run by Penny and Simon Malik who were thanked for their excellent organisation.

5. Forthcoming events.

March 17, 2025: Annual Mansion House Banquet

The Stewards were asked to aim to be there at 5pm. 6 Stewards have booked – KT, DP, MP, MG, JW and JB. They were asked to ensure that VIPs are taken through to the anteroom. The Master is to approach Past Masters to ask them to look after VIPs. The Court members need to know who they are hosting in advance and something about those that they are hosting. The Upper Warden speech will be shortened to 5 minutes to help events to flow. The Committee requested that quality chocolates be provided in the Loving Cups.

March 28, 2025: United Guild Service and Lunch

The Wardens will be gowned at Apothecaries for procession to St Paul's and lunch will be at Carpenters Hall following the service.

April 30, 2025: Court with Masters & Clerks at Carpenters

As many Stewards as possible were asked to be present to look after visiting Masters and Clerks. GL will write up for the website. It was agreed to place the Clerks Cupboard in a better position than last year and provide a price a list for the items. The Clerk reported an issue with SumUp which she and Adrian are looking into. Banks do not understand what Livery Companies are and having received our paperwork is now saying that they will not provide us with the service.

May 12, 2025: Annual Lecture Wax Chandlers Hall following by dinner at Brasserie Blanc

Stewards were asked to sign up to provide support to usher people to the restaurant (a two-course meal at Brasserie Blanc). MP will take pictures and provide a write up for the website. The Lecture has been moved to Wax Chandlers due to pricing issues. Only 80 people can be accommodated therefore early booking is essential. 5 PPDS students will be given Freedom of the Company at the Lecture.

Thursday 29 May: Plumbing Museum and Workshop at Amberley

Attendees will be welcomed by trustees. They will take lunch and can tour the museum. Lvy. Peter Cheesman will demonstrate lead casting. GL is organising the event but is unable to go so JB is taking over the write up. A flyer is to be prepared. DP and KT will attend and the Chairman will keep PM David Hamilton up to date. Stewards were asked to advise of their availability.

The Master's midweek break in North Hampshire: 17-19 June 2025

The break is to include Gilbert White's House and Jane Austen's House. PM Steve Hodgkinson is helping the Master with printing and details are expected at the end of the month.

July 2, 2025: Summer Festival, Barber Surgeon's Hall

There is the possibility of a VVIP and it is planned is to sign the Armed Forces Covenant. At least 4 Stewards are required, so far 5 are available.

September 10, 2025: Royal Kennel Club Art Gallery, Clarges Street

The lead Steward will be PG, 3 Stewards are available.

6. 2025/26 Social Programme and History Group

The Upper Warden and DP are progressing events to include a tour of the House of Lords; a walking tour of Huguenot Spitalfields including Dennis Severs House; a behind the scenes visit to the Royal Opera House; and a visit to the Globe plus optional play, (if current costing can be negotiated down by GL). The Masters break is booked and will be held in Durham & Northumberland for 3 nights from 8-11 June 2026. The PMWT visit will be badged as a history group event and a lecture on a lead related subject which Senior Assistant Michael Cooper has kindly agreed to help organise.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Committee Website Engagement

The need to feedback on all events was stressed in order to keep the website up to date. PG will write a piece on the future of Plumbing and inventions.

7.2 Climate Action Plan of the committee

DP & PG submitted a draft to Asst Damon Reynolds which was confirmed and signed off. There is a need to clarify if there is anything further to be done and this will be revisited at the next meeting if necessary.

7.3 Wheelchairs

It was noted that we need to be conscious of seating guests requiring wheelchairs e.g. allowing access room and not positioning them too close to doorways.

7.4 Branded Clothing

The Committee were asked to promote to members our online shop at the Dropped Stitch at the April Court lunch, we receive a small return for every item sold. PG offered to produce suggestions for a new Ladies scarf and will approach this with sensitivity.

7.5 Installers Show

The Committee were invited to promote attendance and volunteering to staff the Company stand at the Installers Show at the NEC in Birmingham from June 24-26. Volunteers can speak to the Chairman if they wish, or approach the Chairman of E&T, Julie Spinks

7.6 PM Geoff Marsh Celebration of Life, 8th May 2025 at St Magnus the Martyr

PM Marsh was a much respected and influential member of the Company for many years. The Company is assisting the family in organising this service. Stewards are welcome to attend and were asked to kindly keep a stewardly eye open to help with issues that arise.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 16.15.

2025 meetings all at Carpenters' Hall *

Wednesday 21 May at 1030

Tuesday 16 September at 1100 *

Wednesday 10 December at 1400 * (followed by the Carol Service)

* The Company Office moves to Painter-Stainers' Hall during August 2025