



For The Nursing Profession - Past, Present & Future

**Report to the Annual Assembly
May 5th 2021
Frances Davies, Master**

Wardens, Court Assistants, Freeman

It is very good to see so many of you here this afternoon and welcome to The Company of Nurses Annual Assembly. In common with many Livery Companies, our Ordinances dictate that the Freedom shall meet in Assembly once a year, when the Master will address the Company. If and when we achieve Livery status and have our own Liverymen, this will become our Common Hall.

We are here today to affirm the election of the new Master, Upper Warden and Middle Warden to the Company. And for me to give a brief summary of my Master's period of office. We will also receive a report from the Chair of the Charitable Trust, the annual financial statements from the Renter Warden and consider any matters on which fourteen days' notice in writing has been given to the Honorary Clerk. I can inform the meeting that we have received no questions for any other business.

As you are aware, due to the pandemic, our Immediate Past Master continued her term of office until the Annual Assembly that we held last October and gave us a full account of her time as Master. I was installed as Master during that meeting and subject to agreement to my election in a short while, I will continue as Master for the next year. We are then back on track for our stated cycle of business with the Annual Assembly in April next year, to be followed by the installation of the next Master at our banquet in May.

I will therefore provide a summary of my time in office so far and talk a little of the plans we have for the year ahead.

Although we have not been meeting face to face, I can report that it has been a busy time albeit without the opportunity to celebrate some of the City events that are so much part of the Livery calendar. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Honorary Clerk, John Allen who has managed to keep me on track in these difficult circumstances. Managing the business remotely brings a different dimension and the opportunity to meet and discuss matters in person has been lost. We are so lucky to have John who is such an established and experienced Clerk and without him this role would be very much harder. Kerry Hamer Nel our assistant Clerk has provided much appreciated support and we

have also been delighted to see Martin Whitehead, our Beadle, at our virtual declarations and other events. Thank you all and I am looking forward to seeing you in person.

The Company continues to grow and now has very sound roots. We have a healthy operating fund and a membership of 301 nurses from many backgrounds. 150 of those Freeman have become Bicentennial Freeman and I must thank you for making this commitment to supporting the Company in its progression. This unique membership was introduced to celebrate 2020 and the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife and it will be closed for application at the end of May. Still time if you wish to apply, so please do get in touch.

The Court is the governing body of the Company and meets quarterly. The Court is comprised of the Master, Wardens and Court Assistants and in order to become a member of the Court, it is necessary to have served on one of the standing committees for a period of time and/or to have demonstrated a substantial contribution to the Company and to have made a commitment to enter the line of succession to Master. The Court sets out the objectives for the Company and holds a strategy day each year to assess progress against delivering the objectives and to agree priorities for the year ahead. The Immediate Past Master reported to us at the last Annual Assembly in October, so I will try not to repeat the achievements and so I will focus on the time since I was installed.

As a Court we met for the strategy day in January of this year to set the direction for the year ahead. We agreed that our main priority is to prepare for the next stage of progression to becoming the Worshipful Company of Nurses. We hope and anticipate that this will occur within the next two to three years. In order to achieve this, we need to demonstrate that we meet the criteria set out by the Court of Aldermen.

Whilst we are confident that the Company will be able to meet the criteria there is still work to be done. We need to ensure that we have sufficient financial stability in our operating budget to demonstrate that we are sustainable for many years to come. We require sufficient Freeman who are Free of the City of London who will be eligible to become Liverymen of the Company. We want to ensure that we continue to be inclusive and welcoming in order to continue to attract new members and to enable us to maintain an affordable quarterage. To that end we have set ourselves some targets to deliver which include doubling our membership in five years and building a healthy capital. We are also focussing on ensuring that the membership of our Company represents our profession, and we can demonstrate a healthy approach to equality diversity and inclusion (EDI). I have set up a steering group that will coordinate this activity for the Court and ensure that we have a sufficient momentum to deliver what we have set out to do.

To date the Court has approved a Statement on EDI and agreed that we shall monitor the protected characteristics of our members. Thank you to Founder

Warden Anne Milton who has led this work for us ably supported by Bicentennial Freeman Dickon Weir Hughes.

At a recent event we asked our Freeman how they could help with increasing our membership – a ‘Find a Friend’ scheme was suggested which we would encourage all of our Freeman to undertake. It was clear that they would find it helpful to have some supporting literature with information about the Livery and specifically about the Company of Nurses to help with this approach. We are in the process of producing this literature and hope that this will be available soon.

We will also require a Grant of Arms once we become a Worshipful Company and the work for this is also included in our priorities. We hope to apply to the College of Arms early next year. It takes some time for a design to be created and agreed so in order to be ready we need to start now. Later in the year we will be giving you more information and launching an appeal to help with the costs for this work.

Fellowship, benevolence and education underpins all that we do and whilst I know that some of you are already familiar with the work and ethos of the Company of Nurses, the main objectives are:

To enable friendship and fellowship for all nurses throughout the UK.

To establish a Charitable Trust fund for nurses.

To further education and professional development, the promotion of the nursing profession and its standards of excellence and integrity.

The Company of Nurses, along with all the Livery Companies and Guilds, must also support the work of the Lord Mayor and the Aldermen in their charitable work and City traditions.

The standing committees of the Company are where the work takes place to meet these objectives. All committees – Nomination, Communications, Social, Education & Professional Development, Membership and Finance & General Purposes have continued meeting virtually since the end of March 2020 and I will tell you briefly about the work that they have been doing in the past six months.

All of those who take part in Committee work are volunteers and I must say a huge thank you to them all on behalf of the Company. We have achieved so much in a relatively short time and it is down to the work that they do and the support that our Freeman give that means we have made so much progress.

The **Nomination Committee** has now met several times since it was formed last year. I am pleased to report that we have appointed Carol Law as our Archivist and Trevor Bott as Assistant Archivist. They are busy developing the work required and I look forward to reporting back about progress later in the year. We are in a unique position to be able to capture our history right from our inception and we will ensure that we do this in a comprehensive way.

At the last meeting we agreed that we would appoint a Military Liaison Officer and therefore we are seeking expressions of interest. Please do contact the

Honorary Clerk if you wish to be considered for this role. The Nomination Committee is also pleased to hear from any Freemen who might be interested in serving on one of the committees. There are vacancies on the Membership, Communications and Education and Professional Development committees. If you think you have specific skills in any of those areas do please get in touch with the Honorary Clerk or have a word with myself or the Chair of the Committee to find out more.

The **Communications Committee** have been busy making sure the website is updated and thank you to our Webmaster Col Stephen Oxlade of New Valley Web Design for his expertise and efficiency to ensure that the website has all our latest news and information regularly posted. We are currently working on our Spring Newsletter which you will receive soon. Claire Chitty manages our Facebook page and Foundation Past Master Brenda Griffiths our Twitter account. Thank you to both of them for promoting our Company on social media so successfully.

The **Social Committee** continues its hard work in organising a huge and varied social programme and has had to be fleet of foot in managing the calendar whilst we have all been seeking clarity about what we are allowed to do. Without doubt the virtual events have proved very popular and have enabled those to participate who might otherwise not have been able to. We will certainly continue to provide more of these going forward as well as the face-to-face events in our calendar scheduled for later in the year, all things being equal. We have enjoyed virtual walks, cheese tasting, talks and quizzes. The Committee provide us with regular updates about upcoming events and I thank them for all of their hard work.

The **Education and professional Development Committee** have also been busy and we recently enjoyed a virtual evening hearing from two of our recipients of the Chantry Robinson Fund who were sponsored to undertake a module in Healthcare for the Homeless. We also heard from several of our own Freemen who were involved in setting up the Nightingale Hospital in London. An amazing achievement.

The Committee is progressing the outreach work into schools and colleges to engage with young people in career choices via the Livery Schools Platform and will shortly be launching a Coaching and Mentoring scheme which you will hear more about very soon. Thank you for providing with such a varied and interesting programme.

The **Membership Committee** continues to do an enormous amount of work to ensure that all membership enquiries receive a speedy response and that our membership records are accurate and stored safely. For many of our Freemen, this committee is their first point of contact and is vital to the continuing success of the Company. In order to make sure that the membership application process runs smoothly and efficiently, the team meet monthly to discuss the most recent applications and work closely with the Clerk's office. We have recently updated our membership database and we will be sending out a form with your newsletter for you to complete so that we can ensure that our records are correct. Please do send it back even if nothing has changed. This can be done

easily online but you can also post it back to us. We will also be including a monitoring form for protected characteristics which will be anonymous, but is important that we capture this information. I urge to complete this too.

The **Finance and General Purposes Committee** comprises of the Founder Wardens with the Renter Warden in attendance and is responsible for oversight of the Company's finances, administration and development. As with all the other standing committees, it reports to the Court.

In support of the Lord Mayor, I have attended several meetings with fellow Masters and the Lord Mayor where we have discussed the issues facing the Livery Companies during this year. All have adapted to the current situation and like us have been providing fellowship to their Freemen through virtual events and continuing their business through this medium. Through the involvement of a healthcare related group the Company shall support the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs by providing information and advice on health issues and give freely of our experience and expertise in the field of healthcare..

We have continued to support the NHS Livery Kitchens Initiative which was initiated by the Drapers' Company and set up to provide hot food for the many staff working on the frontline

Chair of the Company of Nurses Charitable Trust Fund, Brenda Griffiths

Renter Warden, Elizabeth Bardolph to address the annual financial statements and to take any questions in this regard

It has been an interesting and busy seven months and although it has been disappointing that so many very special City events have not taken place I have represented the Company by attending Zoom meetings and events. I have received several invitations recently for face-to-face events starting in the third week of June so I hope that next year when I report back to you I will have finally met some of my fellow Masters in the flesh!

I attended one event in person last October to lay a wreath at the annual ceremony commemorating Edith Cavell. It was managed under Covid regulations with only a few of us in attendance but still very moving and I was delighted to represent our Company.

I have also enjoyed two virtual declarations events welcoming 24 new Freemen to the Company and had the pleasure of participating in the live streaming of our Annual Church service last October. This was enjoyed by many more than would normally be able to attend in person. Special thanks to our Chaplain Rev Canon Charles Pickstone who masterminded the whole event and to one of his parishioners who filmed the service for us.

As Nurses we have continued to be very much at the forefront of the public's mind. I am often thanked by fellow Companies for the work that the NHS has done to combat the effects of this pandemic. I am always immensely proud to

be part of this amazing profession and can report that many of our Freemen have been involved during this time through, returning to work, test and tracing, vaccinating and continuing their front line work. From those not actively working, I have heard stories of how they are supporting friends and neighbours through help with shopping and other activities of daily life.

Our Almoner to the Company Rosemary Ray coordinated another round of welfare calls last November following up from the initial calls to over 70 of our Freemen who had had to self-isolate. Thank you Rosemary for the work you do and all the Court members who helped with this.

Being Master of the Company of Nurses is an enormous privilege and I am honoured to serve in this role. Our credibility and awareness amongst nurses continues to increase as does our presence within the Livery Community. We are well within sight of becoming a Worshipful Company and this is due largely to the huge commitment of my fellow Wardens, Court Assistants, Committee members Honorary Clerk and our Freemen.

Thank you all very much.

I have received no notices for other business so I will now close the Annual Assembly. Thank you very much for attending and I hope that you will join us shortly for the Installation ceremony of the Master.