



City of London Solicitors' Company

Message from the Master: Livery Company Update and Appeal

20th April 2020

Dear Fellow Liverymen and Freemen,

Now that the government has announced that the lockdown will continue until 7th May, at the earliest, I thought it would be helpful for you all to know how the Livery Company's plans are changing as the situation has developed. In view of the many uncertainties which lie ahead of us, we have adopted the approach of not cancelling or postponing planned events until it becomes necessary to do so. The extension of the lockdown makes it necessary **to postpone the Company's Annual Service at St Peter ad Vincula and Supper at Trinity House, planned for 18th May**, until a date to be arranged, later this year. It is a great shame that we must forego this event, which is so popular with members and often blessed with perfect, late spring weather, for the time being.

We will decide whether any of the events planned for June, namely the lunch on 10th June to mark the 500th meeting of the Court and the AGM, reception and outgoing Master's dinner on 15th June, can go ahead, when more information is available on the restrictions on our social lives which will continue after 7th May. At this point, it seems probable that these events will also have to be postponed, but we will inform you as soon as we can. The Court has decided that the changeover of officers of the Company will in any event take place on 15th June.

As you may be aware, it was announced on Friday 17th April that the terms in office of the current Lord Mayor and Sheriffs will, subject to due process, continue for a second year. This means that Past Master Alderman Vincent Keaveny will not become Lord Mayor until November 2021 and our Liveryman, Alderman Alison Gowman, will not become Sheriff until September 2021. The postponement of their expected elections will affect the Company's programme in both the autumn of this year and in 2021 and, we hope, make it easier for us to arrange this autumn those events which have to be postponed from May and June.

The least advantaged in our society are likely to suffer most severely from the Covid-19 pandemic, in terms of both health and economic hardship. As you will know, we have for several years now supported through the Company's Charitable Fund a debt counselling service at the Haringey Law Centre in Tottenham. The Law Centre works with some of the most deprived communities in London. We therefore contacted them after the lockdown began to find out how they were coping and what their needs were. The Law Centre's staff

are all working from home and trying to continue to serve their clients to the best of their ability. To do this, they have incurred one-off expenditure of some £13,000, mostly on equipment and expect to have additional costs accruing throughout the period they work from home. We have therefore, after consulting the Charities Committee, **made an immediate one-off donation of £5,000 from the Charitable Fund to Haringey Law Centre**, towards the costs they have already incurred. **I am now appealing to you all to donate individually to the Law Centre, through the Charitable Fund**, as I and several other Liverymen have already done, so that we can go further towards covering their additional costs caused by the pandemic and ensuring that they are able to cope with what can only be an increased demand for their services over the coming months. I would hope that, together, we could at least **match the £5,000** already donated and we have made a good start towards this target. Please make your donation to our Charitable Fund Bank Account with CAF Bank: 'The City of London Solicitors' Company Charitable Fund', Sort code: 40-52-40 Account Number: 00001062. Please mark your donation Haringey, so we know your gift should go to the Law Centre. Please be as generous as you can in support of this good cause.

The Lord Mayor's Easter Message is here: <https://www.citysolicitors.org/news/news/bulletin-from-rt-hon-the-lord-mayor> In it he mentions signing up to the London Funders' Statement, which we have done.

I will be in touch with you again in due course. In the meantime, I trust that you and yours are and will remain well and hope that it will not be long before we can all meet again.

JOHN WOTTON
MASTER
CITY OF LONDON SOLICITORS' COMPANY