

Epping Forest & Commons Committee Dinner
Former Chairman's Address: Deputy Benjamin Murphy
Thursday 16th October 2025
Painters' Hall: The Court Room

My Lord, Alderman, Honoured Guests,

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give" – does anyone know who said that? It was indeed the former Member of Parliament for Epping Forest, Sir Winston Churchill.

Everyone here in this room tonight – and many more who are not – have donated time and energy to support our open spaces charities. Whilst we may have fleeting leadership roles, it is the partnerships that will endure, and I hope there will be many more built this evening. That is of course what this great City of London is famous for – well, that and our ale houses of course!

I'm especially humbled to see friends here this evening who have been generous mentors to me for almost 30 years: The Baroness Laing of Elderslie and Councillor Chris Whitbread in particular. They've challenged my thinking, kept me honest, and occasionally reminded me what 'constructive feedback' really means!

I've been told my leadership style is 'ambitious' - though I understand our Officers use a slightly different adjective for my daily 'new idea' emails!

It has, quite honestly, been an incredible team effort, and I have been so proud to stand alongside you all over the past 5 years.

I close with the words of William Shakespeare, who famously lived in the finest ward in the City of London – Bishopsgate! Some of you may also know he wrote *A Midsummer Nights Dream* for a wedding in Epping Forest.

So Verderer Chapman, in response to your kind remarks: "I can no other answer make, but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks".