

22nd March 2023

At the Court of Wardmote held at the The Parish Hall, St Botolph's Churchyard, London, EC2M 3TL on 22nd March 2023 before the Chief Commoner Simon D'Olier Duckworth, OBE, DL, Deputy of the Ward Within.

The Deputy welcomed electors to this annual Wardmote and explained that, as the Alderman of this Ward was unable to attend, he had been invited to chair this meeting.

Minutes of the previous Wardmote of 14th and 15th September 2022 having previously been circulated, were unanimously approved by this Wardmote.

The Deputy upon previous instructions from the Alderman announced the appointment of the two Deputies for the ensuing year being himself for the Ward Within and Shravan Joshi for the Ward Without

The Deputy again on previous instructions from the Alderman then appointed Mr T R Morris as Honorary Ward Clerk for the ensuing year,

The Deputy nominated Mr Joseph Akoto Mensah as Beadle for the Ward Within and (in the absence of Mr Shrubb) Mr James Shrubb as Beadle for the Ward Without and they were unanimously elected by those present to represent this Ward for the ensuing year.

The Deputy informed the meeting that all Common Councilmen of this Ward being present, he would invite each of them to address the meeting about their respective activities on behalf of this Ward and thereafter would invite the electorate to raise questions of their Councilmen.

Accordingly Deputy Shravan Joshi, chairman of the Planning & Transportation Committee spoke about the many challenges facing his committee and in particular the problems facing Liverpool Street Station, one of the busiest stations in London with around 70m travellers using it each year. He also mentioned the plans for new buildings for Broadgate Circle and the traffic problems affecting Bishopsgate road itself. The road is administered by Transport for London (TfL) being a key red route through the City but his committee works closely with TfL to protect the interests of users of this highway

Wendy Hyde, chairman of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee spoke about her committee's involvement in the new policy called Destination City. Following the opening of the Elizabeth Line which would bring additional people into the City the new policy is intended to provide more facilities and activities and encourage people to return to the City after the Covid pandemic. It is planned that two flagship events be arranged each year making greater use of the historic and unique assets that the City can provide. This follows on from the successful Golden Key immersive event in 2022.

Tom Sleigh chairman of the Barbican Centre Board and a resident in the City reminded members that the Arts Centre is the second biggest in Europe and has a very active cultural programme. Nevertheless it would be undertaking renovation works to provide better facilities for the next 40 years. As a local resident he would like to see the large concrete blocks erected during the Covid pandemic tidied up in Brick Lane and as a member of the Policy & Resources Committee he was keen to participate in the overarching policies affecting the whole City.

Andrew Mayer as a Common Councilman of 6 years standing, spoke of his work on both the Planning & Transportation Committee and the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee. He had a particular interest in getting things built and in addition sat upon the Board of Governors of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. This school is rated within the top four of such schools internationally and is keen to maintain its reputation. On the other hand he recognises the difficulties of access into the City and wants to challenge these limitations.

Benjamin Murphy, chairman of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee mentioned the importance of providing green spaces for the City stretching from Buckinghamshire to Surrey and of mitigating carbon emissions and working towards a net zero climate strategy. Epping Forest holds over 1m trees of which 55,000 are ancient and therefore particularly valuable. He is keen to emulate modern cities like Singapore in bringing a greener environment into the City. He has also been very active in tackling the complex problems of rough sleeping and homelessness and developing pathways to encourage people off the street, although numbers are increasing and further investment is needed in assessment centres and help for those involved. Like Shravan Joshi he also sits on the Education Board and is very supportive of the Lord Mayor's work on numeracy and literacy.

Deputy Simon Duckworth then spoke about his own work as Chief Commoner and his responsibilities for leading the Common Council within the City and for balancing the competing views of the various committees during his year in office. He did not mention any of his other activities in the City but he is also a Governor of Economic Crime Board of the City of London Police, a Vice Chairman of Gresham College and a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Greater London. He did however mention that Bishopsgate Ward is fortunate to have all its Common Councilmen taking leading roles in City activities

The first questions from the electorate were from Michael Kucharski the Secretary of the Tapestry Buildings Residents Association who asked about:-

1. Problems created for his residents in New Street, from City of London Police parking vehicles in front of gates thereby blocking pedestrian access to their homes and parking access for their cars;
2. Problems created by the Bishopsgate Busgate restrictions;
3. Problems created by the single lane road affecting cycling safety; and
4. The poor quality of Fibre Broadband reception in New Street.

Both Deputy Shravan Joshi and Benjamin Murphy agreed to take these points forward and have been liaising with Mr Kucharski since this meeting.

Mr Jonathan Dicker who had previously run a hairdressing business in the Ward raised concerns about mental health post Covid and was informed of the initiatives being progressed by the City's Health & Wellbeing Board and could be put in touch with the Board for further information.

M/s Sandra Wang referred to the unfortunate stabbing in the Ward last September and asked what safeguards were provided for office workers particularly women working late hours? Benjamin Murphy mentioned the night time hubs, the City neighbourhood police officers, the Railway Police and confirmed that by comparison with other cities, the City of London had a low level of street crime.

Mr Stephen Borthwick, Clerk to the Coopers' Company, asked what potential disruption was anticipated when Liverpool Street Station undertook any further development of the Station. Deputy Shravan Joshi explained that no planning application had been lodged as yet and that the City had a policy of working with local businesses and organisations to minimise disruption in relation to new developments. Andrew Mayer also mentioned that valuable experience had been gained from the recent works in relation to Crossrail.

There being no further questions Deputy Shravan Joshi proposed a vote of thanks to Deputy Simon Duckworth for his courtesy and ability in presiding at these proceedings and this was seconded by Mr Andrew Meyer and unanimously approved by all.

Deputy Simon Duckworth replied and thanked all those who had attended this Wardmote, the Rector for the use of the Parish Hall and the Honorary Ward Clerk for administering the proceedings.

There being no further business the proceedings were closed at 12.40pm