

SUDBURY FREEMEN'S SOCIETY



ANNUAL REPORT

2017

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Committee: M E J Wheeler (Chairman), B L Hibble (Treasurer), R P Alston (Clerk),
C A Grimwood, M Offord, Mrs S M Prior, A Shelley, C J R Wheeler, M Batty.

The above were elected at the Quinquennial Meeting on 1st July 2014 or at later Annual Meetings and the Chairman wishes to repeat his thanks and admiration for the work carried on by all the Committee without exception but in particular the Clerk and the Treasurer. At a time when the world is full of very busy people and service to the community is undervalued, he is grateful for their continuing patience and support.

The Committee (which has power to 'co-opt' under the Constitution) is always keen to recruit more help; both to provide continuity and to understudy any of the current roles. Any Freeman or Widow who wants to be involved in anyway however small please contact the Chairman or any other Committee member.

Admissions

Sadly, there were no admissions since the date of our last report. There are a number of eligible potential Freemen all over the world but they have to come to Sudbury to be admitted.

The administration of Admission to The Freedom was transferred to Sudbury Town Council in 2014. The Local Government Act 1972 made Babergh District Council responsible for maintaining the Register of Sudbury Freemen, both councils later decided to devolve this task fully to Sudbury Town Council.

The Town Council, after taking legal advice, rationalised the criteria for Admission to The Freedom by Descent to that of children and grand-children of Freemen.

Most other Town Guilds now have similar Admission criteria.

Applications for Admission by Descent should be made to The Town Clerk, Sudbury Town Council.

The Town Council have power to admit Honorary Freemen, which is exercised on rare occasions.

Service as an Apprentice to a Freeman in the Town of Sudbury remains a route for Admission to the Freedom of Sudbury.

'Website'

The Trustees and the rest of the Committee have been discussing the need for a modern 'website' to aid the aims of the Trust which include safeguarding the future of The Society (which elects its Trustees). A website is deemed essential to engage with younger Freemen and potential Freemen; such facility requires investment and directed effort.

Deaths

The deaths, since the publication of the last Annual Report, are reported with regret of:

Laurence Reginald, Bitten,
Edward Cecil Scott,
Shirley May Webb (Hibble family)

We reason that some 'mail returned gone away' events represent unreported deaths and we apologise for any omissions but do our best!

Honorary Macebearers

Honorary Macebearers were provided for:

Sudbury Civic Service
Remembrance Day Service
Mayor Making
Ascension Day Gifts

We always need more Macebearers to ensure that we can always provide the traditional two whenever we are asked by The Mayor's Secretary. Sometimes, for good reasons (such as civic funerals) we are asked at very short notice and so we need reserves; it is not a difficult job and always rewarding! Please volunteer.

The Civic Service (Sunday October 7th, 2018) would be a good time to start. We need some new and younger macebearers.

Your Personal Details and Data Protection

Names and addresses of Freeman and Widows are held on computer files by the Society strictly to assist in mailing out material relevant to the Society and its members. We also hold details for your admission to the Freedom of Sudbury and the exercise of your rights as Freeman. We are using the 'legitimate interests' basis for holding and processing all this data. We are a non-profit making Society and will not pass on your data to any third party without your permission unless required to do so by law.

Anyone who objects to their details being so held should inform the Chairman or any member of the Committee.

We do our best to maintain accurate lists of Freeman and Widows/Widowers of Freeman – but we are only human and mistakes can occur. If mail is returned undelivered after two attempts, we delete the name from our lists to save costs. Names can easily be reinstated if we receive the correct details. We are always pleased to recover details for 'lost' Freeman.

Notification of any changes should be sent to The Chairman in writing via post or email: (michael.friars@gmail.com).

Hard copies will always be available to those who wish and at the Annual Meeting.

SUDBURY FREEMEN'S TRUST
Established 1986
Registered Charity No. 295764

Trustees: M E J Wheeler (Chairman) Mrs S M Prior, Mrs I Gregory,
A. Shelley, E G Filer, (until 6th March 2017) R Alston (from 4 July 2017)
Mrs F M Wheeler (Hon Secretary)

The current trustees, unless otherwise stated, were re-elected at the Quinquennial Meeting on 1st July 2014, to serve until the next Quinquennial Meeting.

The Trust offers its support for elderly Freemen and Widows to help them meet the cost of Local Authority 'Contact Care Line' emergency assistance and monitoring services. Applications by or on behalf of eligible Freemen and Widows are always welcome, our grants are not 'means tested'. There has been a most pleasing 'uptake' this year compared to previous years.

The Trustees express their sincere thanks to Fiona Wheeler for her work as Honorary Secretary to the Trust.

Grants paid:

Several 'Contact Care Line' payments to Freemen and Widows of Freemen.

Christopher Centre toward: further essential improvements.

Sudbury Ephemera Society: copying and preservation of 'Sudbury' documents.

St Gregory's School Sudbury toward facilities for children outside the classrooms

Sudbury Museum Trust toward the second edition of 'What's in a name?' (copies for sale from The Chairman).

Finances

The Trust was established in 1986 primarily to form part of the 1987 settlement with The Sudbury Common Lands Charity following the sale of Harp Close Meadow. At its foundation, the only material source of income of The Trust was a share of the net income of the Sudbury Common Lands Charity. In recent years, as more land was purchased and higher standards of conservation were sought, the net income of The Common Lands declined to the extent that this Charity now depends to some extent on financial support from external bodies.

The Capital of The Trust, now including 'The A R Wheeler Fund' is invested by professional fund managers, appointed by the trustees, with a medium remit to produce a modest but sustainable income over the longer term.

The income of The Freemen's Trust in recent years has been less than in earlier decades but is now steadily increasing.

The Trustees look to distribute most of their net income after expenses in grants over the medium term but also maintain prudent reserves considering The Trust's regular commitments and some contingency for emergencies.

Freemen and their families are invited to include The Sudbury Freemen's Trust among charities they support with their generosity.

Sudbury Common Lands Charity

(Registered Charity No. 212222)

Rev Richard Titford (Chairman)

Freemen Nominative Trustees (elected at the Quinquennial Meeting on 1st July 2014):

C A Grimwood, C J Wheeler, N Eley and M E J Wheeler

Payments as required by the Charity's Scheme were made to:

Sudbury Freemen's Trust
Sudbury Municipal Charities

Adrian Walters (an Honorary Freeman of Sudbury) continues to do sterling work as Ranger, aided by his new assistant and volunteer rangers. You can read his regular columns in the local press. There is an authoritative leaflet on 'dog management' on The Common Lands, that has been widely praised with copies available from many places in Sudbury.

The Common Lands Charity also has an excellent website: www.sudburycommonlandscharity.org where you can sign up for Adrian's regular e-mail updates.

The Trustees have successfully extended the land under their management and influence, either by agreement or possibly purchase and continue to look at new ways to raise funds to support their conservation work and all agree that it is vital that cattle continue to graze The Common Lands for many generations to come.