

SUDBURY FREEMEN'S SOCIETY



ANNUAL REPORT

2018

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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 in this very busy world, for the work carried out with diligence and good humour, by all the Committee without exception but in particular the Clerk and the Treasurer.

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 several eligible potential Freemen all over the world - but they must come to Sudbury to be admitted. We do understand that an admission ceremony will be scheduled when a reasonable number of applicants have been approved.

The administration of the process of Admission to The Freedom of Sudbury 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, Sudbury, CO10 1TL.

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

Service as an Apprentice to a Freeman in the Town of Sudbury has always been a route for Admission to the Freedom of Sudbury. Freeman Malcolm Batty has prepared a paper with proposals to modernise the Admission of Apprentices – see Agenda for the Quinquennial Meeting.

The 'New Website'

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

Simonie Prior and Fiona Wheeler (the 'web-masters') have started work aided by a contract with 'Footsteps' of Colchester – the finance has been provided by The Sudbury Freemen's Trust and some Freemen have been kind enough to make specific donations to the Trust for this purpose. We hope to 'go live' as near to 2 July as possible and in anycase demonstrate the progress made at the Quinquennial Meeting – internet connectivity permitting.

The 'web-masters' are interested in contributions to the website from Freemen and their families, particularly from the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Examples are, tales of 'macebearers' of years ago, family stories and legends. We particularly want to be able to 'scan' any old photographs of Freemen especially, if they are on a formal occasion such as 'Mayor Making or 'Turning-On Day'. Any original documents or phots will be carefully treated and returned safely to you. Contact via the Chairman.

Deaths

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

John Arthur Parsonson

Jean Evelyn Wheeler,

We surmise that some 'mail returned as 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

Civic Funeral of former Mayor Mrs Valerie Mouton (the family expressed their gratitude)

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 (expected - Sunday October 7th, 2019) would be a good time to start. We need some new and younger macebearers.

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, 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'.

The Trustees express their sincere thanks to Fiona Wheeler for her considerable work as Honorary Secretary to the Trust. There are several pending projects that the Trust is supporting.

Grants paid:

Several 'Contact Care Line' payments to Freemen and Widows of Freemen.
Christopher Centre toward: further essential improvements.
Sudbury Museum Trust - the second edition of 'What's in a name?' (copies for sale from The Secretary).
Additional Macebearers' hats and gloves
An information board at 'Peoples' Park' (contribution to Sudbury Market Town Partnership)
Funding for the 'website' discussed above.

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, costs have increased in real terms and higher standards of conservation were sought, the net surplus of The Common Lands declined to the extent that this Charity now depends to some extent on financial support from external bodies and the timing of the receipt of payments, particularly from state 'quangos', are unpredictable.

The Capital of The Trust, mostly '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. It is expected that the income from the A R Wheeler Fund will be more stable than that from the Sudbury Common Lands Charity over the long term

The Trustees intend to distribute the net income after expenses in grants over the medium term but need to maintain prudent reserves for contingencies and the Trust's regular commitments.

Freemen and their families are invited to include The Sudbury Freemen's Trust amongst 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.

In recent years, 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. High levels of capital expenditure and repair costs have been necessary to maintain equipment and comply with safety regulations. The Clerk has had some success in attracting new funds to support the charity's ever-growing commitments. A new assistant ranger started work. Succession planning is receiving concerted attention.

Your Personal Details and Data Protection

Names and addresses of Freemen 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 Freemen. 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 Freemen and Widows/Widowers of Freemen – 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' Freemen. Hard copies will always be available on request and at the Annual Meeting.

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