

**Notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Sudbury Freeman's Society
and Payment of Common Money on Tuesday 4th July 2023 at 5 p.m. at The
Christopher Centre, Gainsborough Street, Sudbury**

Website address: *www.sudburyfreemen.org*

(The Meadow Walk will start from outside the Mill Hotel at 2pm on July 4th and will be led by Ranger, Nick Shimwell. Afternoon tea from 4pm in the Common Lands Room at the Christopher Centre, Gainsborough Street – entrance from Christopher Lane.)

2022 Annual Report for the Sudbury Freeman's Society

Committee:

M.E.J. Wheeler and S.M. Prior are acting as Co. Chairmen until the SFS Quinquennial Meeting in 2024

R.P. Alston (Clerk), B.L. Hibble (Treasurer), A. Shelley, M. Batty

Admissions:

Admission ceremonies took place in the Town Hall at Sudbury on October 28th, 2022, and November 11th, 2022.

The following Freeman were admitted by descent on October 28th, 2022:

- Jessica Rachel Caroline Squires (formally Offord) (The Brown family)
- Kirsty Imogen Clare Offord-Hall (The Brown family)
- Rosslyn Emily Offord (The Brown family)
- Andrew Gordon ((The Scott family)

The following Freeman were admitted by descent on November 11th, 2022:

- Todd Harry Popplewell (The Hibble family)
- Lewis Harry Barton Popplewell (The Hibble family)
- Faye Ella Popplewell (The Hibble family)

Two Honorary Freeman were also admitted on November 11th, 2022:

- Andrew Wyndham Phillips
- John Coleman

Malcolm Batty is continuing his discussions with Sudbury Town Council to allow admission to the Freedom of Sudbury through apprenticeships with local businesses.

Deaths:

The deaths, reported to us, since the publication of the last Annual report, are as follows:

Charles Andrew Grimwood

Merle Anita King

Betty Josephine Berry

Renee Mary Elizabeth Nurser

Andrew Wyndham Phillips (Honorary Freeman)

The Committee offers their sincere condolences to the families of all the above.

Macebearers

Macebearers were provided for:

The Remembrance Day Service at St. Gregory's Church, Sudbury

The Annual Civic Service at All Saints Church, Sudbury

Sudbury Freeman's Trust**Established 1986 Registered Charity No. 295764**

Trustees: M.E.J. Wheeler, (Chairman), S.M. Prior, A. Shelley, R. Alston, I. Gregory,

Hon. Secretary: F.M. Wheeler

The Trust funds the Sudbury Freeman Society website.

The Trust also offers its support for elderly Freeman and Widows/Widowers to help them meet the cost of Medequip assistive technology. Applications by or on behalf of eligible Freeman and Widows/Widowers are always welcome and our grants are not 'means assessed'.

Grants paid:

- Several Medequip payments to Widows of Freeman.
- The Drop-in Group at the Christopher Centre, Sudbury
- The C'Art Group at the Christopher Centre
- The Salvation Army in Sudbury
- The 'Pick up and Drop Off Scheme' at the Town Hall

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

Freemen of England and Wales

The Society is a member of **The Freemen of England and Wales**, and we are represented by Alan Shelley. (**The Freemen of England and Wales** is an association of guilds (gilds) or similar bodies, and of individual freemen, from towns and cities throughout England and Wales with the aim of advancing by research and publication, knowledge of the history and legal custom of boroughs of England & Wales, and of the legal institution of the Freedom.)

Please visit the website for further information: www.freemen-few.org.uk

Report to the FEW Executive and Court Meeting by the Vice/Deputy President

FEW business and internal activities have continued to be quiet and are virtually at a standstill with the exception of a few specific enquiries. Gilds/Guilds have been regathering and indicate a restored interest in their activities.

Following an area warden's concerns regarding the legitimacy of Freedom - for clarification, I have circulated the Area Wardens with two 'Guidance, Aide Memoires' to explain 'Entitlement to Freedom and to describe legitimate 'Freedom and Liberties'.

The Working Group, under the supervision of Stephen Healy has formulated (for future Court appraisal) a number of principal changes that may revise and repurpose the current activities of FEW. Clearly, the general lack of enthusiasm within FEW membership indicates that changes are essential.

We, on the Working Group, do not overlook the general expectations of our membership but recognise that considerable changes are necessary if the Association is to survive. In this respect, the Executive may also benefit from fresh input by some younger and brighter intelligence.

At the age of 83 and in poor health, I feel I should now step down from the Executive and I give notice of my intention to retire at the forthcoming AGM. I joined the Association 45 years ago in 1977, at the instigation by letter from Harry Ward our founder. For more than 20 years I have devoted my time on the Executive and feel I should give way to a younger mind. I remain passionately committed to the Freedom and to the future of FEW.

For the time being I have agreed to continue assisting the Working Group until the project is completed. I will continue with my interests about the Freedom and with my considerable archive will continue to be available to any freeman seeking straightforward advice. In this capacity I shall also continue as the Gild Representative for the Sudbury Freemen where I am a Trustee. I also remain as a Conservator of Gloucestershire Common Lands and their Representative on the Gloucestershire Local Access Forum.

My door, telephone, and website (AlanShelley.org) will always be open to genuine enquiries into rights and customs of Freedom.

My best wishes and kindest regards to all,

Alan Shelley DP/ VP.

Sudbury Common Lands Charity (Registered Charity Number 212222)

Freemen Nominative Trustees: M. E. J. Wheeler and N. Eley (at 1st June 2023).

(There are two vacancies for Trustees to serve for the year to July 2024 whereupon all Trustees will need to be re-elected at the Quinquennial Meeting on July 2nd 2024)

The Sudbury Common Lands are amongst the oldest recorded grazing pastures in England. The SCLC was set up to manage these lands in 1897. It is because of the Freemen of Sudbury that the charity exists in its current form today. Sudbury Freemen are able to elect four persons to serve a five-year term as Trustees of the Charity.

The SCLC has an excellent website: www.sudburycommonlandscharity.org

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

Ross Bentley provides monthly newsletters about the wildlife on and around the Common Lands for our SFS website. We record our heartfelt thanks to him. There are many Sudbury Freemen who are unable to visit the Common Lands and so reading about the conservation and management of these historic grazing lands helps them stay connected with the Town and their Rights as Freemen.

Sudbury Freemen Family Names July 2023

Adams Family; **Alston** Family; **Amey** Family; **Berry** Family; **Bitten** Family; **Bonney** Family; **Brown** Family; **Cook** Family; **Filer** Family; **Grimwood** Family; **Herbert** Family; **Hibble** Family; **Mills** Family; **Murrells** Family; **Parsonson** Family; **Scott** Family; **Shelley** Family; **Smith** Family; **Wheeler** Family; **Wright** Family

Walters, Adrian Charles (Honorary Freeman of Sudbury)

Coleman, John (Honorary Freeman of Sudbury)

Note: The SFS Quinquennial Meeting, Elections and Payment of Common Money for 2023 will take place on Tuesday July 2nd, 2024 (Time and venue to be confirmed.)

Disclaimer: This document is produced by and the responsibility of, volunteers for The Sudbury Freemen's Society on a 'best endeavours' basis: errors are inevitable and will be corrected when we become aware - the 'master' copy for the current year at any time is on the website. We are grateful for the help and support of Sudbury Town Council who is responsible for the Admission of new Freemen according to law and custom and for maintaining the 'Cocket Books' in perpetuity.