

## **Master's Speech Annual Assembly May 2019** **Helen Pickstone**

### **Wardens, Court Assistants, Freemen and Guests**

Welcome to the Guild of Nurses Annual Assembly. Thank you for coming for what is, in non-livery terms, our Annual General Meeting. In common with all Livery Companies, our Ordinances dictate that the Livery and the Freedom shall meet in Annual Assembly once a year. When we achieve Company status and we will indeed have our own Liverymen, this will become our Common Hall.

In the wider livery world, there are two Common Halls each year – one principally to elect the two Sheriffs held on Midsummer Day, the other to elect the Lord Mayor each Michaelmas Day. All Masters (but NOT their spouses or other guests) of *livery* companies, (*not* of guilds or Companies without livery) process at both and most would consider these elections to be a three line whip occasion for every Master.

All liverymen are entitled to attend. To vote, a liveryman must have been clothed prior to May in the preceding year.

We are here today to affirm the election of our new Master, Upper Warden, Middle Warden and Renter Warden. We also need to receive the annual financial statements and consider any matters on which fourteen days notice in writing has been given to the Clerk. We have not received any questions. Our Ordinances also require us to read out the names of members who have died during the previous 12 months. The Court has determined that this is more appropriately done at our Annual Service and this act of remembrance, in the safe hands of our Honorary Chaplain, The Rev'd Canon Charles Pickstone, has become a sad tradition since our inception.

My role today is to give a brief summary of where we are and where we are going. The Guild has had another busy year and I would personally like to thank our Honorary clerk, John Allen, who has been a source of experience, expertise, wise counsel and has kept me on track throughout my time as Master. John is ably assisted by Kerry whose assistance has also been so important to us. Our Beadle, Martin Whitehead has been with us from the start and I am delighted that he keen to stay.

We are in the midst of our renewal process so I am unable to give exact numbers but we have to date: 7 Lifetime Foundation Freemen; 35 10 year Foundation Freemen; 11 Quinquennial Freemen; 198 Annual Freemen. They have all trained at 167 different places of nurse education. In addition we have 1 Apprentice who has yet to qualify (2 qualified this year). We have two Honorary Freemen – our Sponsoring Alderman Dr Sir Andrew Parmley and our previous Honorary Clerk, Keith Lawrey.

The Membership Committee has met on five formal occasions but this does not reflect the enormous amount of work on-going from day to day that ensures that all membership enquiries have a speedy response and that our membership records are accurate and stored safely especially regarding GDPR which came into effect a year ago. The committee oversees the renewal process and is developing a question and answer for the

website. This Committee is fully populated with a new chair and 2 new members. We owe its members a great debt of gratitude.

The Social Committee has 8 members and is looking to recruit more. It has met 5 times with one being virtual. It continues its sterling work in organising a huge and varied social programme to suit a wide range of interests for our freemen. This Committee has organised two formal dinners – our Banquet last year at Guildhall and a very successful dinner at the Palace of Westminster. Other more informal events have included; tours of the mansion house and House of Commons, a visit to the museum of the order of St. John, city walks, and 2 opportunities to watch the ceremony of the keys at the Tower of London. A visit to the helipad of London's air ambulance. The Guild is part of Nightingale 2000, a multiagency forum, planning celebrations to mark the 200th Anniversary of Florence Nightingale. This has both National and international influence. We have also had 2 receptions for our new Freemen to make their Declarations. One of these was after our annual church service which had more freeman than ever attending. I am grateful to the Revd Stephen Stavrou who has been Master's Chaplain this year and who presided and preached so well at this service. Last month we had a first very informal get together in a city wine bar which we hope to repeat, with possibilities of joining with other livery companies who do likewise. The committee has a role in co-ordinating the Guilds attendance at City and National nursing occasions such as the united guild service, Florence Nightingale service and the red cross Christmas market. Feedback from all these events has been very positive. Next years calendar is equally busy and varied. The Committee has ensured that the informal social events pay their way and indeed make a small profit for the Guild. My huge thanks go to all the committee.

The Education and Professional Development Committee have had 4 meetings this year. There are 8 members on the Committee, 1 member recently joined. Three very successful events were held this year. The first was a half day conference held at Apothecaries hall, sponsored by health education England, which was attended by 70 people. The programme included the development of safety Critical roles, and hearing from nurses working in challenging, novel and complex situations. The most recent evening event, held in March, explored the role of the NMC and a talk by a representative of Future Frontiers. Discussion among attendees is always part of the educational events. As a result of this event the committee is exploring the opportunities for volunteering and outreach work into schools and colleges to engage with young people in career choices. This theme will be continued at the next conference in September. The Guild is now a member of the livery schools link and work by the committee is ensuring that we are part of the outreach work that is provided by the livery companies and will participate in the next livery schools showcase in June. The committee chair has already attended a careers day hosted by the society of Apothecaries for year 9 pupils from George Green School, Isle of Dogs. Evaluation of events to date are positive, participants enjoy the networking opportunities and registered nurses can utilise attendance at the events for their required re-validation with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Again we are enormously indebted to the work this committee does.

The Communications Committee, which has 2 new members, has managed the production of the Guild Events calendar, two editions of The Lamp and several informative mail-chimp messages .It manages a Facebook account, while our foundation Past Master is now an expert on Twitter. This Committee also oversees the content of our website and ensures that both Forthcoming Events and Post Event Reports are timely and well publicised. I must at this point thank our web-master Col Stephen Oxlade of New Valley

Web Design for all his work on our behalf. We very much value his efficient, patient input. He is much valued. Our website hits fluctuate but show a healthy bottom line with Forthcoming Events and the Membership Application forms showing the most traffic It is excellent to report that our site remains the top hit if you Google Guild of Nurses. Thank you to the communications team.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee comprises of the Founder Wardens and has met on 5 occasions to discuss Guild strategy, matters of finance and to make recommendations for discussion at the Court. As we know, The Court is the governing body of the Guild and is comprised of Court Assistants who have all served or are serving on one or more of our Committees. In addition to the quarterly meetings, the Court met for an Away Day to discuss our next goals and devise a business plan to reach them. We will continue to do this every year to ensure that our plans remain relevant and on target. The Members of our Court are all busy people and the Guild is exceptionally fortunate to have a gathering of such talent. They all give of their time freely and without question. We must be enormously grateful to each and very one of them.

The Company of Nurses Charitable Trust is up and running. This is the benevolent arm of the Guild, a charity registered with the Charities Commission, which aims to make a difference. We aim to provide benevolent support to nurses when and where it is needed and to contribute to the professional development of nurses today and tomorrow through scholarship and bursary.

I am delighted to be able to tell you that from the Chantry-Robinson Fund we have sponsored a nurse, working with the homeless, to undertake a course at UCL. As a result of our support, more nurses have been able to register on this course. This course began last week. This has been achieved by working with the Queen's nursing institute. We are about to sponsor a nurse to undertake the 3 year Florence Nightingale Fellowship. We have received some substantial one off donations and are now keen to encourage regular giving from our Freemen. You hopefully have seen our leaflet inviting you to make such donations.

The Trust continues to support the work of the Cavell Trust and is part of its "working together" scheme, meaning that we can contribute to a body that shares our values and benevolent aspirations. I have attended several of the Cavell Trusts events including the annual memorial service for Edith Cavell, at which I laid a wreath on behalf of the Guild. The Guild Trust has just made a donation to Richard House, a children's hospice. The Trustees and our Honorary Clerk (who is its secretary) have worked incredibly hard and have achieved an enormous amount this year. My thanks go to all. This means that it is now possible at some point to apply to the court of Aldermen for company without livery status.

We have overall a sound organizational structure, healthy operating fund and vibrant membership. We do need, though, to keep this under review as we take the Guild forward. The City has been most welcoming and receptive to our inclusion. The society of Apothecaries, and the Barbers' company continue to be particularly supportive, the Cutlers Company have provided storage space for the Guilds growing collection of artefacts These include a banner that has been presented to the Guild by the Broderer's Company. The cutlers have allowed us to use their hall for our first court dinner, where we were able to repay some of the generous hospitality we have received.

Donations have been made out of Guild funds to the Lord Mayor's Appeal, the United Guilds Service Trust and the Guild's charitable trust

We are increasingly involved in city events, which included, for the first time, attending a service in St.Pauls for the sons of clergy. Last month I was involved in an explorative meeting with 4 other Livery companies as to how we can collectively promote health and well being and exploring what are the most pressing issues facing the population both in the city and beyond. This in addition to supporting the Lord Mayor as Rector of City university, when he conferred degrees on nurses studying there. Our Sponsoring Alderman Sir Andrew Parmley and I have subsequently met with the Dean of the nursing Faculty.

Our credibility and awareness amongst nurses is increasing and other bodies who share our desire for long term charitable, benevolent and educational sustainability are approaching us in growing numbers, seeking the security that the inclusion of our profession in the livery movement can offer. We have come a very long way in a very short time and are a credible City Guild. A Worshipful Company of Nurses is now well within sight. This is due largely to the huge commitment of my fellow Wardens, Court Assistants, Committee members Honorary Clerk and our Freemen.

I would like to thank you all, and for making my role this year easy and hugely enjoyable. I could not have done it without your support.