



Durham City Freemen

Newsletter

Candlemas

Issue 1

February 2024

This is the first of a trail newsletter to keep member's up to date with what is happening within the Durham City Freemen.

Guild News

The Candlemas guild day was held on the 5th of February in the Guild Hall in Durham. There were no new freemen admitted this time but we did have a first call for Charlotte Victoria Middleton (Joiners Company) to be admitted via Patrimony

There have been a few changes to the makeup of the management committee for the Freemen and the new list is set below.

Chair; Alan Metcalf. Deputy Chair; Neil Graham. Secretary; Bryan Proud

Wardens:

Bryan Proud	Barbers Company.
Mac Williams	Butchers Company.
Theresa Ford	Cordwainers Company.
Iain Wilmshurst	Curriers Company.
Dave Howard	Drapers Company.
Ann Thurlow	Joiners Company.
Neil Graham	Masons Company.
Garry Dunnill	Plumbers Company.

Deputy Wardens:

Alan Metcalf	Barbers Company
Vacant	Butchers Company.
Gary Bankhead	Cordwainers Company.
Vincent Syson	Curriers Company.
Trevor Carter	Drapers Company.
David Neale	Joiners Company.
Alan Richardson	Masons Company.
Arthur Lockyear	Plumbers Company.

Chairs address

Since our last Guild Day, Dave Howard has been elected as Warden of The Drapers Company and Garry Dunnill was re-elected as Warden of the Plumbers Company. Congratulations to you both.

Theresa Ford's tenure as Deputy Chair ends today although she remains in place as Warden of The Cordwainers Company. Unfortunately, Theresa is unable to be with us today, but I would like to express my thanks on behalf of the Wardens and Deputies for her dedication and commitment to the role of Deputy Chair over the past 3 years and for the support she has provided to me since I took office 3 months ago.

Our new Deputy Chair is Neil Graham, Warden of the Masons Company and I look forward to our time working together.

Durham City Freemen now have 270 members of whom 123 are in-district and 147 out of district.

Our Charitable Trust continues to support charities and good causes in the local community and recent recipients include Downs Syndrome North East and Durham Fringe. Details of the work of the Charitable Trust can be found on the Freemen website.

The Freemen, along with other stakeholders including Durham County Council, Durham City Parish Council and Durham University have recently been consulting with The Wear Rivers Trust on a project to prevent plastics and other materials from clogging-up the weirs and the Archimedes Screw and to halt the progress of the materials travelling further downstream. The project is still in its early stages and is not expected to be completed until 2027 at the soonest.

The Wardens and Deputies have discussed our Members Meetings, and it has been decided that due to poor attendance there will only be one meeting a year rather than four with this years' meeting being held here in the Guild Hall on Tuesday April 2nd at 6pm. Wardens will email their in-district members with the date and send reminders nearer the time; the date will be published on our website. Going forward, the Members meeting will be held each year on the first Tuesday of April.

Apprentice Group Report

On the 30th of June 2023, Durham City Freemen held their first Apprentice Award Scheme Event, celebrating the talent of the apprentices who work, train, or live within the city boundaries. Each of the thirteen winners received a prestigious glass trophy, a certificate signed by the Chair of the Freemen and £50 Amazon voucher.

The celebration was held in Durham Town Hall and was attended by several noteworthy VIP's, including the Lord Lieutenant, City Mayor, Leader of Durham County Council and Canon Michael Everett from Durham Cathedral.

Diary Dates

Members Meeting 2nd April 2024

May Day Guild 13th May 2024

Apprentice Award Night 28th June 2024

Annual Dinner 26th October 2024

The event was generally considered to be a great success by those that attended the celebrations, as it raised the profile of Durham City Freemen and their proud history of representing and supporting Craftsmen, Artisans and Businesses within the City boundaries.

Following on from the success of last year's awards, Durham City Freemen are now planning the 2024 celebrations, in conjunction with New College Durham and Durham University, with the hope of being able to expand the award scheme so that we can continue to highlight the achievement and excellence of modern-day apprentices.

Members Meeting

The next members meeting will be held in the Guild Hall on Tuesday 2nd April at 6.00pm. We are looking for your views. What would make you attend a meeting? Would it be better during the day or at evening time? Please send your views to the secretary, the e-mail address is set out below.

Management Vacancies

The Wardens and Deputies are always on the lookout for capable Freemen to come and help with the management of the guild. The usual starting point is a deputy where you will get to understand how the guild is managed. The time commitment is about 4 meetings per year. If you are interested then please get in touch via the secretary.

As this is a trial to keep members up to date, any comments on the format, content, and any future ideas you may have for content please get in touch via secretary@durhamcityfreemen.org

This newsletter has been sent to those members who have supplied their e-mail address; however, it is available to view on the website.