



MASTER
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THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF CARMEN

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The Worshipful Company of Carmen

COURT ELECTIONS: GUIDANCE FOR PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

1. Background

- 1.1 The Carmen's Company is unusual – perhaps unique – in appointing new Court Assistants by election. The Court determines the frequency of elections, as required to fill vacancies arising. In most years there is one vacancy, created by the longest serving Past Master taking Emeritus status in accordance with the Company's Standing Orders. Sometimes there may be more. Elections are held on the day of July Court (Common Hall) and all Liverymen and Freemen are entitled to vote. Votes are traditionally cast in person, however postal and votes are accepted as long as the voting member's quarterage is up to date. Any Liveryman having three years or longer service with the Company as of election day may stand for election, subject to Court approval.
- 1.2 The Court is the 'board' of the Company. It has a maximum of 24 voting members at any time, comprising 11 Assistants who have not yet served in the principal offices of the Company, the Junior and Senior Wardens, the Master and 10 Past Masters. (Emeritus Past Masters may also attend Court and often do, but do not vote).
- 1.3 While the Court retains oversight of the Company's events and social functions, its primary purpose is executive, overseeing strategy, policy development and administration. The Court agrees the rules by which the Company is run (Standing Orders). It oversees the work of the Committees and Panels focusing on aspects of the Company's affairs and agrees appointments to them. It ensures that the Company's funds are properly safeguarded and its finances managed sustainably. It observes the binding, capping and clothing of Apprentices, Freemen and Liverymen. It deals with staffing and accommodation issues. In line with the Carmen's long-standing commitment to charity the Court works ever more closely with the Benevolent Trust in developing the Company's philanthropy and it appoints the Trustees, four of whom are drawn from the Court. The Court also fosters the Company's long-standing links with the Armed Forces, whose service to our nation we are proud to recognise and support.
- 1.4 The Court enthusiastically encourages Liverymen who wish to become more deeply involved in the affairs of the Company to consider standing for election to the Court. It is in the Company's best interests to have a strong field of candidates at each election and regular new intake to the Court.
- 1.5 It is equally important that prospective candidates have a good understanding of what service on the Court entails. That is the intent of this guidance note and the election process described below, which the Court has agreed. The procedure is designed to give every prospective candidate the opportunity to consider privately the commitment involved, to talk to members of the Court serving on the interview panel and then to make an informed decision on whether to stand for election, subject to the Court's final approval of the candidate list.

2. Service on the Court

- 2.1 Service on the Court is an honour conferred by the Company. It is voluntary and carries no remuneration or benefits in kind. Assistants elected to the Court are required to pay an election fine of £500.
- 2.2 Every year there are four Court meetings; in October, January, April and July. All Court members are expected to give priority to service on the Court and attend all meetings (although permission may be sought to miss up to two in succession, but not for persistent ill-health, infirmity or personal/occupational commitments when retirement may be enforced, unless the Court agrees a waiver).
- 2.3 Additionally, Court members are expected to serve on and chair the various Committees and Panels which support the Company's work and activities. Such service entails significant additional time commitment in preparing for meetings, attending and carrying forward the work of the Company in between. It is also expected that Court members will be regular attenders at the Company's principal functions and other events during each year and will participate enthusiastically in the life of the Company.

3. Progression to Office

- 3.1 Assistants appointed to the Court are normally expected to progress and in due course serve as Wardens and ultimately as Master, although progression is not guaranteed and may be reviewed by the Court in the light of circumstances. (Any Assistant declining to progress to the office of Master must retire from the Court within two years and any newly appointed Assistant wishing not to progress to office is obliged so to declare and must retire after five years' service, unless exceptionally agreed otherwise.)
- 3.2 To serve as Master is the greatest privilege which the Court and the Company can convey. It entails a very substantial time commitment – perhaps 150 days in the course of the year in office, attending all Carmen and many other Livery Company functions, civic occasions, religious services and functions at military and educational establishments. The Master works very closely with the Clerk and will spend significant additional time in the Company's office during his/her year. Most Master's diary engagements are in or near the City of London. The Company does not provide accommodation or defray travel expenses.
- 3.3 The role of Master cannot realistically be combined with full-time employment or demanding business commitments. Those progressing to the Chair are required to give priority to the service of the Company.
- 3.4 As the Company's principal representative the Master has considerable personal exposure within the City and across many different Livery Companies and other organisations. S/he must at all times be a good ambassador for the Carmen, able to mix comfortably with prominent figures (such as the Lord Mayor), sensitive to etiquette and protocol and a confident public speaker. Civic, Livery and wider connections which help to build the Company's profile, for example through securing good speakers for Company events, or extending the Company's charitable and professional reach, are of value during a Master's year.
- 3.5 Being Master entails a significant financial commitment. Masters are not called upon to subsidise Company events or activities. However, they bear all their own expenses, often bring personal guests to Company events, may become involved in supporting Company and Civic charitable initiatives during their year and may also wish to make a gift to the Company. Given diversity of personal circumstances it is not practicable to quantify precisely the financial implications of serving as Master (for example, travel and accommodation costs will vary widely according to the Master's normal place of residence). However costs are likely to amount to some thousands of pounds, possibly a five figure sum in total.

3.6 The length of time taken to progress from a newly appointed Assistant to the Master's Chair will also vary. As a rule of thumb it typically takes up to ten years, sometimes a bit less. A full term of service as a voting member of the Court may well exceed twenty years from election as the most recently appointed Assistant, to becoming a Past Master Emeritus after ten years as a voting Past Master.

3.7 While there is no age bar to standing for election to the Court, all prospective candidates should be aware of the time and cost implications of Court service and progression and older candidates should bear in mind energy and fitness issues. Consideration should also be given to business and career commitments, looking some years ahead.

4. Qualifications for Court Assistants

4.1 There are no formally defined qualifications for service on the Court. Liverymen from a wide range of backgrounds and professions can make welcome contributions.

4.2 The Company is proud to represent the large and thriving trade of transport and logistics. Accordingly, connections with or experience of the transport profession – whether passenger or freight – are valued, although not expected of every Court member.

4.3 The Court expects prospective candidates to have demonstrated their commitment to the Company through prior regular attendance at events and by supporting the Carmen's Benevolent Trust. A desire to serve on the Court should also be reflected in reasonable knowledge of the Company's Charter objectives and powers, awareness of Standing Orders and empathy with the work of our Benevolent Trust. A degree of familiarity with City of London governance, institutions and traditions, in which the Carmen and other Livery Companies play a role, is germane.

4.5 Prospective candidates for Court appointment typically have their own views as to how they would like to be of service to the Company and could contribute as a Court Assistant. They should be ready to expand on this at interview. It is the core substance of election CVs and addresses, for those who proceed to stand for election.

5. Diversity

5.1 The Company welcomes prospective candidates for election to the Court irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, faith or ethnicity. We have proudly admitted female Liverymen and Freemen to our Company for many years and Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal is our most distinguished Past Master.

6. The Election Process

6.1 The normal Election process and timetable is set out below although can be adjusted for administrative reasons:

January: Court considers vacancies, determines timing of election, confirms composition of Interview Panel.

February: Clerk issues notice to the Livery inviting responses from interested Liverymen.

March: Prospective candidates submit applications, in confidence, to the Clerk and Interview Panel Chairman.

March: Panel interviews prospective candidates individually.

Early April: After interview prospective candidates either confirm their

willingness to stand for election, or notify the Panel Chairman if, on reflection, they decide not to stand in the current 'round' (such a decision does not prejudice a later candidacy).

Late April: Panel Chairman submits list of prospective candidates recommended by the Panel to the Court for final approval.

Clerk notifies candidates of the Court's decision.

From May: Approved candidates seek proposers and seconders, prepare CVs for circulation by the Clerk to the Livery and election addresses for Common Hall.

July: Court meeting and election day. Candidates address the Company at Common Hall. Election held, result announced after close of voting.

- 6.2 Only the names of prospective candidates who have attended interview, are recommended by the Panel and have confirmed their willingness to stand are put forward to the Court and, subject to approval, subsequently publicised to the Livery at large. Only after Court approval should candidates seek proposers and seconders (who must include one member of the Court). From that point onwards candidates may also wish to inform friends and colleagues in the Livery of their candidacy, but overt canvassing at Company events is discouraged.
- 6.3 The interview panel will normally comprise the Master, Wardens and Immediate Past Master (i.e., last year's Master). Individual panel members may withdraw if a prospective candidate happens to be a family member, close colleague or friend, in which case another senior member of the Court may be co-opted to serve on the panel if necessary. Panel members will not propose or second candidates whom they have interviewed.
- 6.4 All prospective candidates *must* attend for interview, except candidates previously approved by the Court who have been interviewed within the two preceding years. The purposes of the interview are to ensure that each prospective candidate is aware of and accepts the commitments involved in Court service, is relevantly supportive and knowledgeable, offers an appropriate contribution as a potential Court member and can ask any relevant questions about the Company, Court or the election process.
- 6.5 As noted earlier, it is very much in the Company's interests to have a strong field of candidates at each election. The Court's aim is that all elections should be competitive, with more candidates than vacancies. Inevitably this means that some candidates will be disappointed. As by no means all Liverymen vote, the margin between successful and unsuccessful candidates may be just a few votes. The Court strongly encourages unsuccessful candidates not to become disheartened. It is by no means uncommon for Assistants to be elected at second or third attempt and our advice is very much "if at first you don't succeed, try again!".

Revised: April 2021