



BULLETIN FROM THE RT HON THE LORD MAYOR

Christmas 2020

“The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's Household should.”

A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens

Fellow Liverymen

In the opening chapter of *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens describes the bustle and excitement of Christmas Eve in the City, where Londoners are carousing and shopping on gas-lit Cheapside, as Mr Scrooge shuts up his counting house in an alleyway off Cornhill, Bob Cratchit races home to his family, and the Lord Mayor himself prepares to celebrate Christmas extravagantly at the Mansion House.

This Christmas things will be very different, and not just because there have not been fifty cooks and butlers in the Lord Mayor's Household for many years (if ever there were). In 2020 “household” has become a term we see in the headlines on a daily basis. We are coming to the end of a year unlike any other in the City's history, which has presented grave challenges to the Square Mile's businesses, residents and Livery Companies. It has been a year in which we have been denied our usual opportunities to gather together and it will conclude with our marking the Christmas season quietly and, in many cases, apart from those that we love.

It is natural at this time to reflect on the year that has passed. And as I look back over all that has happened in 2020, and all the issues that I have touched upon in these bulletins since March, I am left with two principal feelings – of pride and of optimism.

I feel proud because I have been impressed and reassured by the determination of all in the Livery to adapt to the challenges, and to contribute in the crisis by helping the vulnerable and those most in need. Our long-standing philanthropic traditions have found a new relevance and urgency this year. At my recent virtual Briefing to the Livery we shared the early results of the Pan Livery Philanthropy Survey. The data collected reveals that the total charitable giving of the Livery collectively during the last 12 months was £72 million. We believe that this puts the Livery movement in the top 5 charitable grant makers in the UK, with this year much of that giving being focussed on communities and organisations impacted by COVID19. That is a tremendous achievement. You can learn more about the Survey results by watching the virtual Briefing at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTheqImJX4A>

This determination to make a difference, plus the cautious hope we have been given by the recent development of a vaccine for COVID19, is the cause of my optimism. For the first time we can with some confidence see a light at the end of the tunnel and the possibility, perhaps in the Spring of 2021, that we might see a more extensive and more permanent physical return of workers and visitors to the City. Making the most of such a moment will be essential, to boost confidence and to bring in the crucial footfall that has been so lacking this year. We are therefore beginning to make plans that would involve bringing together, when the circumstances are right, the Livery, business, the hospitality and cultural sectors, community groups and churches, as well as residents, to mark the re-opening of the City next year.

In the meantime I know that all of us in the Livery will continue to do everything that we have been doing this year, despite the pandemic – supporting our communities, working with trades and professions to build for a recovery, and playing an inclusive, sustainable and positive part in the life of the City and the country.

As the year draws to a close, I want to take this opportunity to thank you again for your support, kindness and enthusiasm. I hope that the Christmas period will allow you an opportunity to relax and recharge in readiness for what 2021 may bring. Hilary and I send our warmest wishes to you and your families for a merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, New Year.



Alderman William Russell
The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor



Merry Christmas from the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress