

MagnaMasters' 11th Annual Open Committee 12 noon Monday 14 September 2026 at Cote St Pauls

Attending: Neville Chamberlain, Roger North, Martin Miles (Hon Treasurer), John Moore-Gillon (Deputy Chairman), Edward Hutton, Nicholas Birtles, Jim Conybeare, Graeme Groom, Geoffrey Lewis, Debby Ounsted, Mark Hardy, Ian Locks (Hon. Secretary), Stephen Hodgkinson, Ian McIntyre (Chairman), Adrian Scott Knight, Simon Archer, Patrick Chapman and Barrie Stewart.

Apologies for absence: John Shonfeld (has reached Reading from Cornwall but next train cancelled), Jeremy Randall.

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 11th Magna Masters open committee meeting and briefly summarised events during the year, as follows:

A visit to Stationers' Hall Archives on 1 September 2025.

A visit to the Magna Carta 1225 Exhibition at The Society of Antiquaries at Burlington House on 16 September 2025.

Informal lunches at Founders' hall roughly every 4 to 6 months, on 12 November 2025, and Wednesday 11 March, with the next one on Wednesday 14 October. It was noted that seven were booked for the October 2026 lunch so far, with 10 places reserved.

Tuesday 27 January 2026, the very enjoyable 11th Annual Dinner at Tallow Chandlers' Hall.

A Burgundy Wine Tasting trip to Beaune, 2nd to 5th June 2026. This was the highlight of year.

We look forward to the AGM on Monday 2 November 2026, with a wine tasting and supper at the RAF Club, 128 Piccadilly, London W1J 7PY.

Finally looking further ahead we have the 12th Annual Dinner, again at Tallow Chandlers Hall, on Thursday 4 February 2027.

2. The Honorary Treasurer, Martin Miles, took the meeting through the highlights of the brief financial record, namely:

Assets at 1st July 2025:	£13226
Annual subscriptions of £50 per member	£4400
Net expenses during year	£1934
Assets at 30th June 2026	£15692

Martin said the satisfactory financial position was due mainly to a significant reduction in the cost of the annual dinner due to beneficial agreements struck with Tallow Chandlers' Hall and their caterers plus lower levels of financial support than previously being required for the AGM and Open Committee meeting.

Nic Birtles had examined and found all in good order. Full accounts would follow at the AGM.

Discussion took place regarding the increasing reserves.

Nic Birtles suggested MMA should be looking to spend all its income. It was pointed out, however, that we had always aimed to provide for the future as numbers declined and John MG warned that the costs of the dinner would be higher in 2028 at Apothecaries.

It was felt that with increasing Livery Hall and catering prices and likely decline in membership numbers over time, that this would be absorbed automatically within a few years. It was noted that we could afford to subsidise events a little more where necessary, to encourage wider participation.

It was noted that currently we have around 87 paying members, 81 have paid to date this year and a few more normally pay during the autumn.

The Chairman noted that the MMA finances were in good order as reported by Nic Birtles as examiner and thanked both Martin and Nic for their stewardship.

4. Discussion of other events:

- (a) Re City Lunches, it was felt that the best months to hold these would be March, July and October each year. It was noted that the Founders Hall lunch was particularly good value at around £46 plus drinks, whereas lunches elsewhere, such as Watermans Hall or Innholders, were approximately £95 including drinks. For some MMs, the priority is the camaraderie of meeting up, rather than too elaborate a lunch.

On the other hand, it was felt a good idea to try different venues periodically. On that basis it was agreed there would be an Innholders Hall lunch in March 2027, an Ironmongers Hall lunch in July 2027 and we should hold a lunch at Founders Hall in October 2027.

Other possible venues for lunches would be the Butchers Hall (but the menu is restricted to meat which does not suit everybody) also the City Livery Club.

- (b) John Moore Gillon mentioned a possible tour of the Garrick Club Art Collection for around 30 people, followed by lunch in an upstairs room at the Lamb & Flag pub nearby. He also proposed a possible tour of the Middle Temple, followed by lunch in Middle Temple Hall. Both of these were felt to be excellent potential visits and JMG will look at possible dates. We would be looking for around 30 people for each event to include Carta Consorts.

- (c) We discussed a possible cultural trip for 2028. Nic Birtles would investigate the following and report back:

- (i) Dutch Bulb fields River Cruise April 2028 or
- (ii) Wine tasting Alsace, Champagne or Bordeaux

4/5 days maximum

Emphasis on more Culture and less wine tasting.

It was noted that Riviera Travel does cruises of the Dutch bulb fields in April, which are around four days/5 nights at a similar expense level to wine tasting trips.

Other river cruises later in the year have been seven days and more expensive and have also been cancelled because of lack of water in the great European Rivers.

Graeme Groom proposed a vote of thanks to Nic Birtles for all the work done by him organising the excellent Burgundy wine tour and this was approved with acclamation and also with thanks to Patrick Chapman and to Jeremy Randall for their assistance to Nic during the tour.

- (d) Other possible visits mentioned included Apsley House with lunch at a nearby pub, Benjamin Franklin's house ditto, and H. Forman salmon smokery. It was envisaged that all of those visits could be for MagnaMasters and Carta Consorts.

5. Possible visit to Wales 2027

Wayne Buffet Warlow then joined the meeting. He put forward his proposal for a visit to Wales over a weekend, see details below.

Outline of Visit to Wales 2027

1. *Nantgarw Pottery. The source of some of the finest porcelain in the world for over 200 years.*
2. *Castell Coch. A gothic style castle rebuilt in the 19th century on an original medieval site.*
3. *The Royal Mint. All official British coins and those of many other countries are produced here. A guided tour will be followed by a light lunch.*
4. *Llantrisant. Longbowmen from this medieval hill town played a decisive role in the defeat of the French at the battle of Crecy.*
5. *St Fagans National Museum of History. Set in the extensive grounds of a Tudor mansion are a wide collection of buildings great and small brought from all over Wales and meticulously rebuilt.*
6. *Llanerch Vineyard. Producer of highly regarded British wines. A guided tour is followed by a tasting and afternoon tea.*

In addition to the above a Gala Dinner with entertainment will be provided on Saturday evening at the Cardiff and County Club, celebrated for the finest cuisine in Cardiff. Following a drinks reception the menu will consist of: Cawl (traditional Welsh soup) / Cockles with Laverbread / Roast Middle of Lamb stuffed with leeks and rosemary, braised red cabbage, pea puree, dauphinoise potato, lamb jus / Tia Maria Creme Brulee, Chocolate Truffle, Shortbread / Mini Welsh Cakes with Coffee. Wine and all other accompanying drinks during and after the meal will be bought separately. Members of the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales and other invited guests will pay to attend the evening but for MMA members and partners this will be included in their global payment for the weekend.

Hotel costs cannot be confirmed at this stage but best estimates obtained for June of next year indicate that the global cost per person for accommodation, transport and all items specified above will be in the order of £400 to £500. It is assumed that most members will arrive on Friday and leave on Sunday but accommodation at the venue can be extended pro rata should any wish to remain until the Monday

It was agreed that we should be targeting the weekend of Friday 4th and Saturday 5th June. It would also be useful to be able to extend the weekend to stay over on the Sunday night, 6th June 2027, so as to leave after a leisurely breakfast on Monday 7th June.

We would be looking for approximately 30 to 40 people (note that the coach Wayne currently envisages for the tours on the Saturday and the Sunday is a 37-seater).

A show of hands around the table indicated that this should be a very popular event for June next year. The Chairman suggested it might be nice if someone could give a potted history for, say, 5 minutes about The Livery Company of Wales. Wayne said that one of the principal founders of the Company is now 94 and he would be an excellent person to do exactly that.

Note by way of brief extra details the proposal would be to arrive on the Friday night in time for choral evening song at Llandaff cathedral at 5:30 PM.

The Saturday would see a coach trip past Caerphilly Castle, to Nantgarw Pottery, followed by Pontypridd with lunch and a tour at the Royal Mint.

The Sunday would see a visit to Castell Coch, then on to Saint Fagan's National Museum of History and ending at the Llanerch Vineyard for a guided tour, tasting and afternoon tea.

Wayne will pursue discussions with his preferred hotel and report back.

6. Any other Business

A number of MagnaMasters attended Stephen Bernhard's funeral last October in Derby. He is much missed and we send our sympathy to Jenny and his family.

The Chairman further noted that we had sadly lost Carta Consort Simon Bartley, immediately before the Beaune wine tour. He and MagnaMaster Christine Tompkins should have been on that tour and we send our sympathy to Christine.

The chairman reported that Kathleen Duncan, the Master Musician, was continuing to make progress. She had already had a lengthy period of rehabilitation and her recovery was clearly going to take some time. Debby Ounsted commented it was Kathleen's birthday at the end of September. If anyone had any photographs of Kathleen from her year, the family would be keen to receive them, also if anyone wanted to send Kathleen a birthday card, this could be routed through Debby.

The Chairman reported that Allan Cheeseman was making good progress with his rehabilitation. Allan would not be permitted to drive before next May, but his surgeon feels he is ahead of where he might be expected to be. The meeting resolved to send all best wishes to Allan and also to Jan for Allan's continued good progress. We hope to see him again at another Magna Masters event next year.

The meeting congratulated the Honorary Secretary Ian Locks and Valerie on their recent diamond wedding anniversary.