



THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF GLASS SELLERS OF LONDON

Membership Information Pack

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Who we are

The Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers of London received its Charter from King Charles II in 1664. The Company was initially founded to regulate the Glass Selling and Pot-Making industries within the City of London and to ensure quality and fair trade. To that end, aspiring traders in glass were apprenticed to a master who was a member of the Glass Sellers Company. He in turn, was accountable to the court and officers of the Livery and ultimately to the Master of the Company.

The tradition of integrity, generosity, and fellowship that governed the company in former times remains today and creates an unbroken link with the past. Representatives of almost all the sectors of the modern glass industry are members of the Livery. The Company actively promotes the use of glass in arts, crafts, science & technology, and supports education and training in all these areas. At present, our Company has around 190 Members, of whom a significant number have strong connections with the glass industry. In recent years, around 20% of new members have been women. Membership of the Livery today is not restricted to people actively connected with the glass industry, but an interest in glass is expected. Though being an 'Open Livery' criteria of joining is not restricted, if there is no connection with Glass.

In London today, there are 114 livery companies representing different professions, trades, and crafts, both past and present. The Glass Sellers Company is the 71st in the long-standing order of seniority or precedence.



What we do

The purpose of a City of London Livery Company, as defined by the Court of Aldermen, is to “foster its profession, trade or craft”. This purpose is achieved through charitable works, fellowship, trade, and commerce.



Clearly, all long-standing Livery Companies exist in very different circumstances from those prevailing when the company was formed. For example, nowadays our Beadle oversees our ceremonies rather than policing the streets looking for rogue Glass Sellers. Instead, we are working more generally to promote this wonderful material glass whenever we can, and we are very proud of our continuing contacts with the glass industry. Similarly, our charitable activities have moved from simply looking after Glass Sellers in difficulties to helping others.



The role of the Glass Sellers Company today is to:

- Maintain cordial relationships within the Company, the City and the glass industry
- Stimulate interest in glass in all its aspects
- Carry out charitable works, with special emphasis on education
- Maintain the Company's traditions, values, and customs
- Provide pastoral care for members in distress
- Support the Lord Mayor & the Corporation of the City of London.



Charitable works

The purpose of the Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers' Charity Fund is to support:

- The wider glass industry
- The City and its specific appeals
- Education
- The less privileged in and around the City of London.

All members of the Livery promise to contribute to the Charity Fund throughout their membership, according to their means. Our charitable activities currently include:

- Awards e.g., the Glass Sellers' Art and Craft, and Science and Technology prizes
- Scholarships and bursaries for education
- Glass in Society projects with schools throughout the country
- One-off gifts in response to specific appeals, including the Lord Mayor's Charity.



Fellowship

We promote fellowship and communication between Liverymen, as well as within the wider glass industry.

We wish to encourage all Liverymen to become actively involved in the Company. There are several committees and teams which help the Livery to function and periodically need new members.

Committees	Role
Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GPC)	Acts as a Finance and Management Committee for the Company, reporting to the Court. Chaired by a Court Assistant or Warden
Membership Committee	Responsible for improving the experience of Freemen and Liverymen and strengthening their understanding of the Company and the City, and promoting recruitment. Reporting to the Court and Chaired by a Member of the Court and includes a Past Master.
The Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers' Charity Fund	The Charity Fund is an independent entity, approved by the Charity Commission. The Charity Fund is administered by Trustees who are all members of the Livery. All members of the Company are expected to contribute to the fund
Succession and Appointments Committee	Evolves succession lists for the key offices within the



	Company. Chaired by a Past Master and includes the Master and Clerk
Interview Committee	Responsible for assessing the qualifications of possible new members and carrying out the initial interviews. Chaired by a Past Master and includes the Clerk
Glass Committee	The committee's remit is to improve links and raise awareness of the Company within the wider glass industries. Reporting to the Court. Chaired by a Court Assistant and includes a Past Master.
Sporting Teams	These vary from time to time depending on the active interests of members. In recent years Golf, Shooting and Swimming teams have all competed with other Livery Companies.





Trade Background

The British glass industry is much larger than many realise. It is worth many billions of pounds annually. Glass is possibly the most malleable of substances; it can be fashioned into shapes and used for more purposes than any other material.

- We melt it in the flame of a match, but it can stand the heat of re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere
- We look through it when we look through windows, windscreens, and lenses.
- We look at it when we admire stained and art glass
- We put things in it when we fill milk bottles and wine glasses
- We use it to communicate via fibre optic cables which transmit data signals, and in the manufacture of satellites
- We use it in surface engineering in the manufacture of cars and aircraft and in the biomedical industry.

Glass touches every aspect of our daily lives. It is a truly "green" substance. It is made from natural materials in abundant supply and can be recycled back to its natural state with little or no loss of performance.

The Glass Sellers are interested in and work to promote the manufacture, use and appreciation of glass in all its forms and look to link actively with individuals and organisations within these sectors.

How we are managed

The Company is governed by a Court chaired by a Master who is supported by the Prime Warden and Renter Warden who normally succeed to be Master in turn. These appointments are made annually. The Company Clerk is always in attendance at Court Meetings and takes a minute of the proceedings. Others, such as the Company Treasurer, may also be asked to attend.

Assistants to the Court are appointed regularly to ensure that there is a steady flow of potential new Wardens and Masters for the Company. They, together with the current Master and Wardens and the seven most recent Past Masters, form the voting body of the Court.

General policy issues under discussion are often agreed by acclaim after discussion, but voting does take place quite often on important matters or where opinion remains divided.

All Past Masters are life members of the Court although, as indicated above, they lose voting rights after their first seven years after passing through the chair. Nevertheless, their views are always listened to carefully as they frequently represent wisdom and well-regarded long-standing traditions.



What is expected of a member?

Joining a City Livery Company is a lifelong commitment. It is not equivalent to joining a club in which membership can be dropped when interest wanes. Legally, it is not possible to give up the "Freedom" of the Company once that has been granted, though it is possible to retire from the greater commitment involved in taking the "Livery" of the Company.

These two levels of membership in the Company correlate to what in the early days were the roles of skilled craftsman (Freeman) and business owner (Liveryman).

Today's members commit to supporting the traditions and customs of the City of London and, as Liverymen, voting in the elections for the Sheriffs and Lord Mayor. They also promise to contribute to the Company's Charity Fund according to their means.

There are certain basic City traditional ceremonials that we adhere to like every other City Livery Company. It is important that those seeking membership should be aware of these and welcome them as part of membership. Offering toasts and passing the Loving Cup at dinner are included of course, but in addition a new member is expected to have:

- A real desire to 'give back' to our civic society
- A motivation to give, within their capability, of talent, time, and money
- A disposition, which allows them to work easily with others in the context of the Company
- An understanding of and sympathy for city tradition.



It is hoped that members will become actively involved in the work of the Company throughout their membership. The amount of involvement often varies over time, depending on career and family pressures as well as economic circumstances.

Anyone joining the Company becomes a Freeman of the Company and normally holds this role for a maximum of three years. In that time, they are expected to attend a minimum of two formal Court Dinners and two of the less formal events. There will also be briefing sessions on both the role and organisation of the City and of our Company and its traditions, where attendance is expected.

It is also necessary at this stage to apply for the Freedom of the City of London which is granted to any Company Freeman who is put forward by his or her Company. This involves a short ceremony at the City Chamberlain's Court, conducted by the Clerk to the Chamberlain. It is then possible to apply to the Company to be "Clothed in Livery". It should be noted that this involves paying a one-off fee called a "Fine", an annual amount of "Quarterage" as well as contributing regularly to the Charity Fund. Regular attendance at the Common Hall meetings of the Company and the City Elections mentioned above is also expected. While an interest in the City of London is expected, many of our members live around the country or in a few cases overseas.



What are the benefits of being a member?



The main benefits of being a member are the opportunities:

- to become a Freeman of the City of London
- to contribute to improving the lives of many people by contributing time and skill to the activities that support education, industry, the arts, and less well-off communities
- to meet and connect with like-minded men and women
- to help young and talented people to achieve their full potential
- to contribute to the future developments of the wider glass industry
- to support and assist in the varied charitable activities of the Company
- to attend formal dinners arranged by the Company
- to attend luncheons and dinners with other Livery Companies and at the Lord Mayor's Mansion House.

In addition, there are:

- Teams for sports and social activities.
- Events organised by other City Institutions
- Religious services, where we welcome people of any ethnic or religious background or, indeed, none
- Access to rooms in the City that can be reserved at a modest fee for over-night stays. This can be especially useful for out-of-town members.

Partners and guests are always welcome to all the general social events of the Company, but advice should be taken from the Clerk when considering inviting guests to the more formal events including Court Dinners, Common Hall, City events, etc.





Who can join?

Originally admission to the Company bound together only those who shared an interest in promoting the sale of, and ensuring the quality of, glass products within the City of London. Nowadays the reasons for becoming a Liveryman of the Glass Sellers Company are much wider. Working members from the glass industry and people who work with its products are particularly welcome as the Company continues to foster its links with glass making. We also welcome members from the associated industries such as telecommunications and businesses working with glass composites. However, most new members are based near London and do not have such links though they often have, for example, an active interest in collecting art or historical glassware.

The Company is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious organisation of mixed gender, with most of its membership being based in the United Kingdom. We do have some members resident in other parts of the world, though clearly, they are less able to make full use of the facilities and activities of the Company.

Categories of membership

Full membership is limited to 230 Liverymen and an unlimited number of Freemen.

Liverymen

Liverymen are full members of the Company, entitled to attend all events, to serve on Company committees and to be elected to serve on the Court of Assistants.

Freemen

There are two categories of Freemen:

- Those who are waiting to become Liverymen.
- Artisan Freemen - those who are or have been actively engaged in the wider glass industry, as an artisan or craftsman, and choose on joining never to proceed to become Liverymen.



How to become a member

Any interested person can find out more about becoming a Liveryman from the Clerk.

Application

An applicant for the Freedom of the Company must have two sponsors, one acting as proposer, the other as a seconder; one must be a Liveryman and the other a member of the Court.

Both sponsors must sign the applicant's form, and the proposer must also provide a recommendation in the section within the membership application form. The application form should be sent to the Clerk. Do not worry if you do not currently have a sponsor from within the Company. Contact the Clerk, who will guide you through the application process and implications of membership.

Induction process

Following the receipt of the application by the Clerk, an applicant will be asked to attend an interview. The interview panel will normally consist of the Chairman of the Interview Committee, the Clerk, and another Past Master.

Applicants are normally expected to have attended at least one Glass Sellers event prior to interview and to have some knowledge of the Livery movement, the Company, and the City. It is the responsibility of the proposer to ensure the applicant has this basic knowledge and experience prior to the interview.

After the interview, if both parties then wish to proceed, the application goes before the Court at its next formal meeting for final agreement.

The successful applicant is invited to become a Freeman of the Company and subsequently progress to become a Liveryman.

The progress from application for admission to being elected a Freeman should not take more than six months. Freeman are encouraged to become Liverymen within three years of joining the Company, subject to places being available.

Before being clothed in the Livery, a Freeman is normally expected to have attended:

- Two dinners or banquets
- A Company briefing
- A City briefing

Should a Freeman progress to be clothed in Livery within 12 months they are expected to have attended at least one formal Court Dinner. They should also have attended the briefing sessions if these are available during that period.



The costs of being a member

The costs for becoming a member in 2026 are as follows:

Joining as an Artisan Freeman

A Fine (administration) payment, which is currently £150 and £150 per year. An Artisan Freeman is not expected to progress to be 'Clothed in Livery' and will be active in Glass Art.

Joining as a Freeman

- A Fine (administration) payment, which is currently £150 and £240 per year.

On election as a Liveryman

- A one-off payment or Fine, which is currently £650, and an annual subscription called Quarterage, which currently stands at £450 per year. Payment may be made by annual, quarterly or monthly direct debit. Quarterage is best thought of as representing the running costs of the Company and can be expected to edge up in line with inflation over the years.

The typical costs for events are:

- Dinners - £145 per head
- Lunches – £50 to £100 per head
- Annual Banquet - £175 per head

All prices are inclusive of VAT.

Where partners or guests accompany a Liveryman, the cost will be the same for each person attending.

It is important that Liverymen feel that they can afford these kinds of costs, bearing in mind that we expect participation as much as possible in our events and activities to generate the friendships which are part and parcel of Livery life in the City of London.

In summary

We would very much welcome you joining our Livery Company and hope that the information we have provided above will help you make that decision. This is a long-term commitment and brings with it responsibilities to help us with our charitable work, both in terms of time and money. Being a Liveryman also brings great comradeship with like-minded people from within the City and industry, and access to many interesting ceremonial and social events, for both Liverymen and their partners. We are custodians of the medieval and modern governance of the City of London – steeped in very special history and traditions.

We would be happy to hear from you if you would like more information and, if you are interested, look forward to receiving your application in due course. Our Privacy Policy is available at <https://www.glass-sellers.co.uk/privacy-policy/>

For further information go to www.glass-sellers.co.uk or for an application form contact the Clerk:

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