GUILD OF MERCER'S SCHOLARS
CONSTITUTION

1. Introduction

1.1. This Constitution sets out the rules and regulations of the Guild or Mercer's Scholars that were originally documented on 30th May 1951 and periodically amended by the Court.

1.2. This current version was approved 26-March-2026

2. Title

2.1. The Guild shall be entitled the "Guild of Mercers' Scholars", or such other title as the Court shall decide.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the Guild shall be:

- To bring together former members of the Mercers' cluster of schools, colleges and academies who have an interest in the City of London, its customs, ceremonies and traditions to become Freemen of the City.
- To enable young people from the Mercers' cluster of schools to become Freemen of the City of London through the Apprentice scheme.
- To assist members to become members of a City Livery Company of their choice.
- To foster a sense of good citizenship by service to the Guild, to one's own Livery Company and to the Corporation of the City of London
- To support educational and charitable activities, both by the organisation of events and through grants to Guildmen and Apprentices from the Guild's own Charitable Trust.

4. Governance

4.1. The Guild shall consist of the "the Court", Guildmen and Apprentices.

4.2. The Court shall be made up of a Master, Renter Warden, Junior Warden, Past Masters, Clerk, Treasurer, Membership Clerk, Court Assistants with portfolio or without portfolio and any other officials that the Court may deem necessary.

4.3. The affairs of the Guild shall be under the absolute control of the Court

5. Membership

5.1. Membership of the Guild shall be open to all current and former students of the Mercers' cluster of schools, colleges and academies, and to such other persons approved by the Court, who have taken up the Freedom of the City of London or the livery of one of the City

Companies and having been proposed and seconded by two Guildmen, and duly elected by the Court.

5.2. Honorary Membership of the Guild shall be open to current Principals and School, Liaison Officers of the Mercers' cluster of schools, colleges and academies who have taken up the Freedom of the City of London or the livery of one of the City Companies and having been proposed and seconded by two Guildmen and are duly elected by the Court.

5.3. If in the opinion of the Court, after considering all relevant facts, any act or omission by a member offends against or conflicts with the objects of the Guild it is within the power of the Court to terminate membership of the Guild, without necessarily being required to provide any explanation or reason for such a decision.

6. Apprenticeship

6.1. At the discretion of the Court, Apprentices may be admitted to the Guild, being not less than 17 years of age and not more than 19 years of age and having been proposed and seconded by two Guildmen.

6.2. Applicants for an apprenticeship must be eligible to take the Freedom of the City of London and membership of the Guild on completion of their apprenticeship.

6.3. Apprenticeship shall be open to any pupils or students of the Mercers' cluster of schools, colleges and academies, subject to a limit of two applicants per institution per academic year, unless decided otherwise by the Court. Apprenticeship shall also be open to other persons as approved by the Court.

6.4. If in the opinion of the Court, after considering all relevant facts, any act or omission by an Apprentice offends against or conflicts with the objects of the Guild it is within the power of the Court to terminate apprenticeship in the Guild, without necessarily being required to provide any explanation or reason for such a decision.

7. Committees and Sub Committees

7.1. A Membership Committee (MemCom) chaired by the Renter Warden shall meet quarterly in advance of Court meetings to assist the Court on matters including, but not limited to, the approval of apprentice and direct entry applications and the assessment and approval of grant applications.

7.2. The Court shall from time-to-time form sub-committees to act on its behalf on certain issues. The sub-committees shall be chaired by a member of the Court who shall take responsibility for reporting back to the Court on actions taken and issues discussed.

8. Election of the Court

8.1. The roles of Master, Renter Warden and Junior Warden shall be elected by the Court at the Annual Meeting.

8.2. Other Court roles including Clerk, Treasurer, Membership Clerk, representative School, Social and Court Assistants with portfolio shall be elected at any formal Court meeting.

8.3. The Master shall, if possible, have first served as both the Junior Warden and Renter Warden. The Renter Warden shall, if possible, have first served as the Junior Warden and a Court Assistant. The Junior Warden shall, if possible, have first served as a Court Assistant.

8.4. The Master elect and Wardens elect, shall assume office as soon as practicable after the Michaelmas Day Court and serve a one-year term. The roles of Clerk, Treasurer, Membership Clerk, and Court Assistants with portfolio shall serve indefinite terms. Court Assistants without portfolio shall serve a maximum term of two years.

8.5. All active members of the Court shall be entitled to vote except for Court Assistants without portfolio.

8.6. A Court member is deemed to be active if they have participated in at least one Court meeting in the preceding twelve months, either in person or virtually. If a Court member re-engages after a period of inactivity, they shall be entitled to vote at the following meeting.

8.7. The Court shall be empowered to fill an interim vacancy on the Court.

9. Meetings

9.1. The Court shall meet quarterly for the transaction of the affairs of the Guild. Such Courts shall normally be held within twenty-eight days of Christmas Day, Lady Day, Midsummer's Day and Michaelmas Day. Wherever possible meetings shall be hybrid to allow in-person or virtual attendance.

9.2. An extraordinary meeting of the Court may be called at any time on the instructions of the Master. If the Master is unable or unwilling to act, then the meeting may be called by the most recent Past Master who is able and willing to act.

9.3. The Master, or if absent the immediate Past Master, shall preside at all Courts. In the absence of the Master and the immediate Past Master, the most recent Past Master present shall preside. When so presiding the immediate Past Master or most recent Past Master shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Master and shall have the status of the Master.

9.4. There shall be an Annual Meeting, open to all the Guildmen, which where possible shall be held on the same day as, and following on from, the Midsummer's Day Court.

9.5. An extraordinary meeting of the Court can be requisitioned by not less than ten Court members making a written request to the Clerk and setting out their reasons, therefore. Upon receipt of such a request the Clerk shall convene a meeting of the Court to be held within 21 days and shall send to each member of the Court a copy of the written request and reasons.

9.6. A quorum shall be six members at an ordinary Court meeting and twelve members at an Extraordinary Court meeting and Annual Meeting.

10. Quarterage

10.1. Each Guildman and apprentice shall pay annually the appropriate subscription fee set by the Court. The membership of Guildmen more than three years in arrears shall be set to 'lapsed' and they shall be assumed to have left the Guild. Apprentices must be up to date on subscriptions to progress to being Guildmen. Honorary Guildmen are not obliged to pay a subscription fee.

10.2. The Court shall set a joining and re-joining fee where considered appropriate. Any Guildman or Apprentice whose dues are outstanding shall not be entitled to attend any meetings or functions of the Guild except by authority of the Court.

11. Accounts

11.1. The Treasurer shall arrange for a report as to the financial position of the Guild at each Court meeting.

11.2. The Treasurer shall arrange for the preparation of a Statement of Affairs for each year ending 31st July which shall be presented at the Christmas Day Court meeting where possible.

11.3. The Accounts shall be 'independently examined' by a member of the Guild, not holding office.

12. Clerk

12.1. The Clerk shall be responsible for summoning all meetings; for the maintenance of full and proper records; and for the safe keeping of the Guild's property.

12.2. The Clerk shall prepare, and send to each member of the Court, not less than twenty-one days beforehand, an agenda of the business to be transacted thereat.

13. Diversity and equality

13.1. It is the policy of the Guild to treat candidates and Guild members fairly, taking account of race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment status, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, disability, or age. The Court is committed to ensuring our Guild is inclusive and all its members promote:

- An environment in which individual differences and the contribution of all our Guildmen and Apprentices is recognised and valued.
- Dignity and respect for each other and all our partners.
- A total absence of intimidation, bullying or harassment.
- Training, development and progression opportunities for each other and especially our Apprentices.
- Equality in our partnership working, regularly reviewing all our policies and procedures to ensure fairness.

14. Safeguarding

14.1. The Guild recognises that it has a statutory duty to report disclosures of allegations of abuse and neglect. It also has a moral duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of its Apprentices. This includes helping to protect them from situations in which they might be abused or harmed.

14.2. The Guild safeguards against abuse and neglect by:

- Establishing a safe environment in which all apprentices can learn and develop.

- Practising safe Apprentice Master recruitment procedures built around Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks which all Apprentice Masters of Safeguarded Apprentices are required to complete. A single central record of DBS checks undertaken is held.
- All Apprentice Masters attend compulsory training, online/one-to-one or remotely, on safeguarding, responsibilities and safe management of the relationship with Apprentices.
- Maintaining clear procedures to identify and report suspected cases of abuse or neglect.
- Ensuring all Guild members (Guildmen and apprentices) are made aware of their responsibility to safeguard apprentices and this policy and procedures, and the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person (DDSP), Master and Wardens receive appropriate external training.
- Providing appropriate support to Apprentices who have been harmed.

14.3. It is recognised that individual schools have their own minimum requirements governing Safeguarding and they are deemed to have responsibility for meeting their own individual criteria.

14.4. Details of the Guild's own Safeguarding Policy and Procedures can be found on the website.

14.5. Guildmen and Apprentices play an important role in identifying and reporting potential wrongdoing. Failure to identify and mitigate problems could quickly damage the Guild's reputation built over many years. All members should feel comfortable in raising whistleblowing concerns and be confident they will be listened to without fear of reprisal. In the first instance concerns should be raised with a senior member of the court (Master, Past Master or Warden) unconnected with the issue. The Guild is committed to ensuring an independent investigation of issues brought forward.

15. Alteration to the Constitution

15.1. Any alteration to this constitution shall be within the powers of the Court, provided that due notice shall have been given to all members thereof at least twenty-one days before the Court meeting to which such alteration shall be submitted.