



THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF COOPERS

AN INTRODUCTION

2023

Foreword

Thank you for expressing an interest in joining the Worshipful Company of Coopers. Those of us who are already members of the Company are very proud of it, and the work that it does. We are delighted that you are considering joining us.

The purpose of this booklet is to explain, and assist in, the membership application process and to help you to complete the Membership Application Form.

The booklet also contains some information about the Coopers' Company, which you may find useful. You will find more detail about the Company and its history and heritage on our website (www.coopers-hall.co.uk).

Our Hall, dating from the 17th century, is one of the finest in the City, and attracts admiration from members and visitors alike. It is the focus of our fellowship, the perfect place for Court gatherings, lectures, business meetings and functions, get-togethers, and for our members to entertain private and corporate guests.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email the Clerk at clerk@coopers-hall.co.uk

Introduction

The Worshipful Company of Coopers is one of the oldest in the hierarchy of the City of London and takes precedence as number 36 in the ranking of over one hundred Livery Companies. In modern times, it has evolved into the trustee of six principal charities and a social and charitable enterprise that retains an identity focused on the ancient craft of cask making

Many of our members hold a keen interest in the history of the Company and our Curator maintains a fascinating collection of artefacts of the Company and the craft in Coopers' Hall. Our members are always welcome to visit by prior appointment.

Unlike many of the old Livery Companies, our craft remains alive today and we continue to keep close connections with the cooperage industry in an endeavour to promote the survival of the craft and its associated cooperages.

We are very proud guardians of our long and continuing history. Our mission is to be recognised as an effective and independent forum for the industry, actively contributing to its strategic development, success and education. It is thus vital that we remain relevant to our industry and play an increasingly crucial part in its evolution in the 21st century. To do this, we look to our members for their support and contribution in the many ways they might feel able and comfortable with.

Charitable giving is an integral part of the work of all Livery Companies and especially here at Coopers' Hall. We tangibly support the education of young people and the training of apprentice coopers. Equally, the Company's support of its two educational establishments, the Coopers' Company and Coborn School and Strode's College, remains at the heart of the Company's *raison d'être*.

To be part of our Company is a very special privilege and it is hoped that once you have read through this handbook you will be able to appreciate the good fellowship and opportunities that the Company offers.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Part of being a member of a Livery Company is an acknowledgement of, and pride in, our long and distinguished history. We reflect this by maintaining the best of our traditions and terminology, whilst pursuing a mission that is as relevant in the 21st century as it was in the 15th. This can sometimes appear confusing and we hope that this glossary of terms will help unravel some of the mystery.

Court

The governing body of the Company, comprising the Master, two Wardens elected by the Livery and seventeen Court Assistants, one of whom is elected annually as Renter Warden. The Court meets seven times a year.

Master

The most senior member of the Company, nominated by the Court from among its number and elected by the Livery at Common Hall, he/she serves for one year, starting in mid June. You can find out more about our current Master by visiting our website www.coopers-hall.co.uk.

Wardens

The *Upper Warden* and the *Under Warden*, elected annually by the Livery at Common Hall; both serve for a year. Usually the Under Warden is elected to serve as Upper Warden the following year. The Upper and Under Wardens serve on behalf of the livery.

Renter Warden

Although a Court member, he/she is junior to the Upper and Under Wardens and serves for one year, usually before being nominated as Master Presumptive.

Deputy Master

On completion of his year in office, the Master becomes the Deputy Master and deputises as and when required.

Pastmaster

Someone who has already served as Master.

Court Assistant

A member of the Court, other than the two Wardens, but usually applied to those who have not served as Master.

Clerk

The senior employee of the Company and its Chief Operating Officer (email: **clerk@cooperscompany.co.uk**)

Common Hall

Held in a larger Livery Hall on the Monday before Pentecost, this is the Company's 'AGM' at which elections are held and reports given by the Court upon its activities in the preceding year and its plans for the future.

Liveryman

A full member of the Company; gender-neutral, referring to both men and women, (see the 'Membership Categories' on page 6 for a full definition).

Freeman

Someone at the first-level of membership; gender-neutral, referring to both men and women, (see page 6 for a full definition).

Fines (Fees)

The sums of money due for becoming a Freeman, a Liveryman, and a Court Assistant (see page 12).

Quarterage

The annual, not quarterly, subscription for being a Freeman or a Liveryman (see page 12).

First Sponsor

A Liveryman, who knows the applicant reasonably well, who can recommend the applicant for membership of the Company and who will encourage the applicant to attend events and participate in the activities of the Company.

Second Sponsor

A Liveryman, who knows the applicant and who can recommend the applicant for membership of the Company.

Cloathing

The ancient term for the ceremonial admission of a Freeman to the Livery.

Patrimony (now known in the Company as Lineage)

A route of entry into membership of the Company for the children of members of the Company, who were born after their father/mother became a Freeman.

Servitude

A route of entry into membership of the Company for those who are or were apprenticed to the Master

Redemption

The principal route of entry into membership of the Company for those with connections to our industries.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

We have two principal categories of membership: Freeman and Liverymen.

All members start as *Freemen* and remain so for ever. Freeman can attend most Company events and are kept fully in touch with what the Company is doing. They mainly fall into five categories as follows:

1. New members waiting to progress to the Livery or waiting to see if they would like to so progress.
2. Young people, starting their careers in our industries, who have not yet reached executive positions.
3. The children of Liverymen, who have joined the Company through Patrimony.
4. Former students of Coopers' Company and Coborn School in Upminster and Strode's College in Egham
5. Former Liverymen, who no longer wish to play a full part in the Company but wish to remain in membership.

We currently have around 60 Freeman but there is no limit to the number.

Liverymen are full members of the Company; they may attend all Company events, including the major events (which are Livery only), and most importantly can serve on the many committees of the Company and progress to the Court. Liverymen are enfranchised to vote at elections of the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs.

Becoming a Liveryman is the first step in a member's progression within the Company; a progression that for some will lead to serving as Master. It is impossible to be fully involved in the life of the Company without being a Liveryman.

Liverymen are required to be Freeman of the City of London (see below)

Most members who progress to become Liverymen have the following attributes:

- Have, or have had, a senior position, or are, or have been, innovators and entrepreneurs.
- Have, or have had, some standing in their industry, business or profession.
- A commitment to get involved in the many and various activities of the Company, including giving to the Coopers Charitable CIO.
- A record of attending, and on-going commitment to attend, Company events.

We have approximately 250 Liverymen and this number is expected to grow further.

You may wish to give some thought to which category of membership you would prefer to apply for. Your first sponsor should be able to give you advice on this and you can also discuss it with the Clerk. Subject to your first sponsor's agreement, you may change your application before your interview if you wish.

You have an option when making your application: Freedom or Freedom and Livery.

If you apply for the Freedom, you are likely to be recommended for such. You may apply to join the Livery later subject to a further interview.

THE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

MEMBERSHIP PROSPECTING

Typically, applicants are invited to join by existing Liverymen.

An ideal first step for all potential members is to attend an Open Evening at Coopers' Hall (ask the Clerk for further details). These events introduce the Company and the Hall and a better understanding of what we do. For applicants without a sponsor, it is a vital way of meeting existing members and finding a sponsor. It is not a prerequisite for those who already have a sponsor, although all new members are strongly encouraged to attend an Open Evening at some stage during their membership process.

If you do not know a second Liveryman, your first sponsor should be able to recommend and then introduce you to a second sponsor. If this proves difficult, please inform the Clerk, who may be able to find a suitable second sponsor for you, possibly at an Educational Evening.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Applications for membership are made to the Clerk who will post applicants a membership pack with a form and this booklet.

A detailed guide to the form is contained in the next chapter of this booklet. However, please do not hesitate to ask your first sponsor or the Clerk, if you have any questions.

Completed applications should be returned for the attention of the Clerk, to Coopers' Hall, 13 Devonshire Square, LONDON, EC2M 4TH, or by email to: clerk@cooperscompany.co.uk.

All successful candidates for membership must be over the age of 21 on the day they are admitted.

CLERK'S BRIEFING

Once the Clerk has received your application form, he may arrange for you to attend a Clerk's Briefing.

The meeting will occur at Coopers' Hall at a mutually convenient time and a brief tour of the Hall itself may be possible if time permits where you will be able to see some of the Hall's treasured artefacts of the Company.

The purpose of the Briefing is to ensure that you understand sufficiently what a Livery Company is, what the Coopers' Company does and how you would like to participate in it, once you become a member. It provides an opportunity for you to ask questions and prepare for any interview.

Between your Clerk's Briefing and your interview, the Clerk will co-ordinate with you to ensure that letters from both your sponsors have been received.

MEMBERSHIP INTERVIEW

All candidates for membership usually attend a membership interview. The Clerk will arrange this after you have attended the Briefing.

The interview panel will usually consist of THE Chairman of the Membership Committee and a Warden of the Company.

The principal purpose of the interview is to explore your reasons for your wish to join the Company and the ways in which you would like to be involved and contribute to the charitable work of the Company. It usually lasts no more than 20 minutes and is an opportunity for you to ask questions about the Company and its activities.

The panel may discuss with you your aspirations to go forward to the Livery, and when that may happen.

There are two possible recommendations that the interview panel can make, as follows:

- **Recommendation for Freedom** – this is the most likely outcome for those who have applied for Freedom. However, the panel may feel that an applicant for Freedom and Livery is best suited to spend some time as a Freeman before joining the Livery.
- **Recommendation for Freedom and Livery** – this is the most likely outcome for those who have applied for both, although some members may have to spend time as Freeman before moving to the Livery.

APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Once the panel's recommendation for membership has been approved by the Court, the Clerk will offer you a series of dates on which Freedom ceremonies will take place.

Once you have confirmed a date for your Freedom ceremony, the Clerk will arrange to send you invoices for your Freedom fee. Details of current fees and quarterage are set out below. All quarterage must be paid by Direct Debit, so please pay the fee invoice and complete the Direct Debit form immediately as you cannot take part in your Freedom ceremony unless the invoices have been paid.

FREEDOM CEREMONY

Freedom ceremonies take place at Coopers' Hall during a Court Meeting although additional ceremonies are scheduled for other times.

Immediately after your Freedom ceremony, you will receive your certificate and the freedom event usually includes a lunch at the Hall.

FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF LONDON

All Freemen of Livery Companies in the City of London are entitled to apply for the Freedom of the City. This is a prerequisite for those who wish to become Liverymen and many Freemen choose to seek the Freedom of the City immediately after being admitted to the Freedom of the Company.

The process involves an Application to the Guildhall and payment of the fee (£150 from 2022). The Clerk is available to help you with this process and provide a special form for Freemen of the Company.

Your application must be approved by the Court of Aldermen. This can take up to two months. Once it is approved, you will be informed by Guildhall and it is then up to you to arrange a date to return to Guildhall for that Freedom ceremony. Please inform the Clerk by email of the date that you have arranged. Details as to how you go about the procedure can be seen at: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/about-us/law-historic-governance/freedom-of-the-city>

BECOMING A LIVERYMAN

Once you have become a Freeman of the Company, you are eligible to become “cloathed” as a Liveryman on the following basis:

- You are a Freeman of the City of London
- You meet the attributes set out on page 6
- You have been approved for the Livery by the Court

When you are ready to move to the Livery, the Clerk will send you dates on which Cloathing ceremonies will take place. Once a date is agreed, the Clerk will send you an invoice for your Liveryman’s quarterage (calculated pro rata and less any Freeman’s quarterage pro rata). Details of current fees and quarterage are set below. As all quarterage is paid by Direct Debit, the Company will debit you the quarterage invoice. However, please pay the fee invoice immediately as you cannot take part in your Cloathing ceremony unless both invoices have been paid.

CLOATHING CEREMONY FOR LIVERYMEN

Cloathing ceremonies take place either at Common Hall or at Coopers’ Hall during meetings of the Court. Your sponsor is encouraged to attend. It usually takes about 20 minutes.

Once the ceremony is over, you will have become a full member of the Company and the membership application process is complete.

FILLING IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

We hope that these notes will help you to fill in the form. However, please do not hesitate to contact your first sponsor or the Clerk if you encounter any problems.

<i>Date of birth</i>	The Company requires proof of your date of birth, in the form of a copy of your birth certificate, your driving licence or your passport.
<i>Company name and address</i>	Alternatively enter 'Self-Employed' or 'Retired'.
<i>Interests and hobbies</i> <i>Sports played</i>	We enter this information into our membership database so please give details that you think will be useful for us to know. As above.
<i>Primary sector</i>	Tick only one box, which best describes what you do, or (if retired) did. We use this data to break our membership down into the various industry sectors.
<i>Other sectors</i>	Tick as many other sectors as you wish (other than the sector ticked as your primary sector), where you work, have worked or where you have an interest.
<i>Honours and decorations</i>	Provide details of your post-nominals here.
<i>Education inc qualifications</i>	Enter the name of your secondary school as well as the name(s) of HE/FE colleges attended along with details of the course and the qualification received.
<i>Qualifying occupations</i>	This section should be completed only by those who have ticked 'Redemption'. Please tick only one box from one category. Please tick the box that best approximates to your current or, if retired, past occupation.
<i>Application for</i>	Please tick one box only and check with your first sponsor or the Clerk before answering this question.
<i>Supporting detail</i>	This information will be made available to the Interview Panel so please give a little thought to these questions before answering them.

Sponsors

Please enter the names of your first and second sponsors, if you know them. If you have their letters of support, please enclose them with the form. If not, don't worry; the Clerk will request them.

COMPANY FEES AND FINES

From April 2024 the Company is introducing Age-Based Quarterage.

The Age Related groups are:-

Younger	21 to 32
Middle	33 to 45
Older	46 and over

The fees, inclusive of VAT is as follows:

Annual Livery Quarterage (paid annually)

Younger	25% of Older Livery Quarterage (£117.50 at 2023-24 rates)
Middle	62.5% of Older Livery Quarterage (£293.75 at 2023-24 rates)
Older	100% of Older Livery Quarterage (£470 at 2023-24 rates)

Annual Freedom Quarterage (paid annually)

Younger	90% of Younger Livery Quarterage (£105.75 at 2023-24 rates)
Middle	90% of Middle Livery Quarterage (£264.38 at 2023-24 rates)
Older	90% of Older Livery Quarterage (£423 at 2023-24 rates)

One-off Freedom Fee (paid once on joining, spread over 2 years if member prefers)

Younger	100% of Younger Freedom Quarterage
Middle	100% of Middle Freedom Quarterage
Older	100% of Older Freedom Quarterage

The 2023-24 rate of Livery Quarterage is £470 and is expected to be uprated for 2023-24 for inflation etc.

Exceptionally the Company may waive fees or arrange payment in instalments. Master's Apprentices are excused the Freedom joining and payment of quarterage for their first three years.