



BULLETIN FROM THE RT HON THE LORD MAYOR

1 May 2020

Fellow Liverymen

I hope that you all remain safe and well as I send this bulletin, my latest communication during the ongoing challenges of the disruption caused by COVID-19. I have been very grateful to have your responses to my earlier letter, updating me on how you and your Companies are approaching this unusual period. I have been saddened to learn that some Companies have lost members to the Coronavirus. The Lady Mayoress and I send our sincerest condolences to all who have been affected, and I know that our sadness will be shared by all members of the Livery family to which we all belong.

But I have been heartened too to hear about the operational adaptations you are making to the daily lives of your own Companies and the ways in which you are seeking to support others, especially the most vulnerable, in imaginative and inspiring ways. I hope that as Lord Mayor I can be a channel for the sharing of such stories and as well as the concerns or challenges with which many of us are wrestling. Thank you for the positive responses so far – further replies can be sent via my office by email to LMProgOffice@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Since I last wrote to you at Easter you will have heard that the decision has been taken, subject to some formal procedures in the autumn, to extend my Mayoralty for an additional year, so that my term of office will conclude in November 2021. The current Sheriffs will likewise have their terms of office extended by another year. We feel that this will help to provide the City of London with continuity of civic leadership at a particularly uncertain time. Despite the circumstances that have made it necessary I am nevertheless extremely honoured to have this unusual opportunity to serve alongside you for a further year and I look forward to continuing to work with you during my

Mayoralty. The ongoing support and understanding of the Livery in this process has been crucial and is much appreciated by me.

There will be several implications of this extended Mayoralty, and some of you may be wondering what it, as well the broader COVID-19 situation, may mean for annual activities like the **Lord Mayor's Show**. As I will need to renew my oath to HM The Queen at the start of my second year there will still be the opportunity for a Show if we are permitted to hold one. To that end, I am working with the Pageantmaster and the Board of Lord Mayor's Show Ltd to ensure that we have a Show prepared and ready to go on Saturday 14 November. None of us knows how the course of the COVID-19 pandemic will develop and what restrictions may or may not be in place by then. We will need to be mindful of the mood of the nation. And the tone of the Show will have to be appropriate to those circumstances and to reflect them.

It may be that such a Show would be different from those to which we are accustomed. It may be a welcome chance for us to demonstrate our gratitude to those key workers from the NHS and all other critical sectors who have kept the country going during this difficult time. I feel it would be a lost opportunity if we were not able to take to the streets in November to show our appreciation. I hope that the City and the Livery will feel moved to join together to do so. I would welcome your thoughts.

Among the responses you have sent to my earlier bulletins have been some fantastic insights into the ways in which you are contributing to the battle against COVID-19, many of which will have a direct impact on the front line. To mention a small selection, you may have seen in the media the news that an industry consortium coordinated by the **Engineers Company** is fulfilling an order for 10,000 ventilators for the NHS. Members of the **Broderers Company** are making medical scrubs for hospital staff, while firms associated with the **Upholders Company** are producing the foam to be used in face-masks. These activities, small and large alike, will be making such a difference.

One project that I am delighted to share with you in more detail is the **NHS Livery Kitchen initiative**. This brilliant scheme brings together the **Drapers, Grocers, and Merchant Taylors Companies**, as well as volunteers from the City caterer Party Ingredients, to provide nutritious individually-packed meals, prepared in livery hall kitchens, to NHS staff at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, part of the Barts Health NHS Trust. Members of the **Hackney Carriage Drivers Company** are also driving chefs to work so that they can avoid using public transport. I would like to pay tribute to the sixteen Livery

companies and individuals who have so generously contributed considerable sums to ensure the project's successful launch and sustainability. This has become a truly pan-livery team effort.

The initiative went live on 20 April, and is now delivering 300 meals a day to staff in the ITU/anaesthetics and A&E departments, the surgical hub, the Wellness Centre and other parts of the Royal London Hospital including the maternity, paediatrics and medical wards. With 1000 staff now on site at any one time, the one hospital canteen is over capacity and the requirements of social distancing mean long queues and wait-times, making it difficult and frustrating for staff to get food quickly and easily. The Livery Kitchen meals, as well as being delicious, have enabled staff no longer to worry about how they will feed themselves during exhausting 12-hour shifts when they have so many other demands on their time.

In addition to the 300 meals a day now being delivered to the Royal London Hospital, a further 100 meals a day will be delivered to St Bartholomew's Hospital for similar recipients from Monday 4th May onwards. The team believe they may have the capacity to exceed 500 meals a day. The demand is there, and they are keen to meet it.

There is of course a cost to running such a venture, which under current projections is expected to operate until July. Any other Company or individual who would be interested in contributing is encouraged to contact the Clerk to the Drapers Company, who is acting as the central coordinator. This is such a fantastic example of collaboration that I hope you will join me in congratulating everyone involved. I look forward to bringing you further updates about the project in the future.

In my previous bulletins I have mentioned the **London Funders COVID-19 Statement**. This is a joint statement from funding organisations and grant-giving bodies across London, large and small, seeking to reassure their grant recipients that they will work flexibly with beneficiaries during the crisis. I am thrilled to see that 34 Companies – nearly a third of the Livery – have now signed up to the Statement and I would encourage all others to do so as an expression of solidarity with the charitable sector. I would also recommend to Companies that you consider including the statement on your own websites or grant-giving materials as well. I would reiterate that **signing the statement requires no further financial commitment from donors**. More information can be found here: <https://londonfunders.org.uk/about/covid-19>

Finally, I am sure I am not alone in being moved by the public's generous response to the fundraising appeal launched by **Captain Tom Moore**. His simple determination to make a difference has clearly inspired the nation and this was reflected in the outpouring of congratulations he received on his 100th birthday yesterday. You may be pleased to know that the City of London will recognise his amazing achievement later this month, when Captain Tom will receive the Freedom of the City in a virtual ceremony.

These remain worrying times. But I have been impressed by the spirit that is being shown throughout the Livery. This is our opportunity to re-affirm our commitment to civil society and to our traditions of support for the vulnerable and needy. I know that together we can meet head-on the challenge that is facing us. Please keep in touch with me and with each other as we do so.

With continued good wishes from me and the Lady Mayoress.

Alderman William Russell
The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor



NHS Livery Kitchen meals being prepared, delivered – and enjoyed! – in the first week of operations.