



NEWS FROM Alderman & Sheriff Alison Gowman



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Dear friends,

October 2021

Welcome to my first newsletter as Sheriff and, as promised, a catch up on all that I have been doing in my first few weeks.

Needless to say the start was very busy: getting used to a new office at the [Old Bailey](#), the dress changes and luxury of a footman and car were all a bit bewildering. I will unpick more of that as the year goes by.

The schedule is however quite hectic and I cannot summarise all that I have done but I want to give a flavour and report on some of the elements that may not be in the public eye or may need other comment.

Life at the Bailey

The usual apartments are undergoing much needed refurbishment and so Nick and I have been allocated offices that are otherwise used for Judges and are surplus at present. These provide a desk and space for small meetings and somewhere to change for the evening events. An early visitor to my room was the Harris's Hawk that is regularly flown to deter the pigeons that seem to gather in old buildings such as the Bailey.



Real life at the Bailey, of course, consists of the busy Courts and in my first week there were two significant cases that caught the headlines.

The [sentencing of Wayne Couzens](#) who murdered Sarah Everard and the [first hearing in relation to the murder of](#)



[the south London primary school teacher Sabina Nessa](#). I

have a particular interest in the treatment in the criminal justice system of violence against women and children and you will see this become an issue on which you will hear more from me.



Ceremonial matters

The first day of duty on 29th September is also the Election of the Lord Mayor, where the new Sheriffs with the Common Serjeant act as the tellers of the Livery vote. It was slightly more complicated this year with both my Co-Sheriff and I in nomination for Lord Mayor. The Livery favoured Vincent Keaveny and then Nick Lyons and the Aldermen chose Vincent, as expected! I was happy to be called out for “later”.

The Sheriffs have an important second part to their installation which is the ancient Quit Rents Ceremony at the [Royal Courts of Justice](#) where the approval of the Queen is given to the election of the Sheriffs by the Livery (back in June). The ceremony is preceded by a river trip from Tower to Temple Pier and it was fitting that we were photographed by Tower Bridge. Nick is the Alderman of Tower Ward and I am the former chair of the City Bridge Trust that is linked to the City bridges.



Knuckling down to business

I am always happy promoting sustainability and the City Corporation are working hard on this topic to meet their Climate Action Strategy commitments. A report on the first 6 months shows that the City is on track with its milestones. I was therefore pleased to attend and open the Meet the Cities event held with Westminster City Council and [ReLondon](#) encouraging collaborative work between innovative SMEs and large construction companies around the circular economy.



I was delighted to act as Representative Lord Mayor at the [City of London School for Girls](#) prize day in Great Hall. I had been the chair of Governors for a period spanning the Millennium and so it was poignant to see the girls still high achievers in academic, sporting and cultural pursuits. No hand shaking due to Covid but over 80 girls were awarded prizes. I did consider that they reintroduce the curtsy that was still used in 2000 but that did not go down well!



Similar Covid conditions meant that the [Glaziers'](#) [Livery Company](#) Stevens' Competition was held



on Zoom. I announced and presented the virtual prizes for a design for a stained glass window at [Haberdashers' Girls' School](#) and was pleased at the innovation in such an ancient craft.



Livery events

The Sheriffs' calendar includes many events with Livery Companies and it is wonderful to share some magnificent dinners either in [Mansion House](#) or elsewhere. I have been delighted to receive an occasional posy of flowers that grace my Old Bailey office. Whilst largely events of fun and fellowship I have found out a lot about the unsung work of the Livery Companies (Cooks Livery donating some £500,000 this year to Covid related and other charities; meeting young apprentice Kemi an aspiring Haberdasher; putting a Consort in touch with a Livery that they may well join; and everywhere a positive response to the Livery Climate Action Group that I lead!).



Sheriffs' Bravery Awards

The Worshipful Company of Security Professionals chose the Old Bailey for their dinner and the presentation of the [2021 Sheriffs' Bravery Award](#). I was truly humbled to give this to Lukasz Koczocik. He was chosen to receive this due to the bravery he had shown at the terrorist attack at Fishmongers'



Hall in November 2019. This honour will be marked on the board and in the book displayed outside the Judges' Dining Room for all to see. *Photo copyright Gerald Sharp.*

Livery Climate Action Group

Some of you will already have heard about this network of Livery members and Companies who are looking at how we can all reduce our carbon emissions in line with the City Corporation's



Climate Action Strategy. After 9 months of concerted work, three seminars and lots of research and writing the Group launched its website and the invite to everyone to join. Over 200 joined our virtual event and since then many have signed up. [Please see our new Livery Climate Action Group website](#) and consider joining to find out more. There is no fee or qualification – just an aim to work together to reduce emissions and leave the planet in a better state for the future.

Prayerful help

Just before I started in my role as Sheriff my Church ([Hinde Street Methodist](#)

[Church](#)) kindly blessed me in my work including the following words:

“..sustain and equip, we pray, all who give their time and energy to serve in our various communities as elected councillors and leaders. As Alison takes on the high office of Sheriff of the City of London, we pray your blessing on her today...”

This was echoed in the City Prayer Breakfast on 10th October at Holy Sepulchre High Holborn where the combined congregation prayed for the work of the City in all its guises and where I also read a lesson. It is good to know that the City is living up to the motto on its crest Domine Dirige Nos.



Best wishes

Alderman & Sheriff Alison Gowman

Alison.gowman@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Alison Gowman is an elected Alderman within the City of London:

<https://democracy.cityoflondon.gov.uk/mgUserInfo.aspx?UID=229>

www.alisongowman.org

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