

This note is one of a series placed in the Almanac for the guidance of livery masters, wardens, and their clerks, especially new ones, seeking advice on a particular topic. They are not prescriptive, and how individual companies choose to conduct their affairs is, of course, entirely up to them. Most are written by a past chairman of the Livery Committee, of whom you may read more at the foot of the [Contact page](#).

Sheriff Chain Appeals

The two sheriffs each wear a chain of office, together with a badge. But unlike most symbols of this nature, they are unique to the incumbent (not handed on), and hence have to be commissioned, designed, and paid for, by the new sheriff prior to taking office (on 28th September). The design of the badge will draw heavily on his/her coat of arms, and aim to reflect the life and interests of its owner. They don't come cheap!!

It is also the custom to commission a brooch or similar for the spouse or consort.

This note aims to give a little background on the long-standing tradition of inviting the friends of the sheriff elect and others to contribute to their "Chain Appeal".

The sheriffs elect (asap after their election on 24th June) will hope to encourage as many of their fellow liverymen as possible to contribute towards their chain appeal.

Typically they will do this in two ways, and nowadays both probably by email. Their approaches will be separate, but coordinated (hopefully!)

First by writing individually to their known friends, contacts and supporters. And second to "all clerks" with the request that the clerk will forward the request to their liverymen. [The appeal letter will list invited members of the Chain Appeal Committee – see PS below].

The Committee will have a chairman and secretary, and it is one of these two who will front the appeal and send the emails or letters.

A word about this second approach. Some (of the "good") clerks will do as requested, and allow their individual liverymen to respond or not as they think fit. At the other extreme, some clerks will ignore it completely. This is sad for all sorts of obvious reasons, not least some potential donors (not caught by route 1) will miss out, and will be genuinely disappointed to have been "ignored".

In between these extremes, some will just pass the request to the master, others to the court, and some make a "company donation" and consider that is their job done. This last may sound good, but is very unsatisfactory from the sheriffs' points of view, unless the company donation is exceptionally generous.

One person who would be well advised to consider supporting at least the aldermen is the warden expected to be in the chair when the aldermen is likely to reach Mansion House. Sheriffs tend to remember who has supported them.

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But hopefully those individuals and companies who are generous enough to support these appeals will feel minded to do so on an equal basis to both sheriffs, unless they have special reasons to particularly support one or other.

Finally, a word about the two chain presentation ceremonies in September. Most donors will be invited to attend these pre-lunch "parties". However, the typical cost of such an event (hall, wine, canapés etc), is not insignificant, so a donation of much less than £40 may miss the cut! Different sheriffs will make up their own minds as to whom they wish to invite, and on what criteria. But it would be foolish for a £20 donor to think he or she is entitled to a £50 party!

More generous (maybe three figure) donors may hope for/expect an invitation to the Sheriffs' Breakfast. But the correlation between giving and invitations is entirely a matter for the individual sheriffs, and of course many other factors will influence guest lists.

PS 2018. Chain Appeal Committee. This is a matter for the sheriffs elect, not for this writer. But in practice, the sheriff elect will invite a significant number of the "great and the good" of the livery world to be members of their Appeal Committee. This c'tee will never meet, and the practical duties of its members are zero. They are simply there to demonstrate their support for the Appeal, and accordingly, their names will be listed at the appeal letter.

However, if agreeing to be on the Committee, (and most invited certainly will, and may be honoured to do so) then there may be an unspoken obligation to contribute to the appeal more generously – perhaps >£100 at 2018 values. [this figure is highly subjective – some may wish to be more generous, whilst others will have different priorities.]

Members of the committee may expect to receive an invitation to the Sheriffs' Breakfast, though that is entirely in the gift of the new sheriffs.

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Was this note helpful? Do you have comment? Email nrpullman@btinternet.com