



GLOUCESTER FREEMEN NEWSLETTER

June 2026

From the Secretary

Hello Ladies and Gentleman, I once again have the pleasure in sending out this year's newsletter. I have received a lot of good feedback on the style and presentation of the newsletter in the past year, so I hope you continue to enjoy them just as much. It's been a busy year for myself and the President as we continue to upgrade and maintain what some might call the more boring parts of the Freeman, most recently I have been organizing this year's dinner and updating the design for the car stickers to now include the new badge. I have also been busy sorting through our database of Freeman, with a lot of help from your responses to the newsletter. If you know anybody who does not receive the newsletter or has passed, please let me know. If you'd like to discuss or need to know about any other relevant articles, please feel free to contact me via the address at the end of this newsletter.

Presidents report

Dear Freeman and Women,

Since our last newsletter, the Guild has continued to make positive progress across a number of areas. I am particularly pleased to report that we have welcomed further Freeman and Women during an admission ceremony held in the City Council Chambers at the North Warehouse, conducted by the City Mayor, Ashley Bowkett. These ceremonies remain an important part of preserving the traditions and heritage of the Freeman of Gloucester, and it is always encouraging to see new members joining our historic Guild.

Attendance at the 2025 AGM showed an improvement on the previous year, with 20 members present. Whilst this was encouraging, continued support and participation from members remain essential to the effective running of the Guild. As with many organisations, maintaining communication and ensuring members remain informed about Guild activities can be challenging without active engagement, and I would encourage everyone to participate whenever possible.

We were once again honoured to be invited to take part in the Gloucester Day celebrations. I was delighted to see a significant increase in the number of Freeman and Women participating in the parade, helping to raise the profile of the Guild within the city and wider community. I hope we can build upon this success in the coming year and encourage as many members as possible to attend and take part.

The proposed division of Gloucestershire continues to remain a key focus, particularly regarding the potential impact this may have on the future role of the Mayor of Gloucester. As developments continue, the Guild will remain attentive to any implications these changes may have for the traditions and future operation of the Freeman of Gloucester.

I am pleased to report that communication within the Guild has improved considerably over the past year. Our Secretary, who was tasked with strengthening communication and member engagement, has worked diligently to reconnect the Guild with a number of members who had previously fallen off the circulation list. This remains an important priority, and these improvements are already proving beneficial in helping us maintain stronger links with our membership.

Efforts to promote the Freedom and Freeman of Gloucester also continue. I remain committed to working closely with members of the Council, the wider local community, and fellow Freeman's Guilds in order to raise awareness of the Guild's history, traditions, and ongoing role within the city.

Thank you all for your continued support. I look forward to seeing many of you at our forthcoming events. As a reminder, should anyone wish to lay the Freeman's wreath at the Remembrance Day ceremony in the park, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or the Secretary.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Hensley
President

The AGM

This year's AGM will be held on the 24th of September at 7:00 PM in Meeting Room 1 at the City Council's North Warehouse. We encourage all Freeman and Freewomen to attend—your thoughts, concerns, and ideas are always welcome, so please make every effort to join us and show your support for our organisation.



Kathryn Skillern being enrolled in March

Events this past year

Last year we had two Admission Ceremonies, paraded on Gloucester Day, had ten Freeman represent us at the Remembrance Service and hosted the Annual Dinner. The latter event, held at Bowden Hall went down as a huge success, raising £186 on the raffle, which was donated to James Hopkins Trust. We also displayed a few pieces of Freeman history that we recently found and plan to do so again for this year's event. This year's dinner will be held once again at Bowden Hall, which although I'm biased, I would highly recommend. Please see the pages attached to the back of the Newsletter for more details.

Treasurer's Report

I would like to thank all those Freeman and Women who have paid their subscriptions and made donations, your continued support is greatly appreciated. It is extremely important that this source of income is maintained thus ensuring we have enough funds to sustain our administration costs and continuing production of the annual newsletter.

Subscription Fees!

At the 2014 AGM, it was agreed that the previous £5 voluntary contribution would become a mandatory payment for all members, in response to our rising operational costs. We also understand that, due to the ongoing cost of living, some members may find it difficult to make this payment. However, your support is vital to the future of the Gloucester Freeman and Women. If you are able to contribute, please complete the enclosed form and return it, along with your payment, to the Secretary, Mr. Morgan Hensley.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Admissions

We have had two Admission Ceremonies since the last newsletter one in March 2026 and one in September 2025. We will try to keep enrolments at a regular pacing of late March and late September every year in the future. The cut-off date for getting your forms in for the March enrolments is February 1st and the cut off for getting your forms in for the September enrolments is August 1st.

From these ceremonies we'd like to welcome the following Freeman to the Guild:

- Howard Crowdy
- Andrew Crowdy
- Paul Crowdy
- Philip Crowdy
- Micheal Hensley
- Abigail Lower
- Samantha Lane
- Chloe Meek
- Harry Meek
- Rosenna Meek
- Martin Phillips
- Warren Phillips
- Kathryn Skillern

Welcome!



Set up for the Freeman's Annual Dinner

Age of Admission Stays at 21!

Last year the entire Guild was asked to vote on whether to lower the age of admission into the Freeman to 18. Of the votes that came in an overwhelming majority voted to keep the age of admission to 21. We would like to thank everyone who took part in this vote.

Dates for your diary

Gloucester Day – Saturday 5th September at 2pm

Gloucester Town, Constitution Walk behind Brunswick Road Museum

All are welcome to partake or watch, if you wish to march with us, please meet at the above place by 1:30pm.

AGM – Thursday 24th September at 7pm

Gloucester City Councils North Warehouse, Top floor, Meeting room 1

Annual Dinner – Saturday 10th October at 7pm

Mercure Bowden Hall, Gloucester

See enclosed booking form and menu for further details.

Remembrance Sunday Service – Sunday 8th November at 2pm

Gloucester Cathedral

This is a first come first serve event with a limited number of tickets. If you are interested in coming, please contact the Secretary.

FEW

The Guild is a member of the Association of Freeman of England and Wales (FEW), and as a Chartered Freeman of Gloucester, you are automatically a member as well. This grants you access to attend any of their events, including the FEW's Annual General Meeting (AGM).

If you wish, you can also become an individual member and receive a colourful journal three times a year, filled with news of other Guilds' activities. For more information, please visit their website <https://freemen-few.org.uk>

GCT

We hold two Trustee positions on the board of Gloucester's Charities Trust, currently held by Lee Hensley and Steven Heath, who continue to represent the Freeman. The Freeman have been involved with the charity for many years, stemming from our former ownership of the Alms-house's. For more information, contact the President.

Merchandise and Robes

If there is any merchandise you would like to purchase please fill out the form and send it to the Secretary.

Robes can be purchased from Gemma May. (Facebook) – Gemma May Alteration Service or Tel – 07982826662.

Committee Members

Lee Hensley • Morgan Hensley • Keith Bretherton • Emma Carr • Andrew Croose • Stephen Heath • Harry Croose • Derek Butt • Alan Heath • Jacky Heath • Neil Smart

Contact us!

As always you can keep up to date with us throughout the year either via our website or social media.

The website – www.gloucesterfreemenandwomen.co.uk

X (Twitter) - @glosfreeman

Instagram – glosfreemen

Facebook – The Chartered Freeman and Women of Gloucester

We are constantly working to keep our records updated, so please let us know of any changes of address or circumstance as this helps make sure we can keep you informed. Also, if you know of anyone else not receiving the newsletter that should be please contact us.

If you have any further questions regarding any topics spoken about in this newsletter or anything else regarding the Freedom, please feel free to contact either the Secretary or President at the addresses below.

Secretary: Morgan Hensley – 86 Painswick Road Gloucester GL4 6PT

Email: GlosFreemansec@gmail.com

President: Lee Hensley – 86 Painswick Road Gloucester GL4 6PT

Email: leehensley@btinternet.com Tel: 01452305493, 07780680810