

Court of Common Council

Guildhall

Thursday 23rd April 2026

The Rt Hon The Lady Mayor of London
Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley DBE

Good afternoon, everyone.

I know I speak for everyone here when I say how sad I was to hear of the passing of Brian Mooney BEM earlier this week. A former Chief Commoner who served this Council diligently for almost 30 years, our thoughts are with Sophia and the entire family.

As many of you will know, a focus of my mayoralty has been leveraging the convening power this role offers to open up opportunities to communities in and around the City that have been traditionally underrepresented and underserved.

This work has come to the fore over the last month through our City Insights Days - renowned businesses and organisations covering everything from insurance to accounting, banking to construction and culture, opening their doors and offering hands-on, informative sessions to groups of secondary school and sixth form pupils.

The project has provided invaluable advice and experience to young people who may not have otherwise encountered the Square Mile.

And as I was pleased to report during my recent Gresham Lecture on 13th April, 86% of the students who've participated say they now feel more confident that they could work here in the City.

I would like to take a moment to thank those businesses who took part, as well as officers in the Community and Children's Services Department who made the programme possible.

City Insights Days will be returning next year, so please do encourage businesses in your wards to get involved.

Elsewhere since my last update to this Court on 5th March, I've travelled to Hong Kong, Beijing, and Shanghai to build on the successful business delegation the Prime Minister led in January.

We've reaffirmed partnerships old and new...

...including with the Livery at the annual Dinner to the Masters, Prime Wardens, and Upper Bailiff on 19th March...

...and with the diplomatic community at the Easter Banquet on 9th April.

At the latter, I stressed the need - at a time of immense global uncertainty - to reach out and strengthen our connections - a message I will be repeating when I visit Delhi and Mumbai next week.

Before closing, I would like to pay tribute to Deputy Henry Pollard for everything he has done over the last twelve months, and welcome our new Chief Commoner to his post.

We look forward to working with you during your term.

Thank you.