

Court of Common Council

Great Hall, Guildhall

Friday 25th April 2025

The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of London

Alderman Alastair King

Thank you, Town Clerk.

I hope everybody had a happy Easter.

This is my first time addressing this new Court.

First, on behalf of the City of London Corporation, I would like to express our condolences on the death of Pope Francis.

As a global spiritual leader, he was a voice for compassion, justice and peace around the world.

Our thoughts are with Catholics in the City of London and across the United Kingdom.

He set a great example which touched the lives of many people.

Congratulations to all the Common Councillors here on your election.

I would like to add my welcome to all our new Common Councillors, who have been introduced today.

I remember my first Court of Common Council 26 years ago – at the time, I was the youngest Common Councillor here.

Since then I served seventeen years as a Common Councillor and nine years as an Alderman.

This is a remarkable organisation, and I encourage everyone to take the opportunities to get involved in our many different areas of work – serving all the City of London's communities, and especially our residents.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome the new Chief Commoner – Deputy Henry Pollard!

Since our last meeting, I visited China, including Hong Kong and Beijing.

I met the British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and argued for the resumption of the UK-Hong Kong Financial Dialogue.

I also attended the China-UK Transition Finance Seminar in Beijing and discussed the City's work with Chinese counterparts on Green Finance.

This month, I visited Canada and the United States.

In Toronto, I held discussions with the Canadian investment management sector and addressed the Honourable Company of Freemen of North America.

I also met several tech companies and investment funds in Boston.

I was in New York for Tartan Week and spoke at several events promoting connections with financial services in Scotland and London.

I also had the great joy of marching in the Tartan Day parade along with the Secretary of State for Scotland and the First Minister of Scotland.

Here in the City of London, I was honoured to welcome the deputy prime minister of Vietnam to Mansion House and to hold an investment roundtable with finance minister of India.

We have continued the City Belonging Networks, including the recent launch of the Social Mobility Network, and held the annual Gresham Lecture – on renewing the City's appetite for risk.

I was pleased to participate in the City of London's Eid reception and the Lord Mayor's Appeal Eid charity event, supported by the Mayor of London.

On defence, we recently hosted a defence breakfast with the Minister for Veterans and People, as well as holding a very successful Big Curry Lunch here at Guildhall to raise money for armed forces charities.

We also held the annual Dinner to the Masters, Prime Wardens and Upper Bailiff followed by the United Guilds Service, celebrating the work of the City livery companies, and held a reception here to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Pikemen and Musketeers – who give such great support to the City's ceremonial events.

Thank you.