

## **Dinner to His Majesty's Judges**

*Egyptian Hall, Mansion House*

*Tuesday 18th July 2023*

*The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of London*

*Alderman Nicholas Lyons*

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State, My Lord Chief Justice, President of the Supreme Court, My Lords, Master of The Rolls, Fellow Aldermen, Mr Recorder, Sheriffs, Chief Commoner, Ladies and Gentlemen...

### **Introduction**

A very warm welcome to Mansion House, we are delighted to host His Majesty's Judges here once again.

I look forward to hearing from the new Lord Chancellor for the first time, and the Lord Chief Justice, for the last time at one of these dinners...

Not that I am looking forward to the fact that this will be the last time; I always look forward to hearing what you have to say, Lord Burnett.

I don't want to make myself a hostage to fortune, but for those who were here last year, I am glad that we are meeting at a time of slightly less political drama.

Last year, it felt as if we were all taking part of an episode of 'Succession' with the expletives deleted.

### **Salisbury Square**

This evening's dinner may be politically less exciting, but it is a no less exciting time for our legal sector, with new milestones being reached in the construction of the new City of London Law Courts at our new Justice hub at Salisbury Square, where the foundation stone was laid in October.

Working closely with the MOJ, this will be a flagship facility for His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service, providing magistrates', civil and crown courts across 18 state-of-the-art courtrooms, which will sit alongside a new headquarters for City of London Police and grade-A office accommodation.

Our Policy Chairman, Chris Hayward, has helped us drive forward with this major project, which will ensure we adapt to the changing demands on justice and policing and provide specialist expertise in dealing with fraud and cyber-crime.

Flanked to the north-east by the Old Bailey and the Royal Courts of Justice to the west, the courts will reflect the City of London's growing role as a global centre of justice and legal services - a Law Mile, you could say.

This project is an important element of the HMCTS reform programme and we hope it will help to spur much-needed investment in the fabric and the staffing of the rest of the nation's courts across England and Wales, truly demonstrating the value we attach to the rule of law – which is the bedrock of our society, our trade and our international reputation.

### **City of London and Judiciary**

Throughout its history, the City of London Corporation has been not only allied to, but integrated with, the judiciary.

As Lord Mayor, I have the title of Chief Magistrate of the City, although hearing cases and sentencing people is no longer part of my role, you will be relieved to know.

Historically, this was very much part of the role, with some famous cases being heard in this building, and with holding cells down in the cellar – not a place where we still send misbehaving dinner guests... though I have been tempted once or twice.

That constitutional connection is also reflected in the provisions of the Senior Courts Act, which deem the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London to be judges of the Central Criminal Court – though I can reassure you that we exercise merely ceremonial functions today.

Today, the Old Bailey is still home to the two Sheriffs of the City of London, Alastair King and Andrew Marsden.

And Felicity and I have very happy memories of my year as a Sheriff at the Old Bailey.

And it is wonderful to see so many of the judges of the Central Criminal Court here tonight.

It is worth noting that of the 15 permanent judges appointed there, no fewer than 8 are women – a sign of how things have changed for the better.

The Central Criminal Court is an important part of the City of London family, and supporting the judges there is an important part of the Sheriffs' role.

The Old Bailey, as well as being used for the most serious criminal court cases, is also used by the Recorder and the Sheriffs for a range of civic and charitable events, not least those raising money for the Sheriffs and Recorders' Fund which supports the rehabilitation of former prisoners.

The City of London supports the judiciary, as we recognise how much the judiciary supports all of us, every day, in all that we do and sometimes take for granted...

...Which is why we must continue to invest in our courts, our court staff, and our legal profession.

### **Lord Chief Justice**

This year, we approach the sad milestone of the Right Honourable the Lord Burnett's retirement as Lord Chief Justice.

Let me take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution, your leadership and your friendship to the City of London over your six years as Lord Chief Justice, and your years before that as a recorder and a judge.

You are a very familiar face to Lord Mayors and our families, in no small part due to the role you play in the Lord Mayor's Show, where you receive the Lord Mayor at the Royal Courts of Justice to hear the Oath of Allegiance to the Crown.

Given the amount of doffing of hats which goes on at the ceremony, I have always wondered how you and your fellow judges keep your wigs and hats in position.

I know that I speak for everybody here tonight when I say that we all wish you the very best for what may lie ahead.

And we look forward to welcoming your successor, the Right Honourable Lady Justice Carr, who will be the first female Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales.

### **His Majesty's Judges**

Since we last met, we experienced another significant moment, as you went from being Her Majesty's Judges to His Majesty's Judges.

Queen's Counsel became King's Counsel, reflecting how justice in this country is upheld in the Crown, which provides the stability and continuity on which this country rests, and which has a very special bond with the whole legal profession.

We saw this bond in the recent presentation of the Honours of Scotland, and in the Coronation, where His Majesty swore to govern according to the law and to "cause Law and Justice, in Mercy, to be executed in all (his) judgements".

Across the United Kingdom, we have a judiciary and a family of legal systems which are recognised as world-leading.

The City Corporation has recently supported the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts, and we were pleased to host the most recent international delegation of visiting judges at Guildhall just last week.

We were also delighted to host at Guildhall a celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Technology and Construction Court - originally the office of the Official Referee.

## **Legal Services and Lawtech**

The rule of law is not only vital to our reputation as a place to do business.

It also underpins a thriving legal services sector which is a huge part of the City economy, a key ingredient in London's attractiveness, and a huge export for the UK.

I know from my international visits how widely UK legal services are respected and how global is their reach.

The UK is the home of the world's business law, the leading centre for global dispute resolution, a location for offices of all the world's top 50 law firms.

UK legal services employ 365,000 people and generate over £36billion – a third of all the fee revenue in Western Europe.

Not only is this a sector which continues to grow, it is a sector which continues to innovate.

The City Corporation is working closely with the sector to support innovation in the UK's Lawtech industry, which now has 200 firms generating two thirds of a billion in revenue - a figure which is expected to grow to two billion in the next few years.

Almost half of Europe's Lawtech startups are based here in the UK, with the FT's top 5 innovative European law firms all being British.

We recognise that we face increasing competition from other centres, particularly in Asia.

The use of AI, for purposes both legal and illegal, presents huge challenges and opportunities which will only accelerate the pace of change across the sector.

So as well as our historical reputation, it is vital that we remain home to the sector's latest innovation – which the City Corporation is determined to support.

The City of London is committed to providing the best home for our world-leading legal sector, and - working alongside the MOJ and HMCTS – investing in the innovation and the infrastructure needed to safeguard our legal system... A system which depends on the efforts and the excellence of the Judges in this room.

## **Toast**

Thank you for all that you do to enhance the reputation of our city and our country.

So finally, please join me in a toast to:

“His Majesty's Judges”