

This note is one of a series placed in the Clerks' Almanac by the Livery Committee. Most are written by its chairman, of whom you may read more at the foot of the [Contact page](#). They are intended to be of guidance to livery clerks, especially new ones, or those 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.

## Styles of Address

Masters and their Clerks will wish to correctly address people such as the Lord Mayor (LM), Sheriffs, Lady Mayoress and Consorts, Chief Commoner, Aldermen, Dean, Remembrancer, Common Councilmen/Councillors etc, both in writing, and when meeting them.

*Debrett's Correct Form* ISBN 0747223300 is the authority on this subject (p183 et seq), but is weak on some of the City of London offices listed above.

This note seeks to help, for both spoken and written forms of address, but is only based on the experience and view of this author, and is not authoritative. It does not aim to cover every permutation of title.

As a general rule, those elected to hold senior office for one year – **LM, sheriffs, and indeed masters**, should ALWAYS be addressed by their title – even if they are known as personal friends (certainly when in public). The Lady Mayoress should also be so addressed. This etiquette similarly applies when writing – hence Dear Master, Dear Lord Mayor etc. The more formal *My Lord Mayor* may be considered unnecessarily subservient in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A female lord mayor's male consort (husband) is referred to as the Lord Mayor's Consort, but should be addressed by name.

The prefix Mr may be added if it sounds right, eg Mr Sheriff OK, but obviously not Mr LM! But its omission is also fine. Madam similarly.

Paid full time office holders (eg the **Town Clerk, Remembrancer, Dean, Recorder**, etc) may be addressed by their title, (and also prefixed by Mr if you wish), especially if you do not know them, or wish to be formal. But these office holders need not be slavishly addressed by their title, and to do so can sound pompous.

Similarly elected **aldermen** (and wardens) can be so-called, but in this day and age, all would expect to also be treated on first name terms after introduction.

**Elected members of the Court of Common Council (Chief Commoner, Councilmen, Deputies)**. How you choose to address these people is perhaps dependent on the style and custom of your own company. If your livery is traditionally close to Guildhall, then you may adopt the more formal addresses, esp re Chief Commoner (by title, or informally "Chief", and Deputy similarly. But if you

have little involvement in the Corporation, then they may be addressed as you would anyone else. Common Councilmen (other than the appointed Deputy in each ward) have no title other than “Member”, but you may wish to add the suffix CC after their name when appropriate.

**Allocution** (or preamble Debretts p298). The note on *Speeches - the basics*, elsewhere on this site gives more detail on this topic, but it is worth emphasising the advice to keep it short. So it is not necessary to include all the above in the preamble to a speech, and the more office holders you include, the more likely it is that offence will be caused by leaving some out.

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Was this note helpful? Do you have comment? Email [nrpullman@btinternet.com](mailto:nrpullman@btinternet.com)