

This note is one of a series placed in the Clerks' Almanac by a past chairman of the Livery Committee, 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.

Ale Conners

Wikipedia:

“An ale-conner is an officer appointed yearly at the court-leet of ancient English communities to ensure the goodness and wholesomeness of bread, ale, and beer. Four ale-conners are still chosen annually by the Common Hall of the City of London.”

Encyclopædia Britannica (1911):

“In London, four ale-conners, whose duty it is to examine the measures used by beer and liquor sellers to guard against fraud, are still chosen annually by the liverymen in common hall assembled on Midsummer Day.

The officers are chosen by the liverymen of London to inspect the measures used in the public houses. The title is a sinecure.”

Though the tradition of electing four liverymen as Ale Conners at Common Hall (on 24th June, along with the Sheriffs and other Officers - Auditors and Bridge Masters) continues, the key phrase above is the last - *the title is a sinecure*. Today, four conners each test ales eg in a new City pub, maybe once a year. It's a purely ritualistic/ceremonial process now, and has no legal bearing on the pub.

Becoming an ale conner

In modern times, elections have only taken place when a vacancy occurs, and given the light duties (indeed none specified or laid down), this is rare. Those elected make of it what they will.

When and if an election does take place, like all other City elections, it is administered by the Elections Office at Guildhall, on behalf of the Town Clerk. Should a liveryman wish to stand for this position, it is to the Elections Office that they should initially register their interest. However, it would be wise to ascertain first if a vacancy is likely to occur.

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