

GWEN RHYS – HUSTINGS SPEECH – 22 MARCH 2018

Good evening, everyone.

Most of you are already my supporters and whilst I don't want or intend to preach to the converted, I'd like to take a few minutes to explain a little bit more about

1. Who I am
2. Why I'm putting my hat into the ring as a Non-Aldermanic Shrieval Candidate and
3. What I hope to bring to the Civic Team.

First of all – Who am I?

I was born in Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire and educated at the Girls' Grammar School in Neath, South Glamorgan. Throughout my teenage years I was actively involved in music-making. I played the Cello and the Clarinet (not at the same time, I hasten to add) in local and regional orchestras and sang in many choirs.

After A-levels I completed a business qualification in Hull before moving to London where I lived for 30 years before relocating to Brackley, a market town on the Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire borders.

My career has included periods of entrepreneurship interspersed with employment.

Since the late 1980s my working life has focused on supporting specific groups of people to reach their full potential. I've worked in some of the UK's most economically deprived and culturally diverse areas and have built public-private sector partnerships to develop and lead initiatives that

- raised the aspirations and educational attainment of young people
- encouraged the successful growth of small & medium enterprises
- and since 2003, when I set up Women in the City, I've championed the progress of women working in financial and professional services.

First and foremost I'm a "**people person**", a relationship-builder, a connector and a supporter of others. In fact, one of the things I've found most difficult during my Shrieval campaign, is asking for support as usually I'm either asking for support on behalf of others or being asked to give my support to something or someone.

So why am I putting my hat into the ring?

This December, I shall have been a Liveryman in the Glass Sellers, my mother company, for 25 years. I was one of the first women to be admitted and was never prouder of my company than when I represented it as its Master.

I "discovered" the Livery in the early 80s when I met my now husband, Peter Rawlinson. A third generation Glass Seller he'd been apprenticed to the Company and clearly

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thought I'd be impressed by an invitation to the Company's Annual Mansion House Banquet.

He wasn't wrong! (By the way, this is probably the first time he's heard me say these words!)

I'm now a member of the Needlemakers, Spectacle Makers and Welsh Livery companies and I'm also a member of several Ward Clubs.

Yes, I'm still impressed by the pomp and circumstance of the City but the City is about more than that, and the City is also more than the institutions, the businesses and the buildings within it.

Essentially, **The City is about people** – it's about those who work here (close to 500,000) including some of the 20,000 Liverymen; it's about those who have their homes here and it's about those who use its restaurants, museums, art galleries, churches and shops.

The Corporation's development of The Culture Mile is one example of the changing use of the City.

I sense the 21st century is beginning to separate itself from the one in which we've lived most of our lives. The "traditional" ways of doing things are being questioned. There's a call for **greater transparency and culpability** and it's no surprise that this year the Lord Mayor's theme is The Business of Trust and the 3-year theme for the Lord Mayor's Appeal is "A Better City for All".

Last Friday's Evening Standard featured an article stating that the Corporation is considering whether to offer an allowance to Common Councilmen to purchase evening dress (whether that's white tie or a long gown) together with an allowance to compensate for the time they give to the role. This is part of the Corporation's desire to encourage people from diverse backgrounds to become involved in the City's governance.

More people are putting themselves forward for City elections – whether that's for Common Councilman, Alderman or Sheriff. When I published my intention to stand for Sheriff, the announcement was read more than 2600 times on LinkedIn.

This openness is to be welcomed – it's diversity and inclusion in action.

Liveries are sometimes, and I think rather disparagingly, described as "Dining Clubs". But what's wrong with people coming together in with a common purpose, to enjoy each other's fellowship, especially at a time when people are feeling increasingly isolated from one another and when young people (and to be honest, not so young people) sit next to each other having conversations via text.

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And let us not forget the Livery's collective charitable activities amounting to donations of some £40 million annually.

I'm putting my hat into the ring because I want to be part of this "new order", I want to both give back to the Livery and to the City which has given me so much and, crucially, I want to pay forward (the concept of giving to others what I've received).

I can think of no better way of doing that than serving as part of the Civic Team.

Finally, what do I hope to bring to Civic Team?

When I first announced my intention to stand for Sheriff, I invited both Liverymen and supporters from the wider Business Community to include a "message of support".

Their responses quite overwhelmed me and it's their words that best sum up what I hope to bring to the role.

Many spoke about my honesty and integrity; my energy, enthusiasm, passion, focus and drive; my commitment to diversity and social mobility; my ability to inspire others and my broad network of connections.

They spoke of my being a first class advocate of the wider livery movement with the ability to articulate and communicate key issues.

As one person said: "She is a Sheriff for the 21st Century."

And with that thought, I'd like to end by doing the thing that I find hardest:

asking you all to support me and to encourage those you know to not only support my campaign through my website, but, crucially, to attend Guildhall on 25 June and give me their vote.

Thank you.



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