



Alderman The Hon. Tim Levene

Common Hall Election Speech

Wednesday 26th June 2026, at Guildhall

My Lady Mayor. Masters, Prime Wardens, Upper Bailiff, Fellow Liverymen here in the Great Hall and the Old Library.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me, and Prem, with whom it will be a privilege to serve.

I graciously accept the results of this election and the office of Sheriff for the ensuing year.

Town Clerk, for good order, may I formally place on record my acceptance of the office.

As an Alderman, I serve a City built on a timeless principle: “move carefully and preserve things”. Which makes life interesting. Because in my career as a venture capitalist, we live by the motto: “move fast and break things”!

So, under the watchful eyes of Gog and Magog, let us start with the preservation.

The City is in my blood. My father served as Lord Mayor. My passion for preserving our inheritance is deeply embedded. Our family motto is *Fortunae atque Labore*. By fortune, and by hard work. I am fortunate to have come this far. The hard work, I personally guarantee.

I first walked into this building forty-three years ago. I was attending City of London School prize day, the only nine-year-old in shorts, my parents’ antidote to torn trousers, and a blazer three sizes too big, promising I would “grow into it.” Yes, I experienced early that precarious balance between past and future.

I have always valued my father’s advice, especially on those occasions when I asked for it. He taught me that civic service is not inherited. It is earned.

So I cut a path through entrepreneurship and technology. From launching juice bars, to building Betfair, and listing Augmentum Fintech. I have backed bold and lasting ideas from people I believe in and trust.

In short, I have long navigated between preservation and innovation, learning that, at their best, these two worlds sharpen one another.

This City's remarkable response to plague, fire, war, the end of empire, and decades of technological evolution has been a tale of preservation and resilience. It has endured, while leading and evolving.

Yet the impact of our next challenge, artificial intelligence, will not be evolution. It will be revolution. It is already reshaping trade, regulation, litigation, employment, and competition. Our rivals get it. Our adversaries more so.

I believe that this is a revolution in which we can thrive. Yet again. Building and scaling in financial and professional services, utilising our talent. Our expertise. The rule of law that gives every contract its meaning. World-class universities. Deep pools of capital. A time zone that speaks to Asia at breakfast and America after lunch.

These advantages are not destiny. And we should thank the foresight and bravery of generations before us. They continued to build, fighting against the greatest enemy. Complacency. As must we.

Understanding the threat allows us to unleash the opportunity: cyber security; market integrity; extensive digital and personal networks; the trust that underpins every transaction in this Square Mile.

Now is the moment to take collective responsibility to face the challenge, to frame the future.

Some say we are an institution lost in the past. I see precisely the opposite. I see just how hard the Livery is working to write a future we can all be proud of. Promoting inclusivity. Championing social purpose. Investing millions each year in education, apprenticeships and skills. This is not an institution resting on its laurels.

Prem and I form one civic team, in support of the Lady Mayor, and from November, the incoming Lord Mayor. We share complementary skills, a commitment to the Livery and the Old Bailey, and a determination to honour the trust you have placed in us.

I spoke earlier of good fortune. My greatest by far is Katie, a Liveryman of the Feltmakers, and a master organiser. They say the Sheriff wears the Chain and the Consort wears the trousers. In our house, Katie wears the lot!

My Lady Mayor, Fellow Liverymen, I pledge to bring experience, energy and unstinting effort to this ancient and modern office of Sheriff.

I arrived forty-three years ago in an over-sized blazer, and have finally grown into the robe.

I am honoured. I am humbled. And I am ready to serve you.