

Speech at Common Hall

29 September 2021

Alderman Vincent Keaveny

My Lord Mayor, Fellow Liverymen, THANK YOU for electing me as Lord Mayor of this great City!

Almost 33 years ago I arrived in London on a dark and wet Sunday evening as a young Irish law graduate. My plan was to get two or three years of City experience before returning to start my practice in Dublin.

As sons often tend to do, I broke my mother's heart a little when it became clear that I would not be returning to Dublin after a spell in London. Today, she is the proudest mother in Ireland!

My story is that of countless Londoners down the centuries. I was embraced by this City, given wonderful opportunities and found much personal and professional happiness here. And now my story is stitched in its small way into the wonderful, historic tapestry that is London's great - and continuing - story.

I will take office at a moment when this City faces real challenges. Life is returning to our streets and offices but it is not yet clear what the 'new normal' will be. Other financial centres look at the business transacted here with some envy, and with a keen desire to win a share of that from us. We must ensure we retain our global competitiveness.

Climate change and social issues can no longer be ignored by company boards as distractions from their corporate objectives and are at the forefront of the business agenda.

But the City has faced and overcome challenges in the past, and I have no doubt we will do so again.

My Mayoral theme, '**People and Purpose, Investing in a Better Tomorrow**', will focus on skills, social mobility and deploying finance for social impact.

Our City must remain welcoming to talented people from around the world, be that Ireland or India. We cannot, however, ignore the talent here at home: the City must be open to all, irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation or socio-economic background. We must embrace that talent, as I was embraced, and give them the skills and opportunities to thrive and progress through their careers.

ESG – Environmental, Social and Governance – issues now sit at the top of the boardroom agenda. This is not just because that it is the right decision to focus on them, and it is, but investors, employees and customers are driving this change too. Finance will underpin the delivery of much of what the Government wants to achieve at COP26 in Glasgow in November. And finance will increasingly be focused on wider social outcomes too – a theme I will return to in the year ahead.

These changes present once in a lifetime opportunities to create and shape new global markets. This was borne out by the issuance of the UK's first Green Gilt last week. London and the UK must be at the centre of these new markets, bringing together all of our skills and experience to make this City the world leader in green and sustainable finance: finance with a positive social impact.

My Lord Mayor, you have done some wonderful work in this area over the past two years, and I know that you will continue to be involved in this as you take on some of the responsibilities for Green Finance of the late, and very much missed here today, Sir Roger Gifford. For that, and for the energy, engagement and enthusiasm that you and the Lady Mayoress have maintained over this extraordinary period, as you have together reimaged the Mayoralty, we are all hugely grateful.

Fellow Liverymen, I would not be here today without the love and support of my wife, Amanda. Amanda has a huge heart, and will be a warm and welcoming hostess in Mansion House in the year ahead.

We look forward to sharing the year with our newly minted Shrieval team, Alison and Glen, and Nick and Felicity, working together with our colleagues in Common Council and the Court of Aldermen – and you, ladies and gentlemen, the Livery.

It is with humility, and trusting in your continued support, that I accept this office.

My Lord Mayor.