



The Dames Commander Society: Spring Newsletter May 2025

Dear DCS Members,

We hope everyone is having a wonderful Spring. Lots has been happening at The Dames Commander Society and we have lots coming up. A brief summary is below.

Finance and Governance

We now have a regular rhythm of Board meetings (x6 per year) and Sub Committees (x4 per year). Thank you to Dame Fiona Kendrick for leading this work - which includes setting out a timeframe for us to move from our current CIC status to becoming a full charitable organisation. If anyone would like more detail on this and the various milestones please let us know.

We are also working through the planning and approach to establish Royal patronage. Again, please let us know if you would like more detail on this.

Membership and Marketing

We are delighted we now have 249 members. And the membership fees are building. If you haven't yet paid (a minimum of £50.00 pa) please see the link and payment details below:

Account number: 75382599 **Sort Code:** 40-35-18

Account name: The Dames Commander Society CIC

We will also be sharing our full membership offer and opening the [membership directory](#) to everyone, again in the private section of the website. Please can everyone send their latest biogs, links to articles and podcasts etc to:

Sue Cavanagh - sue@damescommandersociety.org

We have a fast building events calendar for the Autumn and into 2026 and we will update on dates soon.

In terms of events we had a fantastic evening at the London Symphony Orchestra organised kindly by Dame Kathryn McDowell. It was one of the LSO's monthly 'Half Six Fix' concerts at The Barbican and it was wonderful to watch the extraordinary female conductor and soprano Barbara Hannigan in action. Below are some photos from the event.



London Symphony Orchestra DCS event March 2025. With Barbara Hannigan (conductor and soprano) and Dame Kathryn McDowell



In addition, a number of Dames joined The Imperial Society of the Knights Bachelor for our first joint event. It was a dinner at The Cavalry & Guards Club with a brilliant speech by the First Lady Chief Justice of England and Wales, Baroness Sue Carr. It was fantastic to be together - and we look forward to coming together with the ISKB for further events and meetings as we move forward. We have attached Baroness Sue Carr's speech [here](#) - I am sure everyone will read it with great interest.



Joint DCS and ISKB dinner. With First Lady Chief Justice of England and Wales, Baroness Sue Carr. April 2025.

We have a brilliant set of podcasts that Dame Jane Dacre has helped us to produce. We will be sending a link to these next week.

Societal Impact

This is clearly the aspect of the DCS that we are all most energised about. The opportunity for us to work together to genuinely give back to society. And a number of activities are underway:

1. We have established **terms of reference** for this work and are working through a framework for how we might work on a range of issues of interest to our Dame membership
2. In the meantime, Dame Barbara Stocking has been leading some excellent work around the plight of women in Afghanistan. Since our last update, the Afghan Women Dames group has sent a formal letter to the Foreign Secretary, three relevant Ministers and the UK Chargé d’Affaires. It was signed by thirteen Dames. It focussed on the financing for Afghanistan given the serious reduction in overseas development funding. The letter was well received by the Foreign Office team. We are awaiting a response. This letter begins the advocacy work we plan to do in the UK, with the UN, and other bodies. Everyone we meet encourages us to continue with our advocacy to make sure Afghan women are not forgotten by the government or the public.

The second and more difficult area of work is to assess whether we can take any practical action. DCS is not a fundraising body, nor do we have the finances. We may though be able to introduce some of the active Afghan women’s groups in the UK to people or bodies we can influence. We are focussing on health, particularly pregnancy and childbirth where the abolition of all medical / midwifery training of women has been stopped. Recently we have been talking to experienced people about the idea of providing information to ordinary women, men and families. The information would be about what they can do when there are no midwives or knowledgeable community health workers. We are engaging with those who do provide ‘public’ education through the Internet and phones or radio. It remains to see whether this can go forward.

3. In addition, we have some early work underway looking at how we might support in the UK around questions related to Domestic Abuse. We will share early thinking and would love feedback thoughts and questions.

We have a workshop to discuss a number of issues on 31st July We would love as many people as possible to join - please let us know if you are able to.

Finally, we have a wonderful new Executive Assistant working for the DCS Sue Cavanagh - she is copied and can help with any questions at all.

We remain also hugely grateful to Sara Siegel and Talia Nechelpat at Deloitte, to Vincent Sai and Nina Jhita and to Alex Cole at Growth Leadership for their ongoing support for the DCS.

So, lots happening - please do contact either me, Sue or Jackie with any further questions, thoughts, and ideas.

We really look forward to hearing from you.

Dame Tristia Harrison, Chair

Dame Sue Hill, Co-Chair

Dame Jackie Daniel, Co-Chair

On behalf of the Dames Commander Society

[Get in touch](#)

This is an internal document which provides an update to the members of the Dames Commander Society. It is not to be copied or made available external parties. This email may be shared with Dames who are not yet members of the Dames Commander Society, by way of recruitment.

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