

The Fleur Handbook

The Order of the Fleur of Aethelmearc (also called the Fleur d'Aethelmearc or simply the Fleur) is our Kingdom's Order of High Merit for Arts and Sciences. Gentles who are made Companions of our Order are given a Grant of Arms, unless they have previously received a Grant or Patent of Arms. The customary title for Fleurs is "The Honorable Lord/Lady so-and-so" (sometimes "THLord" or "THLady") in written documents, or "Your Lordship" or "Your Ladyship" (or its equivalent in the language of the Companion's persona) in conversation, unless the Companion has a higher-ranking title (such as "Master" or "Your Grace").

The Principle of the Order of the Fleur

Mistress Geirny Þorgrimsdottir

The Clerk of the Order of the Fleur

Gwendolyn the Graceful, Brehynes

DUTIES OF A FLEUR

The Order encourages its Companions to continue their pursuit of the arts and sciences, to develop their talents and abilities, and to increase their knowledge. We encourage and assist gentles who are not yet Companions of our Order in their endeavors and their development, and bring deserving gentles to the attention of the Royalty. We share our knowledge and talents with others through teaching, whether it takes place in a formal class setting, or in a more informal or one-to-one setting. It is also our duty to periodically advise the Crown about particular gentles whom we believe should be made Companions of our Order. To that end, we endeavor to learn about and discover artisans and scientists within our Kingdom who are not yet Companions of our Order.

ADVISING THE CROWN

It is our duty to advise the Crown about gentles we feel should be made Companions of the Fleur. Because the Crown cannot be everywhere, Royalty often rely upon Their Orders to provide this advice. However, the Crown is not required to act upon any advice provided by any of its Orders; it may also decline to act upon Orders' advice. By way of further example, the Crown may make a gentle a Companion of the Fleur who was not recommended by the Order; in fact, the Crown may make a gentle a Companion of the Fleur even though the gentle was not under consideration by the Order (i.e., did not appear on our Survey). The Crown may also decline to make a gentle we have recommended a Companion of the Fleur. This is the prerogative of the Crown. Conduct of our Surveys, as described herein, should never be construed as overruling the Crown's prerogative; to that end, although we have used the terms "vote" and "voting" herein, those terms are in no way meant to suggest that we dictate which gentles shall be made Companions of our Order. We provide advice to the Crown; once we have discharged that duty, the matter is out of our hands.

SURVEY

The survey (with its accompanying commentary) is the primary tool we use to carry out our duty to advise the Crown. Ideally, the Order conducts one Survey per Reign, and reports the results to the Crown. Typically, we will report the numerical results of the Survey along with the Commentary, unless the Crown prefers to have us report results in a different manner. Surveys are typically conducted by electronic mail, with paper copies mailed to Companions who do not have email. Companions who respond by email shall receive confirmation from the Clerk by return email stating that their Survey has been received. It is customary to leave a voting "window" of approximately one month, to allow as many Companions as possible to vote.

The Crown may, from time to time, ask our opinion of a gentle outside our regular survey period. When we are asked for such advice, we shall employ any methods necessary to promptly comply with the Crown's wishes including, but not limited to, discussion of the gentle at a meeting, conduct of a special survey, discussion on our dlist, and so forth.

COMMENTARY

Along with the numerical results of the Survey, Companions are encouraged to share their commentary on prospective Fleurs with the Order and the Crown. Typically, comments are forwarded to the Clerk along with a Companion's Survey, and are compiled and presented to the Crown and the Order after the Survey closes. Any Companion may ask the Clerk not to share his or her comments with the Order but only with the Crown, or to remove his or her name from the compiled commentary. The Clerk will respect such requests provided that the commentary is actually acknowledged by the Companion; completely anonymous comments will be discarded. It is expected that Companions are honorable people who will respect the privacy of their fellow Companions, and will not share commentary with gentles who are not Companions of the Fleur.

CANDIDATE LIST

The Clerk shall maintain a list of prospective candidates. Where possible, the Clerk shall endeavor to list the candidate's field(s) of expertise and his or her home group, so that Companions might seek out candidates and learn about them more easily.

VOTING

There are three answers possible for each prospective candidate on a Survey: yes, no, and abstain. A yes vote (or "yea") signifies that the Companion believes the candidate is ready to be made a Fleur. A no vote (or "nay") signifies that the Companion does not believe the candidate is ready at this time. An abstention means that the Companion is not voting on the particular candidate (see below).

ABSTENTIONS

An abstention is a nonvote; it is not a "nice" way of voting nay (our Surveys are secret-only the Clerk will know who voted for whom, and I'm not telling!). Companions abstain for many reasons. These have included: lack of sufficient familiarity with the candidate, lack of sufficient familiarity with the candidate's field(s) of expertise, and inability to be appropriately objective about the candidate (sometimes called "conflict of interest"). By way of further example, a needleworker may not feel sufficiently familiar with the work of an armorer to express an opinion on the candidate's art. Or, a candidate may be a Companion's sister or best friend, and the Companion doesn't feel that he can be fair and objective about the candidate's skills. A Companion may explain his or her reason for abstention in the commentary, or choose not to.

COUNTING OF VOTES AND ABSTENTIONS

The Clerk shall tally the number of yeas, nays, and abstentions for each candidate. Abstentions, yeas and nays shall each be counted separately.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

When possible, the Clerk shall present the results of the Survey by giving the total number of yeas, nays and abstentions (the "raw score") as well as the percentage of the total votes received that is represented by the raw score (the "percentile score"). For example, if 40 Fleurs respond to the Survey and there are 20 yea votes, 10 nay votes and 10 abstentions for a particular candidate, the percentile score is 50% yea, 25% nay and 25% abstentions. The percentile score is meant to assist Companions and Royalty who understand percentages better than raw numerical data.

MAJORITY VOTE

The term "Majority Vote," as used herein, shall mean "a majority of the legal votes cast," or a 51% percentile score. A "legal vote" shall mean a Survey that is returned by a Companion to the Clerk within the window of time specified for that particular Survey.

RECOMMENDATION OF CANDIDATES

Because it is ultimately the Crown's prerogative to create gentles Companions of the Fleur, the Order prefers to offer the complete results of our Survey to the Crown, with our commentary, for its consideration. The results shall be sorted in any way the Crown prefers, typically alphabetically and also by greatest number of yeas.

If the Crown requests that the Order forward only a list of recommended candidates for its consideration (without numerical data), it is customary to follow these guidelines:

1. **Majority Recommendation.** Any candidate receiving a Majority Vote of yeas shall be recommended to the Crown, along with accompanying commentary.
2. **Plurality Recommendation.** A candidate who has not received a Majority Vote of yeas, but who has received more yea than nay votes may be further discussed by the Order. If the Order determines from its discussions that the candidate should be recommended, the Clerk will advise the Crown accordingly.

Discussion Not to Overrule the Survey. In the event that a candidate has received an equal number of yeas and nays, or more nays than yeas, he or she may not be recommended to the Royalty. However, the Order may also discuss such a candidate, in which case the candidate's supporters may try to persuade Companions to reconsider and possibly vote differently on the next Survey. Nonetheless, discussion and its results shall not overrule the results of the Survey.

REMOVAL OF CANDIDATES FROM SURVEY LIST

A candidate may be removed from the Survey List by one of two means:

Automatic Removal.

In the event that a candidate receives more than 51% nay votes, he or she shall be removed from the Survey List.

Removal by Vote Taken at a Meeting.

In the event that a candidate has had some circumstance or occurrence affect his or her ability to participate in the Society, he or she may be removed by a vote taken at an Order Meeting. Companions who are aware that a candidate has become inactive or is no longer actively pursuing the arts and sciences should bring these circumstances to the Order's attention.

RENOMINATION OF REMOVED CANDIDATES

Removal from the Survey List is not meant in any way to be construed as a "ban" of the candidate from the Order's consideration. For example, a candidate who has become inactive and has been removed may certainly be nominated again if he or she has become active again.

WHO MAY NOMINATE CANDIDATES

Any gentle may bring a candidate to the Order's attention. Sometimes members of the Populace write letters of recommendation to the Crown and copy them to the Clerk; the Clerk passes these recommendations on to the Order, for its consideration. More often, a Companion has been particularly impressed with a gentle's work and brings the candidate to the attention of the Order at a meeting, or via the Order's dlist. Candidates may be nominated at any time.