

Report to Council

Report of Joint Strategic Director (Transformation and Governance)

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Appointment of Honorary Freeman

Recommendation to Council:

To consider the nomination of Keith Churchouse for appointment as an Honorary Freeman and, if so minded, to agree to convene a special meeting of the Council on Thursday 1 December 2022 at 7pm at the Guildhall for the purpose of conferring upon him the title of Honorary Freeman.

Reason for recommendation:

To recognise formally Mr Churchouse's eminent and distinguished service to the Borough of Guildford.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No

1. Background

1.1 Under the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may, by resolutions passed by not less than two-thirds of the councillors voting thereon at a meeting specially convened for the purpose:

- (i) admit to be Honorary Freemen of the Borough persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Borough; and
- (ii) confer the title of Honorary Alderman upon persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Council as past councillors.

1.2 The Council, at its meeting on 10 April 2014, adopted a "Protocol on the appointment, role, status, rights and obligations of Honorary Freemen and Honorary Aldermen". The Protocol was subsequently reviewed and amended by the Council on 5 October 2021. The procedures set out in this report comply fully with the amended Protocol.

2. Honorary Freemen of the Borough

2.1 Since the 1974 re-organisation of local government, the Council has bestowed the office of Honorary Freeman upon the following persons:

- The Right Honourable the Lord Nugent of Guildford (12 June 1985)
- Mr Bill Bellerby MBE (25 March 1995)
- Mrs Doreen Bellerby MBE (25 March 1995)
- Mr David Watts (1 October 2003)
- Mr Andrew Hodges (22 November 2011)
- Mrs Jennifer Powell (3 November 2015)

2.2 In addition, the Council bestowed the freedom the Borough on the former Women's Royal Army Corps in 1988, and the Army Training Centre (Pirbright) in 2017.

2.3 Under the adopted Protocol (as amended), a person shall be deemed eligible for appointment as an honorary freeman provided that they meet all of the following requirements:

“The person shall:

- be a person of distinction
- have given eminent service to the borough during that period. “Eminent service” in this context includes but is not limited to any of the following:
 - public service (including past distinguished service as a councillor or officer of the Council)
 - artistic and/or cultural endeavours
 - business, economic growth and prosperity
 - charitable work
 - improvement to the built and natural environment
 - political activities
 - religious and spiritual life
 - sporting activities
- have a strong and continuing connection with and commitment to the borough of Guildford, or have made a major contribution to national life and in doing so have enhanced the reputation of the borough.”

3. Nomination received for appointment of Honorary Freeman

3.1 In accordance with the Council's adopted Protocol, Councillor John Redpath has proposed, and Councillor Paul Spooner seconded, the nomination of Mr. Keith Churchouse for appointment as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough, in the light of his eminent and distinguished service to the Borough, full details of which are set out in Councillor Redpath's email dated 21 July 2022, attached as **Appendix 1**.

- 3.2 Mr Churchouse has indicated that he would be delighted to accept the appointment, and has confirmed that, subject to Council's approval, he is available to attend a special meeting of the Council on 1 December.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There will be a need to purchase a Scroll of Freedom, which will cost in the region of £900. This, together with the cost of providing a finger buffet/ drinks reception for guests following the special meeting in honour of the new Honorary Freeman (£2,500), would cost in total approximately £3,400. The cost can be met from the Civic Support budget.
- 4.2 The incidental costs of staging a special meeting of the Council at the Guildhall can be met from within existing budgets.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 As stated above, in order to confer the title of Honorary Freeman on anyone, the Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to adopt a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the councillors voting thereon at a meeting specially convened for the purpose.
- 5.2 Under the amended Protocol, any nomination received for appointment as Honorary Freeman shall provide evidence that the person nominated:
- (i) meets the eligibility requirements referred to in paragraph 2.3 above, and
 - (ii) will accept the appointment

Mr. Churchouse has indicated that he would be delighted to have the title of Honorary Freeman of the Borough conferred upon him.

6. Human Resource Implications

- 6.1 There are no human resource implications

7. Background papers

Protocol on the appointment, role, status, rights and obligations of Honorary Freeman and Honorary Aldermen (approved by Council on 10 April 2014 and as amended by Council on 5 October 2021)

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Email dated 21 July 2022 from Councillor John Redpath confirming the nomination of Mr Churchouse as an Honorary Freeman including details of Mr Churchouse's eminent and distinguished service to the Borough