

COUNCIL**14 OCTOBER 2019**

REPORT TITLE	PROPOSALS TO CREATE AN HONORARY FREEWOMAN AND AN HONORARY FREEMAN (POSTHUMOUS)
REPORT OF	THE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

Under the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to grant the title of Honorary Freewoman and Honorary Freeman of the Borough to persons of distinction who have rendered eminent service to the Borough.

The Council is asked to consider a proposal from the Freedom Panel to create a new Honorary Freewoman and a new Honorary Freeman (Posthumous Award).

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Freedom Panel recommends to the Council that in pursuance of the provisions of Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in recognition of:

- (1) her outstanding service as Italian Consul over many years and then as Consular Correspondent providing services to Italians living in the North of England and for her outstanding contribution to the civic life of the Borough, Doctor Nunzia Bertali be admitted as an Honorary Freewoman of this Borough; and
- (2) his heroism on 9 January 1944 when he guided his stricken plane away from homes in Saughall Massie avoiding certain casualties on the ground, and in doing so giving his life for others, Second Lieutenant Jay Frederick Simpson of the United States Army Air Force be admitted as an Honorary Freeman of this Borough (posthumously).

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 In accordance with the Protocol which sets out the process to be followed for determining whether the Freedom of the Borough should be conferred, (attached at Appendix 1 to this report) all Members were asked in May 2019 if they wished to nominate any persons or organisations they considered deserving of this honour by 14 June 2019.
- 1.2 Two nominations were subsequently received.
- 1.3 Former Councillor Phil Davies as Leader of his Group at the time nominated Doctor Nunzia Bertali to be admitted as an Honorary Freewoman of this Borough. Former Councillor Davies' nomination form and a written testimonial from Former Chief Executive of the Council, Steve Maddox are attached (Appendix 2) to this report.
- 1.4 Councillor Chris Blakeley nominated Second Lieutenant Jay Frederick Simpson of the United States Army Air Force to be admitted posthumously as an Honorary Freeman of this Borough. Councillor Blakeley's nomination form is attached (Appendix 3) to this report. It has the support of his Group Leader.
- 1.5 The two nominations received were considered in detail by the Members of the Freedom Panel on 1 July 2019 and they each indicated that they were in agreement to recommending to the Council that both nominees should receive the Freedom of the Borough.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options are being considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The origin of the Freedom of the Borough goes back to early medieval times, when with the growth of the great English towns, there emerged a class of citizen known as Freemen, who enjoyed important privileges in the government of their own and in the matter of corporate property, as against strangers and the rest of the inhabitants.
- 3.2 With the passing of the Honorary Freedom of the Boroughs Act 1885 the dignity attached to the Office of Freeman was revived and enhanced. This act conferred upon all Municipal corporations the power to admit as Honorary Freeman of the Borough "persons of distinction and any persons who have rendered eminent services to the Borough". This can only be achieved by the Council voting at a specially called meeting.
- 3.3 The Freedom of the Borough is the highest Civic Award the Council can bestow.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Section 249(9) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a relevant authority to spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person on whom the authority has conferred the title of Honorary Freewoman or Freeman under subsection (5).
- 4.2 Freedom Scrolls currently cost £855.50 each and it costs £80 each to have them framed. These costs can be met from the Civic Services budget.
- 4.3 It is proposed to hold two small Civic Receptions in the New Year when the scrolls are ready and can be presented. The costs of these can be met from the Civic Services catering budget.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In accordance with Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting thereon at a meeting of the Council specifically convened for the purpose with notice of the purpose, admit to be Honorary Freewomen and Honorary Freeman of the place or area for which it is the authority persons/organisations of distinction and persons/organisations who have in its opinion rendered eminent services to the Borough.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no implications associated with staffing or ICT in respect of the Freedom Panel's recommendation.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There are no risks associated with the Freedom Panel's recommendations.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 All Members of the Council's attention has been drawn to the opportunity to nominate any persons or organisations they considered deserving of this honour.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This has no relevance to equality.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There is no impact on emissions of CO2.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Protocol for Determining whether the Freedom of the Borough should be conferred.

Appendix 2 - Former Councillor Phil Davies’ nomination form for Doctor Nunzia Bertali.

Appendix 3 - Councillor Chris Blakeley’s nomination form for USAAF Second Lieutenant Jay Frederick Simpson.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date