



Council

Extraordinary Meeting

Town Hall
Wallasey

4 October 2019

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend an extraordinary meeting of the Council to be held at **5.30 p.m. on Monday, 14 October 2019** in the Council Chamber, within the Town Hall, Wallasey, to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects : -

This meeting will be webcast at
<https://wirral.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Contact Officer: Shirley Hudspeth
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e-mail: shirleyhudspeth@wirral.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

AGENDA

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Council are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest, in connection with any matter to be debated or determined at this meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

2. CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive the Civic Mayor's announcements and any apologies for absence.

3. FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

(Pages 1 - 18)

Council is requested to consider proposals to create an Honorary Freewoman and an Honorary Freeman (Posthumous).



Director: Governance and Assurance

Audio/Visual Recording of Meetings

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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 Freemen 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

Wirral Borough Council

Protocol for determining whether the Freedom of the Borough should be conferred

1.0 Introduction

Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers a local authority to confer the "Freedom of the Borough" to persons of distinction, who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Borough.

1.1 The Freedom of the Borough is the highest honour that the Council can grant. It will only be used sparingly and awarded on merit to exceptional persons. It should not be given too often. The overriding principle **must be** that this award should be made on merit, defined as:

- Achievement
- Exceptional Service

1.2 Awards should not be for a job well done or because someone has reached a particular level. They should be awarded because an individual has, 'gone the extra mile' in the contribution they have made or stand out 'head and shoulders' above others in what has been achieved.

2.0 Background

2.1 It is important that, if a nomination to confer an Honorary Freedom is to be considered, that all Members of the Council will be in possession of sufficient facts in order to make a decision as to whether the honour should be conferred. Furthermore, there may be instances where there are strongly held views for and against and these need to be addressed as far as possible in advance of an Extraordinary Council meeting called for the purpose. The Council will want to meet with the clear consensus that the person of distinction is to be honoured and not humiliated by the proceedings. A unanimous decision is desirable, but the absence of unanimity cannot prevent the nomination coming forward for consideration by the Council.

2.2 To be granted, the title of Honorary Freeman/woman is a mark of distinction upon the person whom the Council wishes to honour. Conferring the Freedom of the Borough does not grant the title holder any privileges, legal rights or responsibilities. For example they have no rights to attend Council or Committee meetings, nor can they be paid an allowance. However, it does maintain a symbolic connection with the Council and it is hoped that those who are awarded this honour will support the Office of the Civic Mayor at civic events and functions.

3.0 Criteria for conferring the Freedom of the Borough

3.1 It is in the interests of transparency and public confidence that the Council adopts clear criteria for conferring the Freedom of the Borough. It is proposed that one or more of the following are used as the criteria for the award: The person has

- demonstrated exceptional achievement or service to the community which is outstanding in its field;
- made a real difference in their field of work or their community;
- brought distinction to the Borough or enhanced its reputation;
- given outstanding military service;
- demonstrated innovation, entrepreneurship or exceptional business acumen which has delivered benefits to the Borough;
- evidenced exceptional charitable service to the Borough, though either a national or locally based charity;
- evidenced exceptional voluntary service to the Borough or any part of it or community within it;
- carried the respect of and inspired his/her peers;
- significantly improved the lot of those less able to help themselves or suffering disadvantage;
- promoted community cohesion;
- displayed moral courage and vision in making and delivering tough choices;
- contributed to the Borough beyond the call of duty in a way that stands out above others.

3.2 Only in exceptional circumstances should consideration be given to the admission of organisations.

3.3 As this is the highest honour that a Borough Council can grant, it should be used sparingly and should not be given too often in order to preserve its status and value.

3.4 The awarding of the Freedom of the Borough to Service Units “to march through the streets of the Borough with bayonets fixed, drums beating and Colours flying” is really an empty grant. The practice has been generally accepted and provides a dignified and satisfactory means of enabling a Borough to honour a distinguished unit of Her Majesty’s forces.

4.0 Procedure to be adopted on receipt of a Motion to confer the Freedom of the Borough

4.1 Nominations for persons or organisations to be granted the Freedom of the Borough, may be made by any Elected Member to the Director: Governance and Assurance and Monitoring Officer on the appropriate form (See Appendix B). Each nomination must contain the support of the Elected Member’s Group Leader and where appropriate, the Member should first raise the matter for

APPENDIX 1

discussion within their Political Group. An Elected Member who is not a member of a Political Group must have the support of at least one of the Political Group Leaders.

- 4.2 The Director: Governance and Assurance and Monitoring Officer will write to all Elected Members once during the Municipal year, to draw their attention to the opportunity to make nominations.
- 4.3 On receipt of the Nomination form the Director: Governance and Assurance and Monitoring Officer will ensure that sufficient information has been provided on the form. Full reasons why the person should be considered must be included:
 - a person of distinction; or
 - a person who has rendered eminent services to the Borough.
- 4.4 **The Freedom Panel** - When in possession of sufficient information, the Director: Governance and Assurance and Monitoring Officer will convene a Panel of each of the Leaders of the Political Groups on the Council (Deputy Leaders can substitute if their Leader is unable to attend), with relevant officers (The Freedom Panel) to consider:
 - whether they have sufficient information on which to form a view and, if not, to instruct officers to seek further information;
 - once satisfied that they have adequate information, whether there is sufficient support for the matter to go on to the Council for decision.
- 4.5 In the event that the Freedom Panel concludes that it is unlikely that the nomination will receive sufficient support, the Director: Governance and Assurance and Monitoring Officer will advise the Elected Member who made the nomination of this conclusion and the reasons for reaching it. The Elected Member will then be given the opportunity to withdraw his/her nomination, although the Member will still be entitled to have his/her nomination considered by the Council.
- 4.6 **Extraordinary Council Meeting** - Should the Freedom Panel conclude that it is likely that there will be a two thirds majority voting in favour of the nomination, the Director: Governance and Assurance and Monitoring Officer will convene an Extraordinary meeting of the Council specifically for the consideration of the one item of business. The timing of the meeting will be such as, so far as it practicable, to meet the availability of the individual concerned to attend and to concord with the Council's diary commitments.
- 4.7 The subject of the nomination will be invited to attend the Extraordinary meeting of the Council where the nomination is to be considered.
- 4.8 At the Extraordinary meeting of the Council, there will be only the one item of business and Director: Governance and Assurance and Monitoring Officer will submit a report setting out the matters considered by the Freedom Panel and the recommendation of the Panel to Council to approve the nomination.

4.9 The resolution should recite the grounds upon which the recommendation is being made, and details of the public services rendered by the nominee should be included.

4.10 The Civic Mayor will take a vote on the recommendation of the Freedom Panel and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting is required.

(Note: abstentions do not count as a vote and the required majority will be deduced from the number of Members actually voting on the item).

4.11 The Mayor will then immediately close the meeting.

5.0 The Ceremony

5.1 Arrangements for the ceremonial award of the Freedom Scroll will be made by the Committee and Civic Services Manager after liaising with the Civic Mayor, Political Group Leaders and the individual concerned. This can be done at either at the Extraordinary Council meeting and be followed by a Civic reception or at a Civic reception at a later date arranged specifically for that purpose.

5.2 The new Freeman/woman's name will be added to the Freedom Roll that hangs on the wall in the foyer of Wallasey Town Hall.

Wirral Borough Council

Nomination Form for the Freedom of the Borough

I Councillor...Phil Davies would like to nominate the following person (organisation) to be considered for the conferment of the Freedom of the Borough of Wirral.

Nominee...Dr Nunzia Bertali.....

I am aware that the following criteria must be applied to the achievements of the nominee.

They have:

- demonstrated exceptional achievement or service to the community which is outstanding in its field;
- made a real difference in their field of work or their community;
- brought distinction to the Borough or enhanced its reputation;
- demonstrated innovation, entrepreneurship or exceptional business acumen which has delivered benefits to the Borough;
- evidenced exceptional charitable service to the Borough, though either a national or locally based charity;
- evidenced exceptional voluntary service to the Borough or any part of it or community within it;
- carried the respect of and inspired his/her peers;
- significantly improved the lot of those less able to help themselves or suffering disadvantage;
- promoted community cohesion;
- displayed moral courage and vision in making and delivering tough choices;
- contributed to the Borough beyond the call of duty in a way that stands out above others.

I believe that they have met one or more of the above criteria in the way detailed on the reverse of this form:

Reasons for the Nomination

Dr Nunzia Bertali has been Head of the Italian Consular Office, based just off Hamilton Square in Birkenhead, for over 20 years. The Consular Office provides a range of advice and services for citizens living in Merseyside, from official documents such as passports to information regarding educational opportunities and opportunities for businesses.

Dr Bertali has been a Wirral resident for many years. In addition to her duties as Head of the Consular Office, Dr Bertali is a Visiting Fellow at Liverpool John Moores University and is a member of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

Although Dr Bertali is an Italian citizen, I can think of few people who have demonstrated their love and affection for the Borough and its population than Dr Bertali. She never misses an opportunity to promote the Borough to businesses and other stakeholders.

In terms of evidence in support of this application, may I request that the Panel asks for a testimonial for Dr Bertali from former Wirral Council Chief Executive, Mr Steve Maddox, who is totally supportive of conferring this honour on Dr Bertali. Steve worked closely with Dr Bertali in his time as Chief Executive.

Please attach any supporting evidence.

***Support of the Leader of the nominating Member's Political Group**

I, Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Labour Group am fully in support of this nomination.



Signed.....

*An Elected Member who is not a member of a Political Group must have the support of at least one of the Political Group Leaders.

Dr Nunzia Bertali Freedom of the Borough of Wirral

Dear Councillor,

Nunzia Bertali has lived in Wirral for nearly forty years. An Italian national by birth, she acquired joint British citizenship a number of years ago.

She served as Honorary Consul of Italy for the North West for more than twenty five years until she reached the compulsory age of retirement. Although officially retired from that role she still carries out consular responsibilities in support of the many Italian Nationals not just in Wirral and Merseyside but across the wider North West.

It is important to note that her work as Honorary Consul was entirely unremunerated and Nunzia funded her office in Birkenhead herself.

For those who know Nunzia this is entirely unsurprising as she is one of the most selfless people one could ever wish to meet, who is motivated solely by a desire to be of service to those who need her help and support.

Nunzia came to Wirral with her husband Alberto when he was appointed to manage the former Candy factory in Bromborough. Both Nunzia and Alberto have forged the strongest possible attachment to Wirral-a place where they have lived most happily for forty years, where they have brought up and educated their children and which they have both supported in a number of significant ways.

Perhaps, not surprisingly, Nunzia has been keen to promote the teaching of Italian and Italian culture in Wirral schools and she has supported those wishing to do so. She was a tireless supporter for many years of the Wirral Schools Modern Language competition run by the modern language team in the Children's Services Department and was, of course, a key supporter of the Council's Euro Wirral initiative during the 1990's and early 2000's which brought many resources and significant recognition and prestige to the Borough.

One of Nunzia's proudest achievements was the development of our twinning link with the Italian province of Latina and gave much of her valuable time freely and willingly to join Wirral trips to Latina and to help host visitors, including many children, from Italy.

She is very proud of the Borough and its civic heritage and in my thirteen years as Chief Executive I can think of no significant civic function which she has not graced with her presence. I would be very surprised if she has failed to attend a single Mayor-making ceremony or civic service of Remembrance over the past twenty five years.

In 2002 Nunzia was awarded the Wirral Award for her services as Honorary Italian Consul in the North West. She was Director of the National Youth Advocacy Service from 2004 to 2007. She has been President of The Honorary Consuls Association of the United Kingdom and Vice President of the European Federation of Honorary Consuls and President of the Consular Corps of Liverpool. She was one of the founding members of the Council's Independent Advisory Panel on Members' Allowances and continues to sit on it to this day.

Nunzia Bertali has performed outstanding service for the Borough of Wirral and would be a worthy recipient of this highly prestigious award.

If I can provide any further information in support of this nomination please do not hesitate to ask.

Steve Maddox

Wirral Borough Council

Nomination Form for the Freedom of the Borough

I Councillor Chris Blakeley would like to nominate posthumously the following person to be considered for the conferment of the Freedom of the Borough of Wirral.

Nominee USAAF Second Lieutenant Jay Frederick Simpson

I am aware that the following criteria must be applied to the achievements of the nominee.

They have:

- demonstrated exceptional achievement or service to the community which is outstanding in its field;
- made a real difference in their field of work or their community;
- brought distinction to the Borough or enhanced its reputation;
- demonstrated innovation, entrepreneurship or exceptional business acumen which has delivered benefits to the Borough;
- evidenced exceptional charitable service to the Borough, though either a national or locally based charity;
- evidenced exceptional voluntary service to the Borough or any part of it or community within it;
- carried the respect of and inspired his/her peers;
- significantly improved the lot of those less able to help themselves or suffering disadvantage;
- promoted community cohesion;
- displayed moral courage and vision in making and delivering tough choices;
- contributed to the Borough beyond the call of duty in a way that stands out above others.

I believe that they have met one or more of the above criteria in the way detailed on the reverse of this form:

Reasons for the Nomination

Second Lieutenant Simpson born 26th August 1916 in Gillett, Oconto County, Wisconsin USA, died 09 January, 1944 (aged 27) in Saughall Massie, Wirral.

Lt. Simpson enlisted as an air cadet on June 1, 1942 and was first stationed at Santa Ana, Calif., and then at Oxnard, Calif., where he received his primary flight training. He then went to Gardner Field Calif., and later to Yuma, Ariz., where he graduated and was commissioned as a pilot on May 20, 1943.

After graduation he spent a short furlough here and at Oconto. He was sent to Patterson Field, Fairfield, Ohio, where he was a test pilot until he left for overseas on Nov. 1, 1943 and was stationed in England.

Lt. Simpson was born in Gillett, Aug. 26, 1916. He attended the Gillett schools and lived there most of his life until the time of his induction into the Army. His desire always was to learn to fly, his hobby was making small planes, and his father still has many little toy planes his son made during his childhood days.

Second Lieutenant Simpson was based at USAAF base Burtonwood during the latter part of World War 2.

It is reported that he was test flying a Republic Thunderbolt P-47 which had taken off from Burtonwood and flew out to sea and on his return over Hoylake he reported that the plane was on fire. I understand it circled over the RAF camp at West Kirby (Greasby) when it was seen to lose height and flip over before crashing. Eyewitnesses at the time said that they believed the pilot steered away from residential areas before his plane crashed in a field close to the Arrowbrook thereby ensuring lives were saved. This clearly was an heroic act. Pieces of the wreckage were dug up in 1974 and were on show at the War Plane Wreck Investigation Group at Fort Perch Rock. His Gold Class Signet Ring was found in the wreckage and was presented to his cousin, Rose Neil Godfrey, who in turn gave it to Lieutenant Simpsons local Legion post, Krause-Simpson Post No 300 in Gillett, Wisconsin, USA

On 21st March 2005 I was privileged to attend and speak at a commemoration event for Second Lieutenant Simpson, held on the bridge of the new Saughall Massie Bypass, close to the crash site which was also attended by clergy, many local people as well as a Military Attaché from the US Embassy in London, Lt Col Ben Coffey.

While Second Lieutenant Jay Frederick Simpson has been remembered locally and in his home town of Gillett Wisconsin, and is remembered on Armistice Day every year, given his reported heroic action in flying his stricken plane away from densely populated areas and therefore helping save human life I believe he would be a worthy recipient, albeit posthumously of the Freedom of the Borough of Wirral.

Please attach any supporting evidence.

***Support of the Leader of the nominating Member's Political Group**

I, Councillor....., Leader of the.....Group am fully in support of this nomination.

Signed.....

*An Elected Member who is not a member of a Political Group must have the support of at least one of the Political Group Leaders.

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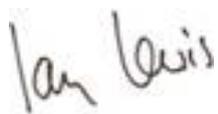
16th May 2019

Dear Shirley

I am writing to inform you that I am fully supportive of Councillor Blakeley's application for US Army Air Force Pilot (USAAF) 2nd Lieutenant Jay Frederick Simpson to be considered for a posthumous award of the Freedom of the Borough of Wirral.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require anything further.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Ian Lewis
Leader of the Conservative Group
Ward Councillor for Wallasey

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