
REPORT TO: General Purposes Committee

DATE: 26 January 2023

SERVICE AREA: Legal and Governance

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
Head of Legal and Governance
(Democratic Services Manager - Elizabeth Jackson)

SUBJECT: **TITLE OF HONORARY ALDERMAN /
ALDERWOMAN**

WARD/S AFFECTED: ALL DISTRICT

FORWARD PLAN REF: N/A

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman on Councillors who have been nominated for the honour.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That, in accordance with Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council be convened on 22 March 2022 in order to confer the title of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman on Councillors who have met the criteria as set out in the Protocol for Conferring the title of Honorary Alderman.

3.0 THE REPORT

Background

3.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives principal councils the power to confer the title of 'Honorary Alderman' or 'Honorary Alderwoman' on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past Members of that Council, but who are no longer Members of the Council.

3.2 The Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (No.2) Regulations 2008 amended the 1972 Act to enable serving Councillors who were Members of a principal council which was subject to reorganisation to be made Honorary Aldermen / Alderwomen before that

council was dissolved. This ensured Members who were due to retire on reorganisation were not denied the opportunity to receive the honour.

3.3 Section 249(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 states “No honorary alderman or honorary alderwoman shall, while serving as a member of the council, be entitled to be addressed as alderman or alderwoman or to attend or take part in any civic ceremonies of the council as an alderman or alderwoman.” Therefore it must be noted that any serving councillors who are conferred the honour will not be able to use the title whilst serving as a Member. This also applies to those councillors who are also serving Members of North Yorkshire County Council, and subsequently the new unitary authority, North Yorkshire Council. Use of the title will be suspended until such Members retire from North Yorkshire Council.

3.4 Honorary Alderman / Alderwomen of Harrogate Borough Council will be transferred on vesting day to become Honorary Aldermen / Alderwomen of North Yorkshire Council.

Criteria for conferring the title

3.5 On 2 October 2019 Council approved a new Protocol for Conferring the Title of Honorary Alderman, which was incorporated in Part 5 of the Council’s Constitution. The Protocol set out a new procedure whereby a nomination form would be submitted for each Councillor who met the eligibility criteria of 15 years’ service on Harrogate Borough Council. The nomination form requested details of what services a Councillor had rendered during their time as a Councillor and whether these services were to be considered eminent. The form was to be signed by five current serving Members.

3.6 Completed forms were submitted to the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer who are content that there is sufficient degree of support for the names to be put to the General Purposes Committee. A draft copy of this report was also shared with group leaders.

3.7 On 14 December 2022 the following notice of motion was debated by Council:

“This council resolves that honorary alderman status be withheld from any councillor or former councillor against whom there is an outstanding course of action they have been recommended to take following a complaint about them through our standards procedure.”

Moved by Councillor Richard Cooper Seconded by Councillor Sam Gibbs

18 Members voted for the motion, 10 against and there were 4 abstentions

Nominations received

3.8 Nomination forms have been received in respect of the Councillors listed below. The forms detail the service undertaken by the Councillors, confirm that the 15 years’ service criteria has been met and they have all been signed by the requisite 5 serving council members. Therefore all Councillors listed below can be considered for the position of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman of the Borough. The lengths of service are detailed alongside their names.

- 3.9 Normally the conferring of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman status would take place following the retirement of a Councillor, but on this occasion the majority of nominations received are in respect of serving Councillors. A nomination has been received in respect of former Councillor Andrew Williams who retired some years ago, but did not respond when approached immediately following retirement to ask if he wished to be considered for the honour.
- 3.10 Sadly two Councillors who were eligible to have been conferred the honour passed away since the process begun. Former Councillor Margaret Atkinson died on 13 November 2022 having served 20 years on HBC. Former Councillor Jim Clark retired on 13 October 2022 with 23 years' service, and died at the start of December 2022. Members are requested to consider conferring Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman status to these two former councillors posthumously.

<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Years' Service</i>
Councillor Philip Broadbank	44
Councillor Nick Brown	15
Councillor Trevor Chapman	19
Councillor Richard Cooper	23
Councillor Michael Harrison	19
Councillor Sid Hawke	18
Councillor Pat Marsh	33
Councillor Stuart Martin	18
Councillor Nigel Simms	24
Councillor Matthew Webber	16
Councillor Christine Willoughby	17
Councillor Robert Windass	15
Former Councillor Andrew Williams	20
Former Councillor Margaret Atkinson	23
Former Councillor Jim Clark	22

- 3.11 Councillor Robert Windass has served 15 municipal years. However Councillors may wish to note that the current municipal year will be shorter than normal due to reorganisation occurring on 1 April, meaning he will be a few weeks short of serving 15 calendar years. This is not considered to be an issue for the purposes of conferring Honorary Alderman status.
- 3.12 In accordance with Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council must be convened in order to confer the title and it is proposed that this take place on 22 March 2023.
- 3.13 As part of the proceedings the Councillors will sign the Roll of Honorary Aldermen following the Council's approval. A civic reception will be arranged immediately following the meeting.

Recommendations to Council

- 3.14 In considering whether eminent service has been rendered Members will need to be cautious about disclosing any personal information. Discussion of the nominations generally or as a block can take place in open session, but should Members wish to discuss the nominations on an individual basis the Committee would need to go into exempt session to consider each nomination as it is likely to involve personal data.

4.0 REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The following were considered: Financial Implications; Human Resources Implications; Legal Implications; ICT Implications; Strategic Property/Asset Management Considerations; Risk Assessment; Equality and Diversity (the Public Sector Equality Duty and impact upon people with protected characteristics). If applicable, the outcomes of any consultations, assessments, considerations and implications considered necessary during preparation of this report are detailed below.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The General Purposes Committee is asked to make recommendations to Council as to which of the nominated councillors should be conferred with the Honorary title.

Background Papers – none

OFFICER CONTACT: Please contact Elizabeth Jackson, Democratic Services Manager, if you require any further information on the contents of this report. The officer can be contacted at *Legal and Governance, PO Box 787, Harrogate, HG1 9RW*, by telephone on 01423 500600 x58593 or by e-mail – elizabeth.jackson@harrogate.gov.uk