

Special Council Meeting

19 10 23 - 7.30 pm

Supplementary Summons

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3. Proposal to confer honorary titles

To consider proposals from the Corporate Management Committee to award the following honorary titles:

1. Freedom of the Borough to the North West Surrey Alliance
2. Honorary Alderman to Mr Derek Cotty

[View the report considered by the Corporate Management Committee on 12 October 2023.](#)

There was a detailed debate about the proposed honours and their recipients.

Many members lauded the contributions made by Mr Cotty to both the community and the Council. In addition, some felt that the role of a ward councillor was often underappreciated. Other members felt that whilst Mr Cotty's work was much appreciated, it was questionable as to whether it was over and above the work undertaken by many other ward councillors. The appropriateness of the Honorary Alderman title, in the context of previous awardees receiving the Freedom of the Borough, was also questioned.

The Committee debated the proposed honour for the North West Surrey Alliance (NWSA). Some members considered the proposed honour to be warranted, particularly because of NWSA's position in caring for Runnymede's residents; a role that was amplified during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was suggested that the NWSA's position in the community was not sufficiently well known to warrant being awarded Freedom of the Borough, and that the publicly available information on their website focused on the senior individuals involved in running the Alliance, and not its frontline and operational staff. It was however suggested that the proposed honour represented a good opportunity to promote the work of the Alliance, in particular the work of operational and frontline staff providing services to Runnymede's residents. It was reported that the NWSA would also be asked to send a number of operational and frontline staff to receive the award on behalf of the Alliance at a special awards ceremony in March 2023.

Some members questioned whether it was proper to recognise just healthcare workers, particularly because other individuals, such as delivery drivers and shopworkers, had also provided important services to the community during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There was discussion about the expenditure associated with the proposals. Some members felt that the anticipated cost, which did not represent new

expenditure due to it being met from in-year savings, was acceptable because the proposals provided a rare opportunity to celebrate the work of partners and other individuals, whilst also commemorating a significant milestone for Runnymede as a Council.

Other members felt that the proposals should have been discussed between group leaders before being presented to the Committee. They also stated that there were more appropriate opportunities that did not involve the awarding of honours. One such suggestion included the planting of fifty trees which would, it was asserted, have also served to enhance the Council's environmental credentials.

By request of the committee, the recommendations were divided into their constituent parts, and named votes taken on each.

1. The Committee **recommended** that North West Surrey Alliance be awarded Freedom of the Borough of Runnymede.

The voting on this resolution was as follows:

In favour (7) – Councillors Howorth, Balkan, Coen, Cressey, Nuti, Snow and Willingale.

Against (4) – Councillors Davies, Gillham, Jenkins and D. Whyte.

Abstentions – none.

2. The Committee **recommended** that former Councillor Derek Cotty be appointed as an Honorary Alderman.

The voting on this resolution was as follows:

In favour (7) – Councillors Howorth, Balkan, Coen, Cressey, Nuti, Snow and Willingale.

Against (4) – Councillors Davies, Gillham, Jenkins and D. Whyte.

Abstentions – none.

3. Subject to the agreement of the Council with the awards detailed in 1 and 2 above, the Corporate Management Committee **agreed** to allocate a budget of £6,200 for the above awards, and other associated costs arising from the proposals contained within the report, which would be drawn from existing budgets.

The voting on this resolution was as follows:

In favour (7) – Councillors Howorth, Balkan, Coen, Cressey, Nuti, Snow and Willingale.

Against (4) – Councillors Davies, Gillham, Jenkins and D. Whyte.

Abstentions – none.