

Runnymede Borough CouncilFull CouncilThursday, 7 December 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Council present: Councillors S Saise-Marshall (Mayor), R Bromley (Deputy Mayor), A Balkan, T Burton, D Clarke, D Coen, MK Cressey, M Darby, R Davies, S Dennett, T Gates, E Gill, T Gracey, C Howorth, J Hulley, S Jenkins, A King, S Lewis, C Mann, J Mavi, M Nuti, N Prescott, S Ringham, M Singh, M Smith, P Snow, S Walsh, D Whyte, S Whyte, S Williams and M Willingale.

Members of the Council absent: Councillors A Berardi, MD Cressey, V Cunningham, J Furey, L Gillham, M Harnden, E Kettle, R King, I Mullens and J Wilson.

**57 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from councillors Berardi, MD Cressey, Cunningham, Furey, Gillham, Harnden, Kettle, R King, Mullens and Wilson.

**58 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**59 Proposal to confer honorary titles**

The proposal to confer honorary titles to the North West Surrey Alliance and former councillor Derek Cotty was moved and seconded. The Leader of the Council explained that the proposal was intended to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of Runnymede Borough Council on 1 April 2024, and it was hoped to recognise those who had made a significant contribution to the borough in that time.

The North West Surrey Alliance had been suggested for an honorary title primarily due to its health workers' efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic to put themselves in harms way by going into people's homes to deliver much-needed care, and doing so before the Covid vaccine became available.

Former councillor Cotty stood down from being a councillor in May 2023, and his work in Chertsey Meads, the Rotary Club and local church was highlighted, along with his efforts during the Magna Carta anniversary celebrations helping to ensure that a local authority event received international recognition.

Councillors across the chamber were generous in their praise for the character and achievements of former councillor Cotty, however some considered it wholly inappropriate to be focussing on awards of this nature given the cost of living crisis and a growing dependency of residents to rely on foodbanks, and nominations for Runnymede civic awards would be a more appropriate mechanism to recognise the efforts of those put forward.

A Member highlighted that the Runnymede Medical Practice in Englefield Green belonged to a different NHS Trust, and it would be distasteful to exclude them based on the quirks of a boundary, whilst the process to get to this stage was also noted by some members, with more cross-council discussion required on how to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The Leader advised that the cost of the overall scheme had reduced significantly since the

matter was discussed by Corporate Management Committee, and whilst unaware that the Runnymede Medical Practice was outside of the North West Surrey Alliance, acknowledged that the vast majority of Runnymede residents would have been treated by the North West Surrey Alliance. Furthermore, the Leader would be fully supportive of any motion put forward to neighbouring authorities to recognise the efforts of the Runnymede Medical Practice.

When queried about why the proposed title for former councillor Cotty was an alderman rather than the more regularly utilised freedom of the borough, the Leader had considered it more appropriate to propose a former councillor as an Alderman, but moved a motion to amend the recommendation to:

*To consider a proposal from the Corporate Management Committee to award the honorary title of ~~Honorary Alderman~~ **Freedom of the Borough** to Mr Derek Cotty*

The Mayor explained that on the basis the council had been specially convened for the purpose of the object in the resolution, it must be passed by not less than two-thirds of the members present.

Following the conclusion of the debate, the amended motion was put to the vote. A named vote was requested for each item and the voting was as follows:

To award the honorary title of Freedom of the Borough to the North West Surrey Alliance:

For (19)

Councillors Saise-Marshall, Bromley, Balkan, Clarke, Coen, MK Cressey, Darby, Dennett, Gracey, Howorth, Hulley, Lewis, Mann, Mavi, Nuti, Prescott, Snow, Walsh, Willingale

Against (12)

Councillors Burton, Davies, Gates, Gill, Jenkins, A King, Ringham, Singh, Smith, D Whyte, S Whyte, Williams

Abstain (0)

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#### **The proposed resolution fell.**

To award the honorary title of Freedom of the Borough to former councillor Derek Cotty:

For (20)

Councillors Saise-Marshall, Bromley, Balkan, Clarke, Coen, MK Cressey, Darby, Dennett, Gill, Gracey, Howorth, Hulley, Lewis, Mann, Mavi, Nuti, Prescott, Snow, Walsh, Willingale

Against (10)

Councillors Burton, Davies, Gates, Jenkins, A King, Ringham, Singh, Smith, D Whyte, S Whyte

Abstain (1)

Councillor Williams

#### **The proposed resolution fell.**

(The meeting ended at 7.59 pm.)

Mayor