

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Conferment of the Titles of Honorary Alderman: Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972

Meeting/Date: Extraordinary Council – 19th December 2018

Executive Portfolio: Executive Leader, Councillor G J Bull

Report by: Elections and Democratic Services Manager

Wards affected: All

Executive Summary:

In 2010 the Council resolved to introduce the titles of Honorary Alderman and Honorary Alderwoman for current and future Members of the Council who cumulatively have served a specific number of years as an elected Councillor on the District Council. The criteria upon which future Alderman / Alderwomen should be selected was revisited by the Council in April 2013 and it was agreed that the title should be awarded for 12 years cumulative service on the District Council. The Council also took the view that the title could also be awarded in other circumstances as the Council might decide.

Recommendation:

On the recommendation of the Council Programme Group and in recognition of their outstanding contribution to Huntingdonshire and their dedicated years of public service, it is

RECOMMENDED

that the Council, in sincere appreciation of distinguished public service to the District and people of Huntingdonshire and to the former wards of Alconbury and The Stukeleys, Gransden and The Offords, St Ives East and Warboys and Bury resolves under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer the title of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman on former District Councillors Keith Baker, Barbara Boddington, Peter Bucknell and Deborah Reynolds.

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1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

1.1 Nominations for the titles of Alderman / Alderwoman are considered annually by the Council Programme Group. Having regard to the existing criteria, the Group nominated former District Councillors Keith Baker, Barbara Boddington, Peter Bucknell and Deborah Reynolds as potential recipients of the title at their meeting earlier in the year. All have subsequently indicated that they would be pleased to accept the honour.

1.2 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that -

"a principal Council may, by a resolution passed by **not less than two thirds of the Members voting thereon at a meeting specially convened for the purpose** with notice of the object confer the title of Honorary Aldermen / Alderwomen 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 not then Councillors of the Council".

1.3 Should the Council bestow the honour of Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman, the incumbents would enjoy the courtesy title of Alderman/Alderwoman, would be so addressed and may receive invitations to civic functions such as the Chairman's Reception, Carol Service, etc as the Council may from time to time decide. No other specific rights are granted with the title and no financial allowance is payable. In addition, an Honorary Alderman / Alderwoman shall not have the right to attend meetings of the Council or a Committee or Panel of the Council other than as a member of the public.

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 Former District Councillor **Keith Baker** stood down as a District Councillor in May 2018. Keith had served three terms of office as Ward Councillor for the former Alconbury and The Stukeleys Ward having been first elected in 2006. Over this period Keith contributed to a wide range of Council activities and was appointed to a number of Council Panels and Committees. Perhaps most significantly he served 10 consecutive years as a member the Licensing and Protection Panel / Licensing Committee. He was appointed Vice-Chairman of this Panel in 2010.

2.2 Keith undertook a number of roles for the Council including Vice-Chairman of the Council, Vice-Chairman of the Licensing and Protection Panel and Vice-Chairman of the Huntingdon Leisure Centre Management Committee. He was also Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for a three year period from 2013 to 2016.

2.3 Throughout his office, Keith also represented the Council on a number of Outside Bodies including at a national level the Local Government Association Rural Commission. He also sat on the Alconbury and Ellington Internal Drainage Board for a 12 year period and was a passionate supporter of Huntingdon Shopmobility.

2.4 Former District Councillor **Barbara Boddington** was first elected in 2003 and retained her seat in the whole District Election in 2004 becoming Ward Member for Gransden and The Offords ward. During the course of her 15 consecutive years in office she championed the cause of her Ward with great rigor and enthusiasm.

- 2.5 Barbara contributed to a wide range of Council activities serving a consecutive 13 years as a member of the Development Control Panel and the Standards Committee until 2016. In more recent times she was a member of the Licensing and Protection Panel and Overview and Scrutiny.
- 2.6 Barbara undertook a number of roles for the Council and was Chairman of the Council from 2014 to 2016, a role which she took on with great diligence and enthusiasm during some difficulty and lengthy Council debates. She was also Chairman of the Development Management Panel and the Employment Panel, having been Vice-Chairman beforehand. As Chairman of the Development Management Panel she was committed to ensuring that the Panel operated to the highest possible standards.
- 2.7 Former District Councillor **Peter Bucknell** stood down as a District Councillor in May 2018. Peter was first elected in 2004 to represent the former Warboys and Bury Ward and went on to serve 12 consecutive years on the District Council which equates to three full terms of office.
- 2.8 Peter undertook a number of roles for the Council. Most notably Peter held the Executive Portfolio for Planning Strategy and Transport from 2006 to 2009 which led to his involvement in a number of planning and infrastructure projects within the District. During this time he also chaired the Huntingdonshire Growth and Infrastructure Group which allowed partners to meet and discuss significant infrastructure issues within the District. Peter's continuing interest in planning also led to him being appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Development Management Panel for three years in 2011. He was highly valued for his input into some difficult planning debates during this time.
- 2.9 Like Barbara before him, Peter was appointed Chairman of the Council in May 2015 a role which he undertook for two years having previously been Vice-Chairman. Peter understood the seriousness of this role and undertook the role with great diligence. His calm manner and even handedness was welcomed during a number of difficult and very lengthy meetings.
- 2.10 Peter also represented the Council on a number of outside organisations. Some in his capacity as Portfolio Holder and others like the Great Fen Project Steering Group, the Red Tile Wind Farm Community Fund and the Warboys Landfill Local Liaison Committee in his capacity as a local ward councillor. He championed the causes of his ward at every opportunity.
- 2.11 Former District Councillor **Deborah Reynolds** was first elected to the District Council in 1992 and served a four year term as Councillor for the former St Neots (Eynesbury Ward). Following a break she was re-elected in 2002 to the former Huntingdon North Ward, a seat which she held for two years until the whole Council elections in 2004 when she was elected to the new former ward of St Ives East. She held this seat for fourteen consecutive years until her retirement in 2018.
- 2.12 Perhaps most significantly Deborah was a Member of the District Council's Cabinet from 2004 until 2011 holding the Portfolios of initially Public Health and Safety, Housing and Public Health and finally Leisure and Law, Property and Governance. She was an advocate of her portfolio areas with great passion, having served on the Housing and Leisure and Amenities committees in her first term of office in the 1990a. She also represented them on a number of related bodies such as the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership

thematic groups for health and crime and disorder, the Home Improvement Agency Advisory Group and the Community Safety Board.

- 2.13 In the latter years Deborah was a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels from 2011 until her last year on the Council. Taking on the role of Vice-Chairman for the Environmental Well-Being Panel in 2012. Other notable roles during this period include Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Governance Panel in 2015.
- 2.14 Deborah represented the District Council on a number of outside bodies. Specific mention should perhaps be made of her role on St Ives Town Initiative, St Ives Environmental Improvements and the Arts Forum for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

3. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no legal or resource implications arising from this proposal. Should the Council indicate their support for the recommendation, a scroll and badge/brooch will be presented to those honoured and as discussed earlier, the recipients will be invited to civic functions such as the Chairman's Reception, Carol Service, etc as the Council may from time to time decide.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Nominations for the honour were made by the cross party Council Programme Group. The Group was authorised by the Council to consider candidates for the award on an annual basis. It was the Council's view that the honour should recognise an individual's outstanding contribution to the activities of the Council and the wellbeing of the District rather than loyalty to a political party.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of the Corporate Governance Panel and Council – September 2010 and March/April 2013

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