

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

Meeting/Date: Special Council – 16th December 2015

Executive Portfolio: Executive Leader, Councillor J D Ablewhite

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 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 wards of Ellington and Stilton resolves under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillors Mike Baker and Peter Mitchell.

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1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

1.1 Nominations for the titles of Alderman/Woman are considered annually by the Council Programme Group. Having regard to the existing criteria, the Group nominated former Councillors Mike Baker and Peter Mitchell as potential recipients of the title at their meeting in June 2015. Both 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 Ball, 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 Councillor **Mike Baker** was not returned to office following the election in May 2015. Mike was first elected to represent the Ellington Ward in 1997 and served as the ward councillor for this area for 16 consecutive years. Over this period, Mike contributed with both wit and intelligence to most Council Committees and Panels. Most notably perhaps was his work, as Chairman of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group and as Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance), latterly known as the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support). He also held the position of Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Governance Panel from 2010 to 2013, the only time the position has been held by a member of the opposition party. Although contributing to a wide range of Council activities over the years from Leisure Centre Management Committees, Member Development Groups and the Huntingdonshire Traffic Area Joint Committee, Mike also represented the Council on the Cromwell Museum Management Committee and the Alconbury and Ellington Internal Drainage Board for 16 years. In more recent times Mike held the position of Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and continued to champion the cause of his ward with great vigor and enthusiasm.

2.2 Former Councillor **Peter Mitchell** stood down as a District Councillor in May 2015. Peter had served four terms of office as Ward Councillor for Stilton having been first elected in 2003 and retained his seat in the whole District election in 2004. Peter served on a number of Council Committees and Panels and undertook a number of roles for the Council that included Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Governance Panel and Chairman of the Development Control Panel. As Chairman of the latter from 2004 to 2011, Peter became a planning expert and his calm manner and even handedness was welcomed during a number of difficult and very lengthy meetings. He also oversaw the introduction of new arrangements for public speaking at Development Control Panel meetings.

In more recent times, Peter was a keen member of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and participated in a number of studies on behalf of the Panel into financial matters including Gross Costs, borrowing and the Council's levels of reserves. Peter also played a key role in updating the Panel on developments at the Great Fen Project and representing the Council on the Middle Level Commissioners and Internal Drainage Board for Conington and Holme. Throughout his office, Peter continued to champion the cause of his ward and was an long standing member of the Stilton Children and Young People's Facilities Association.

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 Ball, 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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