

## **COUNCIL MEETING - 6 AUGUST 2003**

### **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR DENINGTON CHAIR, COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP REVIEW PANEL**

#### **FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH**

The Review Panel has given consideration to recommending Council to grant the freedom of the Borough to 40 Commando Royal Marines.

The Local Government Act 1972 (amended by the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980) allows a Borough or City Council to admit "persons of distinction and persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the city, borough or royal borough" as Honorary Freeman.

A resolution passed by not less than two third of the members voting at a specially convened meeting is required to admit the Honorary Freeman but this does not confer any rights upon them.

However, the conferring of the title of Honorary Freeman is the highest honour that a Council of a City or Borough can bestow and, in the view of many, should not be given too often.

Taunton Deane Borough Council have granted this honour on only two previous occasions. To the Light Infantry to mark its long association with the area and to Sir Edward du Cann to mark his many years as Member of Parliament for Taunton.

Under the terms of our Constitution any grant of freedom must be made by Council on the recommendation of this Panel.

40 Commando have been based in Taunton Deane for many years and during that time they have made a tremendous contribution to the life of the local community in many ways. It is felt, therefore, that the time is now right to recognise their presence in this area by granting them the freedom of the Borough.

Should the Council agree to grant this honour to 40 Commando there is a procedure, laid down in statute, which has to be followed.

The freedom resolution is passed at a special meeting of the Council when a formal presentation is made. It is necessary, however, for Council to agree that they will pass that formal resolution well in advance of that ceremony.

After passing the resolution the newly admitted Freeman may take the appropriate Freeman's Oath and sign the Freeman's Roll with the signature being witnessed by the Mayor and Chief Executive.

A sealed and illuminated certificate of the grant of the Honorary Freedom, incorporating a copy of the formal resolution, contained in a suitable Scroll Holder is then usually presented to the newly appointed Freeman by the Mayor with the recipient being given an opportunity to reply.

Associated with the Freedom is the "Freedom of Entry" which permits service units who have been granted the freedom to "march through the streets of the Borough with bayonets fixed, drums beating and Colours flying". 40 Commando have indicated that they would like to exercise this right should they be granted the freedom.

40 Commando have been consulted on their forthcoming availability and should the Council agree to this recommendation, a Special Council meeting, at which the formal resolution to grant the freedom is passed, will be held at 6.30 pm on 8 September 2003.

40 Commando have indicated that they would then like to exercise their right to parade through the town on the following day, 9 September 2003.

It is anticipated that the Council would arrange a reception for guests following the special Council meeting and offer hospitality to the marines following their parade through Taunton.

The cost of these proposals can be met from within existing budgets.

It is therefore unanimously RECOMMENDED by the Panel that the Freedom of the Borough be granted to 40 Commando Royal Marines in recognition of their service to the Taunton Deane community at a Special Council meeting on 8 September 2003.

Councillor Bryan Denington