

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 22 July 2014

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

Freedom of the Borough – Councillor Clifford William Bishop

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Members to consider supporting a proposal to admit Councillor Clifford William Bishop, as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough.

2. Background

- 2.1 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 Freemen.
- 2.2 Under the terms of the Council's Constitution a resolution passed by not less than two thirds 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.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 Taunton Deane Borough Council has granted this honour on only four previous occasions. To the Light Infantry (now 'The Rifles') to mark its long association with the area, to Sir Edward du Cann to mark his many years as Member of Parliament for Taunton, to 40 Commando Royal Marines and, most recently (in 2004), to Councillor J R G Meikle MBE.

3. Councillor Clifford William Bishop

- 3.1 Councillor Bishop has been an elected Councillor for over 50 years both at both district and parish level.
- 3.2 During that time he has made a significant contribution to the local community of Taunton Deane generally and of the Bradford on Tone, Langford Budville, Nynehead and Oake Parishes in particular.

- 3.3 Amongst many achievements, Councillor Bishop is the longest serving Member on Taunton Deane's Planning Committee occupying the position of Chairman for many years. His vast experience in matters relating to both Planning and Housing has been key to Taunton Deane hosting regular meetings of 'ROOM@RTPI' (Royal Town Planning Institute) which attracts Councillors, officers and professionals from across the South-West.
- 3.4 On a local level Councillor Bishop was involved in projects which resulted in the successful implementation of a flood alleviation scheme at Hillfarrance after years of negotiation and the replacement of a very dated village hall in Oake with the purpose built premises which are now in almost constant use. Last year, Councillor Bishop was very pleased to see the opening of the very first village hall in Langford Budville – again after years of campaigning and fund raising.
- 3.5 These examples are just a few of the many initiatives that Councillor Bishop has been involved in during his 50+ years as a Councillor. However, these do give a 'flavour' of the eminent service he has given.
- 3.6 For these reasons, the Political Group Leaders all agree that Councillor Bishop should be made a Freeman of the Borough.

4. What happens now?

- 4.1 Should Members agree to grant this honour to Councillor Bishop there is a procedure, laid down in statute, which has to be followed.
- 4.2 The Freedom resolution is passed at a special meeting of the Council when a formal presentation is made. It would be necessary, however, for Members to agree that they will pass that formal resolution well in advance of that ceremony.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 If support from Members is forthcoming, a Special Council meeting will be arranged, on a date to be agreed, at which the formal resolution to confer the title is passed.
- 4.6 It is anticipated that the Council would arrange a reception for guests following the special Full Council meeting.

5. Finance Comments

5.1 It is anticipated that the cost of these proposals can be met from within existing budgets.

6. Legal Comments

6.1 There are no legal implications.

7. Links to Corporate Aims

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Environmental Implications

8.1 Not applicable.

9. Community Safety Implications

9.1 There are no known implications related to this report.

10. Equalities Impact

10.1 There are no known implications related to this report.

11. Risk Management

11.1 Not applicable.

12. Partnership Implications

12.1 Not applicable.

13. Recommendation

13.1 It is **recommended** that Full Council supports the proposal that Councillor Clifford William Bishop be made an Honorary Freeman of the Borough in recognition of the eminent service rendered by him to the Taunton Deane community.

Bruce Lang
Assistant Chief Executive