

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Honorary Freemen and Freewomen of the City of Plymouth
Committee: Council
Date: 23 November 2015
Cabinet Member: Councillor Pete Smith, Deputy Leader
CMT Member: Giles Perritt, Assistant Chief Executive
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Key Decision: No
Part: I

Purpose of the report:

Honorary Freedom of the City is the highest award that the Council can bestow. It is a power that is very rarely used and is normally only awarded to local people who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the City.

Full Council has to make a decision (two thirds majority) at a separate meeting specially convened for the purpose, to confer the Honorary Freedom of the City.

The four nominees for this honour are:

Jean Nelder
Father Sam Philpott MBE
Angela Rippon OBE
David Stark

The Brilliant Co-operative Council Corporate Plan 2013/14 -2016/17:

These four individuals are the embodiment of the main ambition of our corporate plan – that of a fairer Plymouth where everyone does their bit.

The Freemen and Freewomen of Plymouth have ‘done their bit’ and continue to do so, and this is the Council’s way of recognising their hard work. In a number of ways the work they have done collectively supports all four of the Council’s corporate plan objectives.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land:

Minor implications to be contained within current revenue budget.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

No implications.

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

That in pursuance of its powers under Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council confers on the following persons the title of Honorary Freemen and Honorary Freewomen in recognition of their eminent services to the City of Plymouth:

Jean Nelder
Father Sam Philpott MBE
Angela Rippon OBE
David Stark

Alternative options considered and rejected:

None.

Published work / information:

Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972

Sign off:

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Originating SMT Member: Giles Perritt													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the content of the report? Yes													

1 Introduction

Before the year 1835, Freeman existed in many cities as a constituent part of the corporation. Freeman enjoyed special rights, dependent on local customs, such as rights of pasturage on corporate land and exemptions from certain tolls and dues.

Since the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, councils continued to be given the power to appoint Freeman but the law gradually reduced the privileges associated with that office.

2 Background

In Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, local authorities were given power to admit 'persons of distinction, and persons who have, in the opinion of the authority, rendered eminent services to that place or area.' The decision must be approved by not less than two-thirds of the councillors voting on the proposal at a meeting specially convened for the purpose which has given notice of the object to admit honorary freemen/women of the city. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 allowed local authorities to also award the title of "Honorary Freewoman".

The granting of "Honorary Freedom" to an individual should not be confused with the granting of "Freedom of the City" to a military organisation such as the Royal Navy. In the latter case there is a right to march through the city.

3 Criteria

The overriding principle is that such awards should be made on merit. Merit for awards is defined as:

- Achievement
- Exceptional Service

Awards should not just go with a job well done or because someone has reached a particular level, they should be awarded because an individual has, in plain terms, 'gone the extra mile' in the contribution they have made or stand out 'head and shoulders' above others in what has been achieved.

Those to be considered should either have delivered in a way that has brought distinction to city life and enhanced the City's reputation in the area or activity concerned, or which has contributed in a distinctive way to improving the lot of those less able to help themselves, or have demonstrated innovation and entrepreneurship which is delivering results in the City.

4 Privileges

It is the highest honour that the City can give, the honour cannot be passed on and, in Plymouth, the title of Honorary Freeman has conferred the following privileges:

- (a) To enjoy the courtesy title of Honorary Freeman/Freewoman
- (b) To receive precedence in Civic Processions immediately behind the Lord Mayor, and between themselves based on the date of conferment
- (c) To receive copies of Council summonses, have a seat reserved for them at meetings of the City Council and car parking provision
- (d) To be invited to those civic functions to which all members of the City Council are invited
- (e) To have the City Flag flown at half-mast on death

The Council traditionally presents a scroll to the person upon whom the Council has conferred the title of Honorary Freeman or Honorary Freewoman.

5 Nominees

Jean Nelder

Jean Nelder has been one of Plymouth's longest serving City Councillors and is a hugely popular and well respected Plymouth figure with a remarkable track record. Jean represented one of the city's most deprived communities and is a dedicated and inspirational public servant.

Her main achievement has been the establishment of a vision for Plymouth that promoted significantly higher levels of growth which won the top planning award in the country (RTPI Silver Jubilee Cup). Jean established unique cross-party groups which helped ensure political and community buy-in. Jean played the key leadership role which secured hundreds of millions investment in some of the most deprived wards in the country and which delivered many award-winning regeneration projects. She oversaw a 10 year programme of investment in the historic Barbican, establishing new and innovative forms of community engagement such as the Sutton Forum. Jean personally led the campaign to declare the East End a Housing Renewal Area which enabled a programme of major housing and infrastructure investment. She has been a Cattewater Harbour Commissioner (the first woman to be appointed) and is representative on numerous partnerships and local community forums. also served on the Plymouth Development Corporation which was set up about 1995 for the regeneration of the Royal William Yard. Jean also served on the Plymouth Development Corporation set up in 1995 for the regeneration of the Royal William Yard.

Perhaps most of all Jean has through her continual re-election from 1987 until 2015, when she retired from the Council, maintained the respect and admiration of local people and opposition politicians because of her personal integrity and commitment.

She has managed to stay rooted in her community, engaging local people to help deliver improvements, while also handling with distinction demanding leadership responsibilities and a period as Deputy Lord Mayor.

Father Sam Philpott MBE

Father Sam has been in continual service to the community of Plymouth since 1978, when he became the Vicar of Saint Peter and the Holy Apostles, Stonehouse. Father Sam has been at the forefront of pioneering projects including the Drake Foundation, the Ship homeless hostel, Plymouth Mediation and The Millfields Economic Development Trust, which he chairs.

He developed close working relationships with the Council's housing and social services staff as well as the Probation Service in the development of schemes including Wheels, which encouraged children to work on car repairs and Stables, which taught children how to interact more effectively by teaching them activities such as theatre and rock climbing.

Not only has Father Sam worked tirelessly in some of the most deprived wards of the City but he has also acted as a school governor at a number of schools across the city. He cares passionately for the welfare of Children and is one of the City's Child Poverty Champions and is a member of the Cabinet Advisory Committee on Child Poverty.

Father Sam has also been in charge of parishes in Keyham and Ham, and has served twice (1996 – 1997 and 2012 – 2013) as the Lord Mayor's Chaplain.

He was awarded the MBE in 2012 for services to the community of Plymouth. Father Sam has also served as a Commissioner with the Plymouth Fairness Commission.

Angela Rippon OBE

Plymouth born and educated, Angela Rippon is a television journalist, newsreader, writer and presenter. She presented radio and television news programmes in South West of England before moving to BBC One's Nine O'Clock News, becoming a regular presenter in 1975.

Angela became patron of the South West Film and Television Archive in 2013; the SWFTA is the regional film archive for the South West of England and the largest regional film archive in the UK

In addition to her work for broadcasting and the arts, she is a dedicated supporter of the Alzheimer's Society, and became their ambassador in 2009. She is also Vice President of The Patients' Association, whose motto is 'Listening to Patients, Speaking up for Change'. In 2013, she was awarded the National Dementia Care Ambassador in recognition of her role as an Alzheimer's Society Ambassador. She is regularly a guest speaker at conferences using her personal story of caring for her mother with dementia. Angela co-chairs the Dementia Friendly Communities Champions Group which focuses on improving inclusion and quality of life for people living with dementia.

Angela was awarded the OBE in 2004 for her services to broadcasting, charity and the arts.

David Stark

David Stark has made a sustained contribution to Plymouth as a well-liked and respected local politician with a strong commitment to building cross-party consensus on contentious issues for over 5 decades. David has had a long and varied career in politics starting in 1947 when he joined the Young Conservatives.

He has been instrumental across a number of roles including education which saw him working across the party divide to secure funding for Plymouth schools and securing funding for the Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity.

David was Chair of Plymouth University's Audit Committee before later becoming a University Governor helping to establish a strong Higher Education Presence with the City. Using his roles with the University and Plymouth Area Business Council, David was a key member of small team which set up Plymouth Science Park to translate research into marketable products.

A crowning achievement was the development of a capital fund to purchase Mount Edgumbe in 1971. The 865 acre country park on the Rame Peninsula is now home to Grade I listed gardens and 55 Grade II listed structures and provides great days out for Plymouth residents and visitors alike.

David always ensured that local people's concerns and issues were heard and acted upon. He made active contributions to his local area with the development of a local park and arranging family fun days for local people. David worked incredibly well with officers recognising and respecting the role they play with politicians in meeting the needs of local people.

6 Existing appointments

Other people and organisations who have been awarded the honour:

FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF PLYMOUTH SINCE 1914

John Henry Ellis, O.B.E. (Deceased) Conferred 9 November, 1917	H.E. the American Ambassador (The Hon. Walter Hines Page, D.C.L., LL.D) (Deceased) Conferred 17 September, 1918	H.R.H. Prince Edward of Wales (Afterwards Duke of Windsor) (Deceased) Conferred 13 June, 1919
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Alderman Sir Thomas Baker, K.B.E., J.P. (Deceased) Conferred 13 October, 1919	The Rt. Hon. Sir Henry E. Duke (Afterwards Lord Merrivale) (Deceased) Conferred 14 March, 1924	Sir John Frederick Winnicott, J.P. (Deceased) Conferred 9 November, 1934
The Rt. Hon. The Viscount Astor (Deceased) Conferred 2 July, 1936	Field Marshall The Rt. Hon. J.C. Smuts, P.C., C.H., K.C., D.T.D. (Deceased) Conferred 9 November, 1942	Alderman Sir James Clifford Tozer, J.P. (Deceased), Conferred 8 September, 1952
Alderman Hubert Moses Medland, J.P. (Deceased) Conferred 9 September, 1952	The Royal Marines Conferred 7 May, 1955	Nancy Viscountess Astor, C.H. (Deceased) Conferred 16 July, 1959
Plymouth Command of The Royal Navy Conferred 26 September, 1963	Alderman Henry George Mason, C.B.E., J.P. (Deceased), Conferred 6 December, 1965	Alderman Ronald George King, M.B.E. (Deceased), Conferred 20 December, 1972
Alderman Harold Miller Pattinson, C.B.E. (Deceased), Conferred 20 December, 1972	Alderman Leslie Francis Paul (Deceased) Conferred 20 December, 1972	Alderman Frederick John Stott, O.B.E., J.P. (Deceased) Conferred 20 December, 1972
Baroness Vickers of Devonport, D.B.E. (Deceased) Conferred 26 November, 1982	The Rt. Hon. Michael M. Foot, M.P.(Deceased) Conferred 26 November, 1982	Councillor George Ernest Hillyer Creber, C.B.E., D.L. (Deceased) Conferred 26 November, 1982
Councillor Ivor Clarence Lowe (Deceased) Conferred 26 November 1982	The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment Conferred 19 March, 1988	The 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery Conferred 29 January, 1996
John Joseph Ingham Conferred 1 April, 1998	Councillor Thomas Edward J. Savery M.A (Oxon), LL.B. (London) Conferred 1 April, 1998	Arthur Raymond Stanley Floyd J.P. (Deceased) Conferred 1 April, 1998
Dr. Sheila Anne Cassidy, B.M., B.Ch, M.A. (Oxon), D.Sc. (Hon) Exeter, D. Litt. (Hon) Conferred 1 April, 1998	Mrs Sylvia Irene Brice Conferred 1 April, 1998	The Rt. Hon. The Lord Owen, C.H. Conferred 23 March, 2001
Baroness Fookes of Plymouth D.B.E, D.L Conferred 23 March 2001	Dennis Howard Dicker Conferred 23 March, 2001	Alderman Reginald Cyril James Scott (Deceased) Conferred 23 March 2001
The Merchant Navy Conferred 23 June 2008	Royal Navy Reserve – HMS VIVID Conferred 23 June 2008	The Rifles (formerly known as The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment) Conferred 23 June 2008, Reconfirmed in 2009