

TO: COUNCIL
18 SEPTEMBER 2013

HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH AWARD
Director of Corporate Services – Democratic & Registration Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of the Leader of the Council and sets out a proposal to admit John Nike OBE DL to be an Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Bracknell Forest.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That by virtue of the provisions of Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, John Nike OBE DL be admitted an Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Bracknell Forest in recognition of his eminent service to the Borough.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The reasons for this recommendation are set out within the report.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 5.1 Under the Local Government Act 1972 (amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009) Councils with Borough status can admit to be Honorary Freemen or Freewomen of the Borough, persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Borough. No further guidance is provided by the 1972 Act. It is for the Council to determine which individuals should be admitted as Freemen or Freewomen. The Council has not adopted formal criteria for the award.
- 5.2 The Council must convene a special meeting specifically for that purpose and a resolution must be passed by not less than two thirds of the Members present at that meeting.
- 5.3 Section 249(6) of the 1972 Act empowers the Council to spend a reasonable sum as thought fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to the recipient of the Freedom of the Borough.
- 5.4 Previously the Council has presented an illuminated scroll contained in a casket commemorating the grant of the Honorary Freedom and has held a reception in honour of the recipient. The Council has also had a copy of the scroll framed for display within the Council.

- 5.5 A commemorative scroll and casket have been commissioned and will be presented at a small reception in November.

Freedom of the Borough

- 5.6 The Freedom of the Borough is the highest tribute that a Borough can bestow, and although in modern times it is an honour only and confers no legal rights, Honorary Freemen and Freewomen are invariably invited to take part in all important ceremonial occasions in the Borough. It is an honour sparingly awarded. Only three individuals and one organisation have been awarded Freedom of the Borough of Bracknell Forest:

- Mrs Kathleen (Kitty) Dancy OBE (deceased) – June 1994
- Sir William van Straubenzee MBE (deceased) – June 1994
- Royal Military Academy Sandhurst – December 1996
- Councillor James Finnie – May 2000

- 5.7 The Council is asked to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on John Nike OBE DL and to invite him to take the Freeman's Oath. A synopsis of John's services to the community of Bracknell Forest is set out below.

John Nike OBE DL

- 5.8 A Devonian by birth John Nike moved to Bracknell Forest in 1964 and set up his first company in 1967. Since that time John has forged strong links with the Borough and has become a major employer and benefactor to Bracknell Forest especially in the realms of education, sports and leisure.
- 5.9 John is the Chairman of Nike Land Securities Ltd, which is a Bracknell based company encompassing a wide range of activities, with commercial interests spanning property, construction, a hotel, restaurants, skiing and ice skating. He gave his name to the John Nike Leisure Complex (home of the Bracknell Bees ice hockey team) and the John Nike Bracknell Ski and Snowboard Centre. John funded the John Nike Athletics Stadium at the Bracknell Sport and Leisure Centre in 1984 and the John Nike Dance Studio at the Brackenhale School in 2011. The South Hill Park Trust named the digital suite the 'John Nike Digital Suite' in recognition of his sponsorship in 2004.
- 5.10 Between 2007 and 2011 the John Nike Centre and Bracknell Bees were partners in the 'Playing for Success Scheme' which was an after school club that addressed low self esteem in pupils of primary and secondary school ages through involvement with sports clubs. Players from the Bees attended club sessions to answer questions and award prizes; the ice rink and ski slope were used for activities; and children benefitted from subsidised tickets to go skating, for food, and other services.
- 5.11 In a scheme that ran from 2009-2011 the Ice Rink subsidised skating tickets for disadvantaged children and young people and subsidised tickets for the same children and their parents to the ice show in 2010.
- 5.12 Other notable facts include:
- President of the Bracknell Athletic Club, Bracknell Cricket Club, Bracknell Ice Skating Club, Bracknell Drama Club, and past President of the Bracknell Ice Hockey Club and Thames Valley Tigers' Basketball Club

Unrestricted

- Honorary Member of both the Bracknell and Easthampstead Rotary Clubs
- Governor of Easthampstead Park School (1987-1989) and Bracknell & Wokingham College (1990-1995)
- Recipient of the Berkshire Fellowship Award in 1996 for an outstanding contribution to the development of basketball.
- Recipient of a plaque from the Mayor of Bracknell Forest Borough Council in 1997 in recognition of his outstanding contribution to sport and leisure throughout Bracknell Forest.
- Recognition in the 2002 New Year Honours List with the award of the Order of the British Empire for services to business and the community in Bracknell.
- Commissioned as a Deputy Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire in 2005.
- Sponsor of the new civic regalia for the Mayor of Bracknell Forest Borough Council in 2010 and sponsor of the new civic regalia for the Bracknell Town Council in 2005.
- Donation towards a stained glass window for the Parish and Pilgrimage Church of St Michael and St Mary Magdalene Easthampstead, to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.
- Between 1987 and 2013 in excess of 80,000 ice skating vouchers donated to charitable causes.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1 Nothing further to add to the report.

Borough Treasurer

6.2 The total cost of the commemorative scroll, casket and presentation is likely to be in the region of £3,000.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 Not relevant to this report.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 Not relevant to this report.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 Not applicable.

Method of Consultation

7.2 Not applicable.

Representations Received

7.3 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for further information

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