

Item No. 2.1	Classification: Open	Date: 28 March 2012	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Freedom of the Borough	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Constitutional Steering Panel	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council Assembly considers the recommendation from the Constitutional Steering Panel (CSP) to confer the award of Freedom of the Borough to the nominees outlined in paragraphs 13 – 26 below.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The council has power under Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer the title of “Freeman of the Borough” on persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent services to the borough. For the purposes of the Act ‘person’ includes organisations. The constitution (3A.21) provides for council assembly to confer the title of Freedom of the Borough.
3. The council must agree such conferment by resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present at a meeting specially convened for that purpose with notice of the purpose being set out in the summons for the meeting.
4. The council has power under Section 249(6) to spend a reasonable sum as thought fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to such Honorary Freeman.
5. The Honorary Freedom of the Borough is the highest award the council can bestow. Since 1965 Southwark has conferred the award on 31 recipients. On each occasion the council has considered nominations on individual merit.
6. Council assembly agreed on 30 October 2002 the following criteria for conferment of the Freedom of the Borough.
 - That nominations may be received from councillors, officers, MPs, outside organisations and members of the public who are on the council’s Electoral Register.
 - That nominations be limited to one per person/organisation and that they must show by example that the nominee is a “person of distinction who has rendered eminent services to the borough”.
 - That there be no restriction as to how often this award may be conferred.

7. Nominations are initially considered by the Constitutional Steering Panel (CSP) which then makes recommendations to Council Assembly. CSP considered the nomination listed below on 5 March 2012.
8. If council assembly agrees to confer the honour, then a ceremony for presentation of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough is arranged. Previously this has been at a special meeting of the council but this year it has been agreed with Southwark Civic Association to make it coincident with the Civic Awards and conferment of Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen is scheduled for 12 May 2012 at St George's Cathedral.
9. A framed certificate and Honorary Freedom Badge on ribbon (individuals) or commemorative plaque (organisations) will be presented to honorands.
10. The office of Honorary Freedom of the Borough does not convey with it any legal rights or responsibilities other than a ceremonial role at civic functions. Conditions apply to an award conferred on an organisation (Appendix A).
11. On 6 April 2011 council assembly agreed to confer Freedom of the Borough to F.A. Albin & Sons, a family business based in Bermondsey, who have been funeral directors for over 200 years and supported many Southwark families through bereavement. They also manage the repatriation of all British service personnel who are killed in Afghanistan and Iraq and consequently all returning casualties are brought back through Southwark. Albin International Repatriations has been bringing home soldiers and their families killed abroad for 12 years. Albin's have been actively engaged in supporting fallen heroes through their long and strong association with the charity *Help for heroes* and more recently *Homes for heroes*.
12. Since then other nominations listed below have been received and recommended by the Constitutional Steering Panel on 5 March 2012.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Lance Corporal Johnson Gideon Beharry

13. The Deputy Lieutenant for Southwark nominated the above individual who lives in Dulwich. In March 2005 Lance Corporal Johnson Beharry was awarded the highest military decoration, the Victoria Cross, for valour in the armed forces whilst on duty in Iraq. He is one of only 6 living recipients of this award.
14. He now visits many schools and colleges in Southwark telling his own story and why he joined Army. He supports many Armed Forces charities and is a patron of Help for Heroes. He was also present as the principal guest at the flag-raising ceremony in Southwark to mark Armed Forces day in 2011.

Stephen Humphrey

15. The Chair of Southwark Civic Association nominated Stephen Humphrey, who for 30 years, until his retirement last year, was Borough Archivist. Over this time, Stephen has helped thousands of visitors to Southwark to trace their ancestry back to the borough.
16. Stephen has also helped many organisations and charities by giving talks at fund-raising events on local history. In particular he has contributed to the

Restoration fund Raising Committee of the St George in the Martyr Church in Borough High Street, which managed to save this grade 2 listed building from collapse.

The Rt. Hon. Simon Hughes MP

17. Simon has been nominated by Councillor Anood Al-Samerai and has represented people in Bermondsey, Rotherhithe and the north of Southwark for almost thirty years. Since his first election as Member of Parliament for Southwark and Bermondsey in a by-election in 1983, Simon has worked tirelessly for his constituents.
18. Simon is currently Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the Commons and served as President of the party for four years between 2004 and 2008. He was made Advocate for Access to Education and appointed to the Privy Council by the Prime Minister at the end of 2010.

The Rt. Hon. Harriet Harman MP

19. Harriet has been nominated by Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle and has represented the people of Camberwell and Peckham for thirty years. Since her first election as Member of Parliament for Peckham in a by-election in 1982 she has worked tirelessly for her constituents.
20. Harriet is currently Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, Shadow Deputy Prime Minister and Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. She has been Chair of the Labour Party since 2007. Between 1997 and 2010 she served in government in several roles including Secretary of State for Social Security, Minister for Women and Equality, Leader of the House and Solicitor General.

The Rt. Hon. Tessa Jowell MP

21. Tessa has been nominated by Councillor Helen Hayes and has represented the people of Southwark in Dulwich and the south of the borough for twenty years. Since her first election as Member of Parliament for Dulwich in 1992 Tessa has worked tirelessly for her constituents.
22. Tessa held a number of posts in government between 2005 and 2010 including Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Minister for London, Minister for Women, Minister for the Olympics, and Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General. She continues to work to bring a successful Olympics for all Londoners later this year as Shadow Minister for the Olympics and as an observer on the Olympics Board.

Sir Michael Caine CBE

23. Michael has been nominated by Councillor Peter John. He was born in St Olave's Hospital in Rotherhithe. He has been an exceptional ambassador for the place where he grew up and an example for Southwark residents.
24. Michael has been a professional actor for 60 years and is one of the world's most admired actors. He has won two academy awards for his roles in Hannah and Her Sisters in 1986 and The Cider House Rules in 1999. He was knighted in 2000 for his contribution to cinema.

Coral Newell

25. Coral Newell has been nominated by Councillor Ian Wingfield. Coral has served her local community in Southwark all her life. She has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of others and has set the highest possible example for community involvement.
26. Over the course of almost four decades Coral has been heavily involved in or led the Bermondsey Care for the Elderly, Bermondsey Forum, Corporation Tenant and Resident Liaison Group, Rotherhithe and Bermondsey Housing Association and Guy's & St Olave's area Health Forum. As part of her work for Bermondsey Care for the Elderly she has selflessly given up her time on every Christmas day for well over 30 years to support older people during the festive period. She has - of course - been the Executive Director of the Beormund Community Centre since 1999. Coral served as a Southwark councillor between 1978 and 1992 and is one of our borough's Honorary Aldermen.

Resource implications

27. Occasional Honorary Freedom of the Borough ceremonies can be managed within existing staff and financial resources.

Legal implications

28. Legal issues are outlined in the body of the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Minutes of Council Assembly held on 30 October 2002	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Lesley John 020 7525 7228
Agenda and Minutes of Council Assembly held on 6 April 2011	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Lesley John 020 7525 7228

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	Award Conditions

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Deborah Collins, Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	
Report Author	Stephen Douglass, Head of Community Engagement	
Version	Final	
Dated	15 March 2012	
Key decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer title	Comments sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	Yes
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	15 March 2012	

APPENDIX A

AWARD CONDITIONS

- A. The award does not provide any rights or privileges to the recipient.
- B. The award is not of itself an endorsement of any services or goods provided by the organisation.
- C. The granting of the award does not entitle the recipient to use the official crest of the council.
- D. Use of or reference to the award in any advertising or promotional activity is subject to the prior approval of the council. The council reserves the right to withdraw the award in the event of unauthorised use or reference to the award.
- E. When an award is granted to an organisation it may not be used in any way to suggest that the individuals associated with the organisation are themselves in receipt of the award.
- F. Where an organisation ceases to exist or ceases to operate in the activity recognised by the award it is automatically withdrawn. The award is not transferrable.
- G. The award does not signal that the council will act as a referee for the organisation.
- H. All recipients, including organisations, are expected to uphold the principles of the civic functions of the authority and to encompass the diversity of our communities.