

Council Report

Wards affected: All

Report of Director of Resources

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## Freedom of the Borough

### Recommendation to Council:

To consider formally a nomination that the Freedom of the Borough be conferred upon the Army Training Centre (ATC), Pirbright; and, if so minded, to agree to arrange a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose of admitting the ATC to the Freedom of the Borough on Monday 6 March 2017 at 7pm at the Guildhall.

### Reason for recommendation:

To recognise formally the eminent and distinguished service to the Borough of the ATC, Pirbright.

### 1. Background

- 1.1 Under the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may, by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the councillors voting thereon at a meeting specially convened for the purpose, admit to be Honorary Freemen of the Borough persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Borough.
- 1.2 The Council, at its meeting on 10 April 2014, adopted a "*Protocol on the appointment, role, status, rights and obligations of Honorary Freemen and Honorary Aldermen*". The procedures set out in this report comply fully with this Protocol.

### 2. Honorary Freemen of the Borough

- 2.1 Since the 1974 re-organisation of local government, the Council has bestowed the office of Honorary Freeman upon the following persons:
  - The Right Honourable the Lord Nugent of Guildford (12 June 1985)
  - Mrs Doreen Bellerby MBE (25 March 1995)
  - Mr Bill Bellerby MBE (25 March 1995)
  - Mr David Watts (1 October 2003)
  - Mr Andrew Hodges (22 November 2011)
  - Mrs Jen Powell (3 November 2015)

- 2.2 In addition, on 22 June 1988, the Council bestowed the Freedom of the Borough on the former Women's Royal Army Corps.
- 2.3 Prior to 1974, the Freedom of the Borough was granted to the Queen's Royal Regiment in 1944, Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment in 1960<sup>1</sup>, 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment on 1 January 1967 and extended to the new Queen's Regiment in July 1969.
- 2.4 Under the adopted Protocol, a 'person' (which includes an organisation for these purposes) shall be deemed eligible for admission to the Freedom of the Borough provided they meet all of the following requirements:

"The person shall:

- be a person of distinction
- have given eminent service to the borough during that period. "Eminent service" in this context includes but is not limited to any of the following:
  - public service
  - artistic and/or cultural endeavours
  - business, economic growth and prosperity
  - charitable work
  - improvement to the built and natural environment
  - political activities
  - religious and spiritual life
  - sporting activities
- have a strong and continuing connection with and commitment to the borough of Guildford, or have made a major contribution to national life and in doing so have enhanced the reputation of the borough."

- 2.5 Under the Protocol, any nomination shall provide evidence that the person nominated:
- (i) meets the eligibility requirements referred to in paragraph 2.4 above, and
  - (ii) will accept the appointment

### **3. Nomination received for admission to the Freedom of the Borough**

- 3.1 In accordance with the Protocol, the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Matt Furniss has proposed, and the Council's Armed Forces Champion, Councillor David Elms has seconded, the nomination of the ATC, Pirbright for admission to the Freedom of the Borough.

- 3.2 The nomination states as follows:

*"ATC Pirbright has its origins in 1875, when the War Office acquired 3,000 acres of heathland and constructed rifle ranges and a training depot for the Brigade of Guards. There have been many changes over the years, but the links between the military in Pirbright and Guildford are certainly historic.*

*Today, ATC Pirbright is the largest initial training site in the British Army, supported by varied training areas, modern ranges and excellent facilities. It provides training*

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<sup>1</sup> Freedom subsequently transferred upon amalgamation of Surrey and Hampshire Regiments into "The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment".

*for all recruits for Army Air Corps, Army Medical Services, Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Corps of Royal Engineers, Corps of Army Music, Royal Armoured Corps, Royal Regiment of Artillery, Royal Corps of Signals, Royal Logistical Corps, Adjutant General's Corps, Intelligence Corps and Reservists of all cap badges.*

*There is no doubt that ATC Pirbright is an establishment of considerable distinction. It has made an outstanding contribution to national life over many years by providing first class training for generations of new recruits to the British Army. We are very proud that this most important of public services takes place within the borough of Guildford and look forward to this local connection and commitment continuing for many years to come.*

*We would very much like to recognise this distinguished service by proposing that ATC Pirbright be offered the Freedom of the Borough of Guildford."*

- 3.3 The nomination was accompanied by a letter from Lt. Col. Richard Green confirming that ATC Pirbright would be honoured to accept admission to the Freedom of the Borough by the Council.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There will be a need to purchase a Scroll of Freedom, which will cost in the region of £500. This, together with the cost of a civic dinner in honour of the recipients of the Freedom of the Borough (£2,500), would cost in the region of £3,000. The cost can be met from the Borough Promotional budget.

- 4.2 The incidental costs of staging a special meeting of the Council at the Guildhall can be met from within existing budgets.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 As stated above, in order to admit a person to the Freedom of the Borough, the Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to pass a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the councillors voting thereon at a meeting specially convened for the purpose.

#### **6. Human Resource Implications**

- 6.1 There are no human resource implications associated with the proposal in this report.

#### **7. Background papers**

Protocol on the appointment, role, status, rights and obligations of Honorary Freemen and Honorary Aldermen (approved by Council on 10 April 2014)

#### **8. Appendices**

None