



Northumberland

County Council

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: 22 MARCH 2023

HONORARY ALDERMEN AND ALDERWOMEN

Report of Councillor Glen Sanderson, Leader of the Council

Lead Officer: Head of Democratic and Electoral Services

(1) Purpose of Report

To consider admission of Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen of the County of Northumberland.

(2) Recommendations:

Council is requested to approve the following:

(i) To confer the title of Honorary Alderman /Honorary Alderwoman on the following former Members:

- 1) Thomas Sinclair Wilson**
- 2) David Ledger**
- 3) Ian Carr Fry Swithenbank**
- 4) Gordon Webb**
- 5) Margaret Evelyn Richards**
- 6) Lesley Jennifer Rickerby**
- 7) Deirdre Campbell**
- 8) Susan Elizabeth Dungworth**
- 9) James Grant Davey**

(ii) To acknowledge that the provisions of section (32) of the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (No.2) Regulations 2008: Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen, whereby virtue of a section 7 order, a local authority area is abolished on the reorganisation date, any person who, immediately before that date is an Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman of the predecessor Council for that area shall become an Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman of the related single tier Council.

(ii) as described in (ii) above, to confirm that the title of Honorary Alderman bestowed on Anthony Harkness Murray by Berwick Borough Council in 2009 be recognised as Honorary Alderman of the County of Northumberland under the provisions of sub section 32 of section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

(3) Key Issues

3.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, gives principal councils the power to confer the title of 'Honorary Alderman, or Honorary Alderwoman, on persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council but are no longer members of that authority.

3.2 Under this legislation, a formal vote is required to proceed. No fewer than two-thirds of those present at the Council meeting must agree the nomination. The decisions of the Council on all nominations are final.

3.4 In addition to the above, subsection (32) of The Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (No.2) Regulations 2008.states:

(1) Subsection (1) of section 249 of the Local 1972 Act (honorary aldermen and freemen) shall have effect in relation to a principal council which is a predecessor council as if, for the words from "as past members" to the end, there were substituted "as past or serving members of the council".

(2) Where, by virtue of a section 7 order, a local government area is abolished on the reorganisation date, any person who, immediately before that date, is an honorary alderman of the predecessor council for that area shall, on that date:

(a) where there is more than one related single tier council for that area, become an honorary alderman of the council (whether a related single tier council or another local authority) whose area includes the whole or the greater part of the electoral area for which the person was last returned as a councillor of the predecessor council;

(b) in any other case, become an honorary alderman of the related single tier council.

(3) In relation to a person to whom paragraph (2) applies, references in subsections (2) and (4) of section 249 of the 1972 Act which, immediately before the reorganisation date, fall to be construed as references to the predecessor council shall, on and after that date, be construed as references to the council of which that person becomes an honorary alderman on that date.

3.5 Should the vote be positive, a further Extraordinary Meeting of the Council will be arranged for a date in May 2023, inviting those conferred with the title (or their representative) to attend and be presented with a pin brooch and gift to mark the occasion and to be given an opportunity to address the Council.

(4) Background

4.1 In September 2021, Council **RESOLVED** that:-

(a) the Council agree to the reinstatement of the practice of appointing Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen from the 2021 election onwards.

(b) a special Council (an extraordinary meeting of the Council), be convened to confer the title of Honorary Aldermen/ Alderwomen on those past Councillors meeting the criteria.

- (d) the Protocol attached to that report be approved. This protocol is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. [Here is a link to the report](#)

4.2 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives principal councils the power to confer the title of 'Honorary Alderman, or Honorary Alderwoman, on persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council but are no longer members of that authority'.

4.3 Appointments of Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen must take place at an Extraordinary County Council meeting specially convened for the purpose. It is for this purpose that this Extraordinary Meeting has been convened. The nominations form the list of names in the recommendation and will be proposed and seconded at the meeting.

4.4 Two thirds of the members present must vote in favour of a resolution for the nominees to be appointed as an Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman.

4.5 The length of service as a Councillor whether continuous or broken and including former District Council service should be a minimum of 20 years unless there are deemed to be exceptional circumstances where a shorter term may be considered.

4.6 The agreed protocol (as attached as Appendix 1) and states that the Leader, in consultation with the Group Leaders, consider nominations and assess them against the criteria on behalf of their Groups via the Chief Executive.

4.7 The Leader of the Council and other political Group Leaders (on behalf of their Groups) have met to discuss the nominations and they propose that the title of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman be conferred on the following persons who they agreed meet the criteria as set out in the Protocol attached:

Name	District Council Service	County Council Service
Dierdre Campbell	20 years: 1987-2007	20 years: 2001-2021
James Grant Davey	5 years 2004-2009	13 years 2008-2021
Susan Elizabeth Dungworth	14 years: 1995-2009	8 years: 2013-2021
David Ledger	18 years: 1991-2009	20 years: 2001-2021
Margaret Evelyn Richards	10 years: 1999-2009	13 years: 2008-2021

Lesley Jennifer Rickerby	18 years: 1991-2009	28 years: 1993-2021
Ian Carr Fry Swithenbank	10 years: 1995-1999 and 2001-2007	44 years: 1977-2021
Gordon Webb	19 years: 1990-2009	13 years: 2008-2021
Thomas Sinclair Wilson	18 years: 1995-1999, 2003-2009 and	20 years: 2001-2021
Anthony Harkness Murray	5 years: 2004-2009	13 years: 2008-2021 Less than 20 years but legacy Honour already bestowed by former Berwick Borough Council

(5) Implications

Policy	Protocol agreed by Council 1 September 2021
Finance and value for money	Small cost for gifts.
Legal	<p>Part 2 para. 3(9) of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are functions reserved to Full Council.</p> <p>These functions are set out within the terms of reference for Full Council in the Constitution.</p> <p>Section 32 of the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (No.2) (Regulations) 2008 allows for the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman granted by a predecessor Council to become an Alderman of the single tier authority.</p> <p>All other legal implications have been incorporated within the body of the report.</p>
Procurement	None

Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	None
Carbon reduction	None
Health and Wellbeing	None
Wards	All

(6) Linked papers:

Report to Council 1 September 2021
 Local Government Act 1972 as amended
 Part 2 para. 3(9) of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000
 Section 32 of the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (No.2) (Regulations) 2008

(7) Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Interim Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer	Suki Binjal

Executive Director of Transformation & Resources and S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Dr. Helen Paterson

Appendix 1 – Protocol for the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen (attached)

Author and Contact Details

Jackie Roll, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services

Jackie.Roll@northumberland.gov.uk

01670 622603

APPENDIX 1

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

PROTOCOL FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN/ ALDERWOMEN as agreed by Council on 1 September 2021.

Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that a Council “*may by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, confer the title of Honorary Aldermen (or Honorary Alderwomen), on persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council but are not then members of that Council*”.

1. Appointment

- 1.1 Appointments of Honorary Aldermen must take place at a County Council meeting specially convened for the purpose. The meeting can occur on the same date as another full council meeting. The nomination will be proposed and seconded. Two thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in favour of a resolution for the nominee (s) to be appointed as an Honorary Alderman/ Alderwoman.
- 1.2 They will be presented with a certificate confirming the title by the Business Chair or Leader at a Extraordinary Council meeting and will be given an opportunity to speak. The name of the Honorary Alderman will be placed on an Honours board in County Hall.

2. Role

- 2.1 Those appointed to the role of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman are entitled to use the title: ‘Honorary Alderman the County of Northumberland’ or ‘Honorary Alderwoman of the County of Northumberland’.
- 2.2 Honorary Aldermen or Alderwomen have the right to attend meetings of the County Council as members of the public. The title does not confer any special privileges or rights upon the appointee to speak or vote at Council meetings, beyond the rights and privileges already afforded to the public. The only rights that are conferred to an Honorary Alderman by virtue of their appointment is to be invited to Civic functions and events by invitation of the Council such as the annual Civic Dinner. They have no formal role on the Council.
- 2.3 The role of Honorary Aldermen or Alderwomen does not carry any right to claim any allowances payable under the Members Allowances Scheme.
- 2.4 Honorary Aldermen or Alderwomen cannot be appointed posthumously.
- 2.5 The role of Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman is an honorary one, but to the public they are perceived to be representatives of the Council. In taking up this role all Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen must be aware of this, and:

(a) that the person becoming Alderman or Alderwoman does so in the full knowledge that they are perceived to be representative of the civic element of the Council and must act to the highest standards.

(b) In taking this role, the Alderman or Alderwoman becomes apolitical in public; knowing that any views expressed may be interpreted as the views of the Council. Aldermen or Alderwomen are not to speak on behalf of the Council in any way whatever.

3. Criteria for the appointment of an Honorary Aldermen or Alderwomen

3.1 The statutory requirement is that the Council must be satisfied, in conferring the title that the person nominated has 'in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past members of the Council but who are no longer members of the Council'.

3.2 There is no statutory definition of 'eminent service' but the Council will take account of the following matters in determining whether a person has provided eminent service to the Council in the past:

- (a) Each nomination will be assessed on its merit.
- (b) The length of service as a councillor whether continuous or broken and including former District Council service should be a minimum of 20 years.
- (c) Whether the person has held a position such as Leader, Deputy Leader, Chair or Vice-Chair of the Council or Committee or another senior position of the Council.
- (d) The extent that a person has contributed to Outside Bodies on behalf of the Council and the commitment given to that role.
- (e) The extent to which a person has actively participated in Ward issues on behalf of the Council beyond that normally expected of a councillor. This could include delivering projects with officers or simply acting as an effective liaison between residents and the Council on a number of issues.
- (f) Anything else that the former member has done that can be considered as 'eminent service'.
- (g) Nominations shall be made in writing setting out the reasons why the person should be nominated and addressed to the Chief Executive who will consult with the Leader of the Council and other political Group Leaders and if there is a sufficient degree of support for conferment of the title, then the Chief Executive will call a special Council meeting for that purpose.
- (h) Nominations may be made by serving Councillors

4. Removal of Title of Honorary Alderman

There may be occasions where, due to the past or future behaviour of individuals who have been appointed as Honorary Aldermen or Alderwoman, the Council may wish to remove the title of Honorary Alderman from an individual in order to protect the reputation of the Council. Removal of the title of Honorary Alderman will follow the same process as appointment (proposed and seconded, and then a resolution of two thirds of those present must be passed). However, it may take place at any meeting of Council rather than a specially convened meeting.

Version dated 01 September 2021