

By: Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership

To: County Council – 16 December 2010

Subject: Honorary Aldermen

(1) At its meeting on 30 April 2009, the County Council resolved to utilise the power contained in Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, to confer the award of Honorary Alderman to recognise the eminent services of some of its distinguished former Members (see previous report at **Appendix 1**). There is no statutory definition of “eminent services” but the County Council agreed that the award should only be made to former Members who had served at least 12 years and had rendered eminent services in terms of the individual’s contribution to the activities of the County Council and the well-being of the County of Kent.

(2) It is proposed that Honorary Aldermen should be invited to attend relevant civic and ceremonial events, including the Annual Meeting of the Council and the Chairman’s Civic Reception. The names of those individuals awarded the status of Honorary Alderman will also be included on the wooden honours board in the Council Chamber.

(3) The following nominations are made for this Honorary Award in 2010:

- (i) Dr S J Cox, JP: who was elected to Kent County Council as the Conservative Member for Gillingham South Central in 1967 and left in 1998. He was Deputy Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Police Authority from 1973 until 1977. He was the Vice Chairman of the Council from 1977 until 1979 and Chairman from 1979 until 1981.
- (ii) Mr John Frisby: who was elected to the County Council in 1989 and served the residents of Maidstone Central and the people of Kent for sixteen years until he retired in 2005. He served on a number of regulatory committees including Audit, Superannuation and Standards Board.
- (iii) Mr R H B Neame, CBE, DL: who was elected to the County Council in 1965 as the Conservative Member for Faversham leaving in 1989. He served as the Leader from 1983 to 1984. A former High Sheriff in 2001/02 he is currently Chairman of Kent Ambassadors.
- (iv) Mr William Newman, DL: a retired teacher, who was elected to serve as the Labour Member for Dover Central Electoral Division at a By-election in 1995 and served until 2009. He served on a number of committees, including Governance and Audit, Education, Appeals Group and was Chairman of the Labour Group.
- (v) Mr J A Spence, OBE, DL: who was elected to serve as the Conservative Member for Gillingham No 3 Electoral Division in 1973 and left in 1993. During his time with Kent County Council he held a number of Chairmanships including Police, Finance and Superannuation.

(4) Members are reminded that, in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the nominees for Honorary Aldermen have to receive the support of not less than two thirds of the Members voting thereon at a special meeting of the County Council convened for the purpose.

Recommendation:

(5) The County Council is invited to consider the five nominations for the award of Honorary Alderman of Kent County Council, as described above.

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By: Alex King, Deputy Leader
Geoff Wild - Director of Law and Governance

To: County Council – 30 April 2009

Subject: Appointment of Honorary Aldermen

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report invites the County Council to approve the procedure and criteria to appoint Honorary Aldermen.

FOR DECISION

Background

1) At a meeting of the Selection and Member Services Committee on 8 October 2008, consideration was given to a proposal to allow the County Council to bestow an Office of Dignity upon individuals. The Committee was advised that the only statutory Office of Dignity that can be awarded by an English County Council is that of Honorary Alderman. The Committee was advised that, under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 “a principal Council may, by a 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 Alderman on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past Members of that Council, but who are not then Members of the Council.”

Criteria for the Award

2) At its meeting on 23 January 2009, the Committee was advised that there is no statutory guidance on the definition of “eminent services”, although it is recommended that each Council should develop its own criteria. Accordingly, the following criteria are recommended to the County Council for approval:

- The title may be conferred on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past Members, but who are no longer serving Members;
- There shall be no specific definition of “eminent services”, it being left to the discretion of the Council at the time to assess and recognise any individual’s contribution to the activities of the Council and the wellbeing of the county of Kent;
- Nominees would normally require a minimum period of 12 years past service as a Member of the Council;

- In accordance with Section 249 of the 1972 Act, nominees would have to receive the support of not less than two-thirds of the Members voting thereon at a special Council meeting convened for the purpose;
 - Nominations can be made by any Group Leader. However, before proceeding, officers and Members should, via the party groups, establish whether or not the nomination would be likely to receive sufficient support to proceed;
 - Honorary Aldermen should be invited to attend relevant civic and ceremonial events, including the Annual Council meeting, the Chairman's Civic Reception, and any future appointment of Honorary Aldermen;
 - The status of Honorary Alderman carries no special right to attend or address meetings of the Council or its Committees or to receive any allowances or payments to which serving Members are entitled. However, at the discretion of the Chairman, a nominee for Honorary Alderman may (if present) be invited to respond to the vote conferring that status;
- 3) Should the County Council agree both the principle of awarding the status of Honorary Alderman and the criteria suggested by the Selection and Member Services Committee listed above, it is suggested that a meeting of the County Council be arranged after the County Council elections in June, in consultation with the Chairman of the County Council, to determine the nominations made by any Group Leader as to the award of the status of Honorary Alderman. It is also proposed that the names of Honorary Alderman would appear on a suitable wooden board in the Council Chamber, as already exists for Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the County Council.

Recommendation

- 4) Members are invited to approve the criteria for appointing Honorary Aldermen of the Council, as set out in paragraph 2) above.

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