

Minutes of the General Purposes and Arbitration Committee

**20th August, 2018 at 6.00 pm
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

- Present:** Councillor Dhallu (Chair);
Councillor P Davies (Vice Chair);
Councillors S Crumpton and Melia.
- Apologies:** Councillors Y Davies, S Hosell and Tagger.
- Observer:** Councillor Gavan.

6/18 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th March, 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters not delegated to the Committee

7/18 **Honorary Freeman of the Borough**

In accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council had the authority to admit suitably qualified persons to be Honorary Freemen/Freewomen of the Borough.

The Council had, from time to time, conferred the title of Honorary Freeman/Freewoman on suitably qualified persons in recognition of the service they had given to the Borough.

The Committee considered a proposal to admit Mr David Manners as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough. Councillor Gavan, who had made the nomination, informed the Committee that Mr Manners was born, raised and educated in Smethwick and had been an exemplary employer in the Borough for over 40 years. He had recently won an award for Apprenticeship Company of the Year,

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due to the commitment he had shown to young apprentices and had donated significant amounts of money to local charities.

The Council had previously granted Honorary Freeman of the Borough to:-

- Baroness Boothroyd of Sandwell;
- Lord Archer of Sandwell;
- Joseph Adams OBE;
- Christopher Graham Collins (Frank Skinner);
- Cyrille Regis MBE;
- Julie Mary Walters CBE;
- Wilfred Lunn MBE;
- Patrick John Sullivan;
- Dr Hiren Roy;
- Francis Arthur Betteridge MBE;
- Lord King of West Bromwich;
- Lord Snape of Wednesbury;
- Anthony “Bomber” Brown;
- Wendy Mary Lawrence (Josie);
- David Heeley (blind Dave);
- Dr Roy Richardson.

The Committee felt that Mr Manners had demonstrated exceptional innovation and entrepreneurship, which was delivering significant economic growth and prosperity in the borough of Sandwell and should be conferred to the office of Honorary Freeman of the Borough.

Resolved to recommend to the Council:-

- (1) that the office of Honorary Freeman of the Borough be conferred upon Mr David Manners;
- (2) that the Director – Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Mayor and Leader of the Council, make the appropriate arrangements to implement the decision referred to in Resolution (1) above.

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8/18 Honorary Alderman of the Borough

In order to recognise eminent or notable service rendered to the Borough by former councillors, in 1997, the Council introduced a scheme for the enrolment of Honorary Alderman of the Borough. This scheme was amended in 2008 to reduce the required number of years' service to twelve, and in 2013, to reflect Section 29 of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 to the effect that any reference to Honorary Alderman should be followed by the insertion of Honorary Alderman.

The Local Government Act 1972 gave authority to the Council to confer the honour to elected members who had given eminent service to the Borough. Local authorities had defined the operation of the scheme within their council areas.

The Committee was advised that Councillor John Edwards had nominated Mr Gurcharan Sidhu to the office of Honorary Alderman.

Mr Sidhu had been in public office for 32 years representing the Greets Green and Lyng ward, until his retirement from office, due to ill health, in 2018. He was formerly Chairperson of the Council's Education Committee and Audit Committee and was Mayor of Sandwell for the Municipal Year 2007/2008. The Committee felt that Mr Sidhu had given many years of service to the residents of Greets Green and Lyng ward, which was a testament to his commitment and dedication to the borough of Sandwell as a whole and should be conferred to the office of Honorary Alderman of the Borough.

Resolved to recommend to the Council:-

- (1) that the office of Honorary Alderman of the Borough be conferred upon Mr Gurcharan Sidhu;
- (2) that the Director – Monitory Officer, in consultation with the Mayor and Leader of the Council, make the appropriate arrangements to implement the decision referred in Resolution (1) above.

(Meeting ended at 6:17pm)

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