

## **Minutes of the General Purposes and Arbitration Committee**

**19<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at 6.00 pm  
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** Councillor Dhallu (Chair);  
Councillors E A Giles, Z Hussain, Melia and  
Millar.

**Apologies:** Councillors Crumpton and P M Hughes.

7/19 **Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

### **Matter not delegated to the Committee**

8/19 **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 Roger Horton as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Yvonne Davies, had made the nomination and informed the Committee that Roger Horton was first elected in May 1975 in the Soho and Victoria ward and served as a councillor for 44 years before retiring in May 2019.

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During his 44 years, Roger Horton served on many Council Committees, including Planning Committee, Smethwick Town Committee, Audit Committee, etc.

As Chair of the Environment and Highways Committee, Roger Horton had played an important role in turning the department around to be a very successful one.

Nominated as the Council's Lead Member for Transport, Roger Horton was very outspoken about bus and tram services in and around Sandwell. He was elected to the position of Vice Chairman of the West Coast 250 Board, a national group to oversee transport issues.

He had served as a governor in most of the schools in the ward of Soho and Victoria and until recently, was the Chair at Crockett's Community School.

He had also supported many voluntary and charitable organisations over the years as follows:-

- Mencap, who later changed their name to MIND, supporting people with mental health issues;
- volunteering to serve on the Management Committee of Sandwell Adventure Play Association, providing after school activities for children across Sandwell;
- member and then Chairman for many years of Windmill Centre Management Committee;
- Harborne Parish Lands Charity;
- Ring & Ride Transport;
- 29 years as a volunteer on the West Midlands Valuation Tribunal and Valuation Tribunal for England.

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;

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- 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;
- Mr David Manners.

The Committee felt that Roger Horton had given many years of service to the residents of Soho and Victoria 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 Freeman of the Borough.

### **Resolved to recommend to the Council:-**

- (1) that the office of Honorary Freeman of the Borough be conferred upon Mr Roger Horton;
- (2) that the Director – Law and Governance and 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.

(Meeting ended at 6.05 pm)

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