
Subject:	NOMINATIONS FOR HONORARY ALDERMAN AWARD
Meeting and Date:	GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 9 OCTOBER 2017
Report of:	DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE
Classification:	UNRESTRICTED

Purpose of the report: To consider nominations received for the award of the courtesy title of Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman in accordance with the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Recommendation: That the General Purposes Committee determine whether to recommend to Council that one or more of the nominee(s) be conferred the title of Honorary Alderman in recognition of their 'eminent service' to Dover District Council.

1. Summary

The Council approved a Scheme of Enrolment for Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen at its meeting held on 25 January 2017, which incorporated the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972. This report sets out the first set of nominations for Honorary Aldermen.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits a local authority to confer the title of Honorary Alderman (or Alderwoman) upon 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".

2.2 The Scheme of Enrolment set out in Appendix 1 of this report sets out the process for awarding the courtesy title of Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman and the rights and privileges it confers.

Nomination Criteria

2.3 To be considered for conferment of the title of Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman, the nominee must have rendered:

(a) A total of 20 years' service as a Member of Dover District Council which is calculated on a cumulative basis. In exceptional circumstances less than 20 years' service may be considered; and

(b) 'Eminent services' to the council as past members of that council.

2.4 It is for the Council to determine who in its judgement has rendered 'eminent services'. The legislation does not define the term in any further detail and it is for members to determine what may qualify as 'eminent service'.

Nominations

2.5 Councillor P Walker, seconded by Councillor K E Morris, has proposed that the following former district councillors be considered for the award of the title of Honorary Alderman:

Nominated Honorary Alderman: **Paul Watkins**

Mr Watkins served as a member of Dover District Council for Lower Walmer Ward (1983 – 1995) and St Margaret’s-at-Cliffe Ward (1999 – 2017). In total he was a district councillor for 30 years of non-continuous service. He was Chairman of the Council three times (1989 – 1992) and Leader of the Council under the Executive Model (2003 – 2017).

Nominated Honorary Alderman: **George (‘Jim’) Hood**

Mr Hood served as a member of Dover District Council for Town and Pier Ward from 1976 – 2015. In total he was a district councillor for 39 years of continuous service and still remains the Council’s longest serving member. He was the Cabinet Member for Transport, Opportunity and Access from 2000-02, Cabinet Member for Opportunity from 2002-03 and a member of the Shadow Cabinet from 2003-4 and 2007 – 2011.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 The two nominations that have been received meet the criteria as set out in the Scheme of Enrolment (a copy of this is attached in Appendix 1). A copy of the nomination papers can be found in Appendix 2 (Paul Watkins) and Appendix 3 (Jim Hood).
- 3.2 It is for the General Purposes Committee to consider the nominations and determine whether they should be recommended to the full Council where the title of Honorary Alderman (or Alderwoman) can only be conferred by a “resolution of not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the [full] council specifically convened for the purpose”.
- 3.3 If the General Purposes Committee decides to recommend one or more of the nominees for Honorary Alderman, the nomination(s) will be considered at the meeting of the Council to be held on 18 October 2017. The award of Honorary Alderman itself will be made at a Council meeting to be held at a future date and not at the meeting at which the decision is taken to confer the award.

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 Option 1: To recommend to Council that one or more of the nominees are considered for the award of the title of Honorary Alderman.
- 4.2 Option 2: To not recommend any of the nominees for the award of the title of Honorary Alderman.
- 4.3 It is worth noting that the legislation makes provision that any former Member who is conferred the status of Honorary Alderman (or Alderwoman) and who is subsequently re-elected to the Council shall have their status as Alderman (or Alderwoman) placed in abeyance for the time that they hold office and may not be referred to as Alderman (or Alderwoman) or exercise any of the associated privileges.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 Section 249(4A) of the Local Government Act 1972 permits a principal council, in this case Dover District Council, to ‘spend such reasonable sum as they think fit for the purpose of presenting an address, or a casket containing an address, to a person on whom they have conferred the title of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman’.
- 5.2 As it is for Members to determine who in their opinion is suitable to be have the title of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman it is difficult to quantify the number of awards to be given in any given year. However, it is not expected that the cost will be significant.

6. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Scheme of Enrolment

Appendix 2 – Nomination for Paul Watkins

Appendix 3 – Nomination for Jim Hood

7. **Background Papers**

None

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