

Appointment of Honorary Alderman

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1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks approval to appoint the title of Honorary Alderman on a previous long-serving District Councillor.

2. Public Interest

The title of Honorary Alderman can be conferred 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 Councillors of the Council. The position of Honorary Alderman is non-political and the title is nominated and agreed by a majority of their fellow Councillors.

3. Recommendation

The Council is asked to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on former District Councillor, Patrick Palmer.

4. Background

Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states "that 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."

There is no statutory guidance or definition of "eminent services" although it is recommended that each Council should have its own criteria for the appointment. Bearing in mind the current local government review, arrangements would be looked at in respect of the position and status of such a designation should there be a change to the existing council structures in South Somerset. In deciding whether "eminent services" have been provided by a councillor, services by a councillor to a predecessor Authority can be taken into account.

The current criteria for appointment was agreed in July 2007 and it was reviewed in July 2015.

5. Criteria for Aldermen

The criteria for conferring the title honorary alderman is as follows:

- (a) the title would be conferred on persons who have, in the opinion of the District Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past members, but who are no longer serving councillors.
- (b) Nominees would have a minimum period of 12 years past service as a Councillor of the District Council.

- (c) Nominations would have to receive the support of not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a Special meeting of the Council convened for the purpose.
- (d) Nominations can be made by any Party Group Leader. However, before proceeding, officers and members would, via the party groups, establish whether or not the nomination would be likely to receive sufficient support to proceed, as per criteria (c) above.

(In exceptional cases the Council may agree to waive paragraph (b) above)

6. Privileges of Honorary Aldermen

Honorary Aldermen have no 'legal or social precedence' but it is custom and practice that they are invited to all Civic ceremonial events. Historically, this has meant an invitation to the annual Chairman's Civic Reception, however, this is extended to:-

- invitation to the Chairman's Civic Reception
- invitation to any future appointment of Honorary Aldermen.
- a commemorative badge to be worn at Civic Events
- a framed commemorative certificate
- invitation to SSDC events such as opening ceremonies or presentation evenings (i.e. All Star Awards and opening of new facilities)

The Aldermen have no right to attend meetings of the Council or its committees or to receive any allowances or payments to which serving councillors are entitled.

7. Financial Implications

The costs involved in this proposal will be the cost of any invitation taken up by appointed Alderman to attend civic events. Their name would also be displayed on the Board of Honour in the Council Chamber. These costs can be met from within existing Legal and Democratic Services budgets.

8. Implications for Corporate Priorities

None.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

All councillors are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and we are determined to ensure that councillors receive fair and equitable treatment.

10. Privacy Impact Assessment

No implications.

11. Background Papers

Appointment of Honorary Aldermen report to Council – July 2007
Appointment of Honorary Aldermen report to Council – September 2011
Report and Minutes of District Executive – July 2015
Report and Minutes of Council – July 2015
