



COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	ANNUAL COUNCIL - 3 JUNE 2020
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM (11)
Subject	HONORARY ALDERMEN
Wards affected	None specifically
Accountable members	Council
Accountable officer	Nigel Adams, Head of Paid Service Tel: 01285 623202 Email: nigel.adams@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the existing scheme for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen; and determine whether any new appointments should be made.
Annexes	Annex A - Honorary Aldermen Appointments by Cotswold District Council
Recommendation/s	<i>(a) That the existing scheme for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen be reviewed and, in so doing, the Motion to continue the current scheme and make appointments in respect of former Councillors Sue Coakley; David Fowles; Chris Hancock; Nick Parsons; Lynden Stowe; and Len Wilkins be considered;</i> <i>(b) that, if appointments are continued, a Special Meeting of the Council be held to bestow the title on the former Councillors identified, on a date to be determined in consultation with the Chair of the Council.</i>
Corporate priorities	None specific
Key Decision	Not applicable - the matter is reserved to the Council
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.** The Council may, under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, confer the title of Honorary Alderman on Councillors who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to it as former Members. The resolution to confer the title of Honorary Alderman has to be passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting at a specially-convened Council Meeting.
- 1.2.** The Council has, to date, bestowed the honour on 55 former Councillors (see Annex A); and there are currently 29 Honorary Aldermen.
- 1.3.** The Council has always applied a points system to determine eligibility (and changes have been made to the points system from time to time, especially as member structures have been revised). The current scheme is as follows:-
 - each year as an Elected Member of the Cotswold District Council or its predecessors - 1 point;
 - each year as Chair of the Council (pre September 2001) - 3 points;
 - each year as Chair of the Council (post September 2001) - 2 points;
 - each year as Vice-Chair of the Council (post June 2003) - 2 points;
 - each year as Leader of the Council - 3 points;
 - each year as Deputy Leader of the Council - 2 points;
 - each year as a Portfolio Holder - 2 points;
 - each year as Chair of a main Committee - 2 points.
- 1.4.** The Council has previously accepted that a former Councillor accruing 15 points or more would be automatically considered for the title.
- 1.5.** Conversely, the Council has not ruled out, in exceptional circumstances, conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on former Members who may not have accrued the necessary points but have otherwise rendered eminent service to the Council.
- 1.6.** Using the current points system, the following former Members, who retired or were not re-elected in May 2019 would be eligible for appointment as Honorary Aldermen:-
 - Sue Coakley
 - David Fowles
 - Chris Hancock
 - Nick Parsons
 - Lynden Stowe
 - Len Wilkins.
- 1.7.** The next highest number of points accrued by a non-returning Member was 10 - being former Councillor Mark MacKenzie-Charrington who served the Council for four years, three of which were as a Cabinet Member.

- 1.8.** At the Council Meeting on 22nd January 2020, Councillor Sue Jepson submitted the following formal question to the Leader of the Council:

‘Could the Leader of the Council please explain the delay in bestowing Honorary Alderman status on those former members of this Council who either stood-down or were not re-elected at the May 2019 District elections, and who had amassed the necessary length of service and points under the rules of our extant Constitution.

It is now more than eight months since those elections. Today’s meeting is the sixth meeting of full council (including Special Meetings) to have taken place since those elections and the matter is once again not on the agenda.

In the continued absence of the necessary Officer Report, please could the Leader publish as part of his answer to my question both the extant “point-scoring” rules under which those members would have served this council, together with the “points” amassed by each councillor who either stood down or were not re-elected in May 2019?’

- 1.9.** As well as providing the factual information requested, the Leader explained that the Liberal Democrat group did not believe that the Honorary Alderman scheme was compatible with the modernisation agenda they were implementing or with the motion about democratic renewal unanimously agreed by Council in July. The Leader also pointed out that the Council is one of a declining number of local authorities retaining the intention to appoint Honorary Aldermen. It was for these reasons that the Administration did not wish to bring forward any new nominations (although it was acknowledged that any future council would have the opportunity to do so if it so wished).

- 1.10.** Subsequent to the Council Meeting, a requisition was received from Councillors Sue Jepson and Tony Berry and signed by the requisite number of additional Members (in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.1) for a Special Council Meeting to be convened to consider the following Motion:-

(a) that the existing scheme relating to the appointment of Honorary Aldermen by the Council be retained;

(b) that, in accordance with (a) above, the title of Honorary Alderman be bestowed on former councillors Sue Coakley, David Fowles, Chris Hancock, Nick Parsons, Lynden Stowe and Len Wilkins, given the eminent service that each has rendered to the Council.

- 1.11.** However, in the period between the Council Meeting and the receipt of the requisition, the Head of Paid Service had agreed with the Leader the need to formally consider and decide upon the Administration’s wishes in this matter; and that a report would be presented for debate at the then ensuing Council Meeting (scheduled for 25th March). Following discussions with the lead Members who had initiated the meeting requisition, they agreed not to seek a special meeting on the basis that the matter would be subject of Council debate and decision. In the event, the March Council Meeting was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic; so the issue is presented for consideration at this Meeting.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1. There are no significant financial implications arising from this report.
- 2.2. A Special Meeting of the Council has to be convened to bestow the title of Honorary Alderman. Each Honorary Alderman is presented with a certificate and medallion. The associated costs can be met from within existing budgets.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Council to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on Councillors who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to it as former Members. The resolution to confer the title of Honorary Alderman has to be passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting at a specially-convened Council Meeting.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1. Not applicable.

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 5.1. Not required.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS (IF REQUIRED)

- 6.1. Not applicable.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1. No direct recommendation is made on the way forward - this is a matter for Member debate and decision.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1. None.

(END)