

Honorary Freedom of the City

Purpose

- 1.1 The Honorary Freedom of the City of Derby is the most prestigious honour that can be bestowed upon an unelected person by the Council. Local authorities across the United Kingdom can grant this honour to persons or organisations of distinction who have rendered eminent services to their local areas.
- 1.2 Council has previously resolved to summon a Special Meeting so that Honorary Freedom of the City may be granted to Mr Steve Kirk.
- 1.3 This report sets out the legislative basis upon which awards for Honorary Freedom must be made. It is for the Full Council to determine whether they wish to proceed with conferring Honorary Freedom to Mr Kirk.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To determine whether Council wishes to pass the following resolution, under powers vested upon the authority under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972:

Council resolves to confer on Mr Steve Kirk the Honorary Freedom of the City of Derby
- 2.2 To note that contact will be made with Mr Kirk for a civic reception to be arranged, when they will receive the honour from the Mayor of Derby.

Reasons

- 3.1 Under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, Honorary Freedom of the City must be granted at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose.

Supporting information

- 4.1 To bestow the status of Honorary Freeman of the City on any person, Council has to be satisfied that they are a person of distinction or a person who has, in the Council's opinion, given eminent services to the city.
- 4.2 The Council has previously used its powers under the 1972 Act to grant Honorary Freedom of the City to four other individuals:

- Football manager Brian Clough, to mark his success in transforming Derby County from a Second Division team into English League Champions in 1972 and European contenders thereafter;
- Swimmer Adam Peaty, following his multiple successes at the Commonwealth Games, European and World Championships, culminating in his Gold Medal-winning performance at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.
- Footballer Reg Harrison, who was the last surviving member of Derby County's FA Cup winning team of 1946 and who subsequently worked as part of the Council's Youth Service, establishing several youth centres and junior football clubs across Derby.
- Boxer Sandy Ryan, who is the current WBO Women's World Welterweight Champion and former Commonwealth Games gold medallist.

In addition, Honorary Freedom of the City of Derby has been granted to the Royal Lancers, Mercian Regiment and Royal Navy Submarine Service.

- 4.3 At its meeting of 28 February 2024, Council resolved to award Honorary Freedom of the City of Derby to publican and fundraiser, Mr Steve Kirk. Minute extract 90/23 is attached at Appendix 1 for reference.
- 4.4 Mr Kirk was recognised for his exceptional charitable fundraising during his career as the landlord of The Neptune public house. The resolution of Council cited fundraising on behalf of the Royal British Legion – Mr Kirk has raised more than £120,000 for the RBL and is reputed to have collected more donations for the annual poppy appeal than any other pub in the United Kingdom. Mr Kirk's charitable endeavours extend to co-ordinating hundreds of volunteers in support of community events as well as individual feats of endurance, which have raised thousands of pounds in sponsorship.
- 4.5 The citation also includes reference to Mr Kirk's 27-year tenure as landlord of The Neptune on Osmaston Road, during which time it has established itself at the centre of community life. The pub is particularly associated with Derby County Football Club and is locally renowned for its friendly atmosphere. On Christmas Day, the pub remains open to provide hot meals to those in need and is often the centre of Mr Kirk's wider fundraising and community initiatives.
- 4.6 Council commended Mr Kirk for his dedication and commitment to his chosen charities, as well as the role he has played as a community leader over many years.

Debate and Determination

- 4.7 The normal rules of debate will apply when considering the draft motion detailed at recommendation 2.1, together with any amendments that may be proposed.
- 4.8 A two-thirds majority of voting councillors is required to pass a resolution to award Honorary Freedom of the City. The table below details the number of votes required for the motion to be carried:

Number of voting councillors	Votes required for resolution to be carried.
51, 50	34
49	33
47, 48	32

46	31
45, 44	30
43	29
42, 41	28
40	27
38, 39	26
37	25
35, 36	24
34	23
32, 33	22
31	21
29, 30	20
28	19
26, 27	18
25	17
23, 24	16

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 Not applicable – the recommendation arises directly from a prior resolution of Council.

Other options

- 6.1 To not proceed with the award of Honorary Freedom for the individual previously nominated.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 None directly arising. The cost of a Civic Reception will be delivered from within the Council's existing budget for civic events.

Legal implications

- 8.1 The main requirements of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 are set out in the report. The resolution must be passed by not less than two-thirds of members who vote on it. The council has power to spend a reasonable sum on a formal presentation.

Climate implications

- 9.1 None directly arising.

Socio-Economic implications

- 10.1 None directly arising.

Other significant implications

11.1 None.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal		
Finance		
Service Director(s)	Emily Feenan, Director of Corporate Governance, Property and Procurement	5 April 2024
Report sponsor	Andy Smith, Deputy Chief Executive	4 April 2024
Other(s)		

Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Full Council minute extract 90/23

ITEM 3 - Appendix 1

Minute extract

COUNCIL

28 February 2024

90/23 Motion: Honorary Freedom of the City of Derby

The following motion was moved by Councillor P Ingall, and seconded by Councillor Shanker:

Council proposes that Steve Kirk be awarded Honorary Freedom of the City of Derby under powers reserved to it by Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Council notes the exceptional charitable fundraising undertaken by Mr Kirk, who has raised over £120,000 for the Royal British Legion. As landlord of The Neptune, he has raised more money for the annual poppy appeal than any other public house in the UK. In 2023 alone, he collected £17.6k.

Over the course of 15 years, Mr Kirk has coordinated charitable events and initiatives involving hundreds of volunteers and including several impressive feats of endurance. Notable achievements include rowing 15 miles between Shardlow and Willington, as well as walking a distance equivalent of Derby to Glasgow in just one month.

During his 27 years behind the bar at the Neptune the pub has become closely associated with Derby County and renowned for its friendly atmosphere, particularly on Christmas Day when it stays open to serve hot meals. Moreover, Steve has dedicated his time to many other causes and initiatives, including volunteering for the NHS at the Derby Arena, when it was used a vaccination centre during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Council commends Steve Kirk for his dedication and commitment to his chosen charities, as well as for the role he has played at the heart of Derby's community over many years.

Council resolves to request that the Mayor convene an extraordinary meeting for the matter to be determined.

The motion was put to the vote and carried.

Resolved:

Council proposes that Steve Kirk be awarded Honorary Freedom of the City of Derby under powers reserved to it by Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

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of endurance. Notable achievements include rowing 15 miles between Shardlow and Willington, as well as walking a distance equivalent of Derby to Glasgow in just one month.

During his 27 years behind the bar at the Neptune the pub has become closely associated with Derby County and renowned for its friendly atmosphere, particularly on Christmas Day when it stays open to serve hot meals. Moreover, Steve has dedicated his time to many other causes and initiatives, including volunteering for the NHS at the Derby Arena, when it was used a vaccination centre during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Council commends Steve Kirk for his dedication and commitment to his chosen charities, as well as for the role he has played at the heart of Derby's community over many years.

Council resolves to request that the Mayor convene an extraordinary meeting for the matter to be determined.

ENDS