

## **LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM**

**Report to:** Full Council

**Date:** 25 May 2022

**Subject:** Freedom of The Borough

**Report of:** The Leader of the Council - Councillor Stephen Cowan

**Responsible Director** - David Tatlow – Director of Corporate Resources

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### **SUMMARY**

In recognition of the achievements and contributions of

- Daphine Aikens MBE
- William Hunter
- Ms Hanora 'Nora' McCool
- Frances Stainton

to the wellbeing of the residents of our borough and across London, this Council is requested to confer on them the "Freedom of the Borough".

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Council confer the "Freedom of the Borough" of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham" on:

- **Daphine Aikens MBE**

In recognition of her selflessly serving the residents of this Council through the H&F Foodbank which was set up in 2010. The Foodbank through its four locations feeds over 120,000 people via food parcels plus provides holiday clubs, cooking skills courses, counselling and advice provision that has helped so many people resolve the root causes of their crisis and move out of poverty.

- **William Hunter**

In recognition of his huge contribution of voluntary work in the civic life in the Borough over the last four decades, including as a school governor and chair of governors at Lady Margaret School, board member and chair at Riverside Studios and voluntary service to local politics.

- **Ms Hanora 'Nora' McCool**

In recognition of her selfless service to the children of the Borough, first as a childminder for over 17 years and then as foster carer. Over the course of her fostering career, she has fostered 240 children. She has remained a dedicated foster carer, being known never to turn away a child or family in need of support. Ms McCool has extensive experience and is committed to caring for children and young people.

- **Frances Stainton**

In recognition of her selflessly serving the residents of this Borough for 32 consecutive years as a Councillor in various positions and acting as a community champion for the area.

**Wards Affected:** All

<b>H&amp;F Values</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the H&amp;F Values</b>
Creating a compassionate council	The Council's support of the H&F Foodbank is a demonstration of the Council's commitment to protect the health and welfare of its residents.
Taking pride in H&F	<p>The Administration takes pride in the excellent provision of fostering care to our most vulnerable children through our local residents and supporting families in need.</p> <p>Voluntary work in the civic life is a cornerstone of how residents are able to contribute to Civic renewal.</p>

**Financial Impact**

The cost of a small reception for the friends and family of the recipients will be met from the existing Mayor's budget. There are no additional financial implications of conferring the "Freedom of the Borough" of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham on the individuals.

**Legal Implications**

Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a Council by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members at a meeting of the Council, specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, to admit 'persons of

distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the borough' as "honorary freeman", "honorary aldermen", "honorary freewoman" and "honorary alderwoman".

**Contact Officer(s):**

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Emily Hill, Director of Finance, dated 17 May 2022.

Angela Hogan - Chief Solicitor (Contracts and Procurement)

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**Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report**

## **1. DETAILED ANALYSIS**

1.1. The conferring of the title Freedom of the Borough is the highest civic distinction that can be bestowed upon individuals or collective bodies in recognition of outstanding service or particular civic association. The overriding principle is that these awards should be made on merit. Merit for awards is defined as:

- Achievement
- Exceptional Service

1.2. The Council supports the request that the Freedom of the Borough be granted to:-

- Daphine Aikens MBE
- William Hunter
- Hanora 'Nora' McCool
- Frances Stainton

1.3. The reasons for the awards are attached as Appendices 1 - 3.

## **2. REASONS FOR DECISION**

2.1. Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009) allows the Council to confer the titles "honorary freeman", "honorary aldermen", "honorary freewoman" and "honorary alderwoman" on an individual where appropriate.

2.2. The Council may confer the title of honorary aldermen or honorary alderwomen 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 currently serving on the council.

### **List of Appendices:**

- Appendix 1 – Daphine Aikens MBE
- Appendix 2 – William Hunter
- Appendix 3 - Hanora 'Nora' McCool
- Appendix 4 – Frances Stainton – To Follow

## **Appendix 1 – Daphine Aikens MBE (Statement of Support and Reasons for the Award)**

The following statement is provided in support of Daphine Aikens MBE being nominated for a Freedom of the Borough award for Hammersmith & Fulham.

Daphine Aikens MBE is an award-winning social entrepreneur and the founder of the Hammersmith & Fulham Foodbank. She set up the Foodbank in 2010 and under her leadership it has grown into one of the largest, most innovative and well respected foodbanks in the country. She gave up her paid office job to be a volunteer full-time devoting her days, evenings and weekends to keeping the charity afloat.

With the help of a bank of dedicated volunteers, she has been responsible for feeding over 120,000 people via food parcels plus all the holiday clubs, cooking skills courses, counselling and advice provision that has helped so many people resolve the root causes of their crisis and move out of poverty.

The Foodbank opened in Fulham in 2010 when there were only a handful of foodbanks existed. It now operates across four locations in the Borough and continues to be one of the busiest foodbanks in London. Daphine was nominated in 2012 by her local community to carry the Paralympic torch, an event which she describes as 'a huge honour'. In 2013, Daphine appeared on the Evening Standard's Power 1000 list of influential people in the capital, and in 2018 she won Hammersmith & Fulham's community hero award for outstanding contribution to the life of the borough.

She was awarded an MBE in 2020 for a decade's work helping some of the most vulnerable residents of the borough. A cornerstone of her work at the Foodbank has been

For her passionate support and spearheading the work of the H&F Foodbank and supporting vulnerable people especially children in the Borough, Daphine has been nominated for this honour.

## **Appendix 2 - William Hunter (Statement of Support and Reasons for the Award)**

The administration is proposing William Hunter for the Freedom of the Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham in recognition of his huge contribution of voluntary work in the civic life in Hammersmith & Fulham over the last four decades.

In 1983, after he had established a successful career as a barrister, William began to commit much of his free time to voluntary efforts in the borough.

He has long been a dedicated school governor for several decades at Lady Margaret School in Fulham, during which the school was consistently high performing. He also served as a Governor at Burlington Danes Academy and served for two decades on the board of the Riverside Studios and was at one time the chair of its board.

But it is in local politics that William has played his most definitive, though largely unseen, role. British democracy is underpinned by hard-working volunteers in all parties. Often working behind the scenes, they ensure that elections are conducted properly, and that parties are able to field strong candidates to form administrations and hold them to account. They enable MPs and councillors across the country to serve the public.

William is a notable example of this proud tradition. He has been Hammersmith & Fulham Labour's most consistently active volunteer for nearly forty years. Never seeking elected office for himself, he instead volunteered his time, including holding the following positions:

- Treasurer Hammersmith CLP 1986 to 1994
- Chair Hammersmith & Fulham CLP 1995 to 2007
- Chair of Hammersmith & Fulham LGC/LCF 2009 to present day
- Secretary of Hammersmith CLP June 2021 to present day

Impressive a list as this is, it does not accurately reflect the sheer workload William undertakes. His legal training and long Labour Party experience have given him a comprehensive understanding of both Labour Party rules and election law. This expertise has been deployed to ensure that the local party is scrupulous in its attention to electoral rules. He has also regularly volunteered his expertise to local Labour parties across London.

For this selfless commitment to Hammersmith and Fulham, William Hunter is being proposed for Freedom of the Borough.

### **Appendix 3 - Hanora 'Nora' McCool (Statement of Support and Reasons for the Award)**

The following statement is provided in support of Ms Hanora 'Nora' McCool being nominated for a Freedom of the Borough award for Hammersmith & Fulham.

Ms McCool became an approved foster carer for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham on 1 June 1988 after 17 years as a childminder. Over the course of her fostering career, she has fostered 240 children placed with her. She has remained a dedicated foster carer, being known never to turn away a child or family in need of support. Ms McCool has extensive experience and is committed to caring for children and young people. She is thoughtful, reliable and communicates well with children, young people, and professionals; building trusting and respectful relationships while maintaining appropriate routines and boundaries.

Ms McCool has a specialist and particular strength in caring for babies and sibling groups. She is able to manage the competing demands of maintaining a happy and settled home environment, professional meetings, educational and social interests, training, and contact. Ms McCool appears to do all of this with effortless ease and works to high standards irrespective of the child(ren)'s complex experiences.

Ms McCool has a good sense of humour and uses this in her work with children and young people. She enjoys creating positive, stimulating, fun, and interactive memories, and has a good understanding of the issues children, young people and their families experience within their communities and wider networks. Ms McCool engages children in outdoor activities such as going on rides with children at theme parks and all of her family gatherings and parties.

Ms McCool also has a particular strength in developing and sustaining strong relationships with children and young people who often remain in contact with her after they have moved on. She has created a stable and secure home environment. She is child-centred and works hard to enable children and young people to identify and reach their full potential. Ms McCool has a calm and reassuring persona. She also has the experience and skills associated with helping children and young people contribute to their plans and express their feelings, needs and views. Ms McCool has a strong support system of family and friends and her sister and brother-in-law are also foster carers. Shared family time together serves as an informal opportunity for children in her care to socialise and - if they choose to - share experiences.

Ms McCool supports children and young people of different cultures and faiths to understand their identities and practice their chosen faith. She actively researches information on the cultural needs and practices of children who do not share the same culture or faith group as her. Ms McCool has cared for children with mild learning difficulties, histories of mental health problems, children or young people who have been abused, siblings, parent and child placements, and has supported contact with siblings/extended family members. She has a lot of experience of moving children on, such as returning to birth families or alternative permanent homes. Ms McCool does this by working in partnership and supporting the care plan for the child or young person. She shares information and contributes to discussions

about the plan to ensure that children are moved on to happy homes and environments in which they can continue to thrive.

As we begin to return to the new normal after COVID we wish to recognise that at no point during the pandemic did Ms McCool stop opening up her home to children and families.

Ms McCool has also adopted two children who are now aged 29 and 34 and she has 12 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. Her mother was also a foster carer and she is a lifelong resident of Hammersmith & Fulham. Ms McCool enjoys spending time with her family and in her spare time does crosswords and word search puzzles. She will turn 68 in July 2022 and has no plans to retire as she can't imagine a life without fostering. Ms McCool has a good support network and has been able to support other foster carers providing respite over the years.

For her selfless devotion to fostering children in the Borough, Ms McCool has been nominated for this award.

#### **Appendix 4 - Frances Stainton (Statement of Support and Reasons for the Award)**

The following statement is provided in support of Frances Stainton being nominated for a Freedom of the Borough award for Hammersmith & Fulham.

Frances Stainton was invited to stand as a Councillor in May 1990 choosing Walham ward, having previously defended the local communities, including her own, against Ken Bates attempt to Compulsory Purchase their homes to expand CFC (Chelsea Football Club) in a massive Planning Application. He set about "Operation Stainton" to intimidate her. She fought fire with fire forming, Stop the Proposed Overdevelopment of Fulham. The logo being a NO Entry sign With SODOF on it. This was the lingo he understood! Her campaign led to a Public Inquiry. Bates hired a formidable lady QC whilst Frances simply got the resident groups to defend themselves - a real David v Goliath effort. CFC eventually got a huge redevelopment, but the community saved their homes.

As a new Councillor for Walham Ward in 1990, she served in many of the then Committee system committees. In 2003 Stephen Greenhalgh invited her to stand for the position of Opposition Whip later becoming the Chief Whip in 2006. Subsequently she was the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, when Westfield came to Hammersmith among other things.

Next, as Cabinet Member for Culture & Heritage, came the restoration of Fulham Palace and Bishops Park, twice getting £3 million from English Heritage. The Bishop of London, whose home it had been, spoke in support at both openings.

Next as Cabinet Member for Parks. She formed friends groups of many parks, giving residents a lot of say in matters relating to the parks which resulted in free help from them in keeping order and also helping win Green Flag status for some 15 Parks, with great assistance from officers as well.

Cllr Stainton also brought Polo back to the Borough which was opposed by some initially but has since proved huge fun for one and all, including local school children who helped stomp the divots and learnt all about polo, even riding some of the ponies. She also introduced Paddle Tennis courts.

In 2011 she stopped being Chief Whip and was elected Mayor in 2011/12, which she found a most rewarding job. As her main Charity she chose Walking with the Wounded, then a new charity proving to wounded ex- soldiers, even those with PTSD. Proving to them that they could do more than most able-bodied people, such as walking to the North Pole. Helping them from deep depression. She raised £50,000 for them. CFC had now become great supporters of her (as she is of them) and they gave Stamford Bridge as an Auction Dinner Venue as well as a prize. Many local businesses she had dealings with as Cabinet Member also generously supported the event.

She won £4,000 for Hammersmith and Fulham with her Float in The New Year's Day Parade, so helping H&F's Children's Circus which helped build back their confidence. This was repeated in her 2<sup>nd</sup> term as Mayor in the Jubilee year 2013

ending late on 30 June 2014. She raised a total of one hundred thousand pounds for Walking with the Wounded plus £8,000 from the 2 New Year's Day parades awarded over her 2 terms as Mayor of H&F

Other help and support given to Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation over the years, included going with our MP Greg Hands to see the then Minister for Veterans Jonny Mercer, to help when the then CEO was causing some distress to the residents.

She served 35 years on The Daisy Trust which raises funds for H&F residents and to date is still on the committee and now for 5 years as a Trustee as well. She also served on her ward police Safer Neighbourhood Team since it began and also a neighbourhood watch previously.

In 2000 she received a Civic Seal of honour for Public Service given to many people.

She was invited by Gordon Haines, Master of The Painter Stainers, to join The Painter Stainers in 2013, receiving The Freedom of the City of London in 2016.

She retired after 32 years as a Hammersmith and Fulham Councillor - from 1990 to this election in May 2022.