

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Full Council

Date: 22/05/2024

Subject: Freedom of The Borough

Report of: The Leader of the Council – Councillor Stephen Cowan

Responsible Director: Grant Deg, Monitoring Officer

SUMMARY

In recognition of the achievements and contributions of the members of the H&F Disabled People's Commission to the wellbeing of the residents of our borough, this Council is requested to confer on them the "Freedom of the Borough".

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council confer the "Freedom of the Borough" of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham" on the following members of the H&F Disabled People's Commission¹ and Kevin Caulfield who provided the Commission with policy support:

- Tara Flood
- Kate Betteridge
- Victoria Brignell
- Ali Buhdeima
- Martin Doyle
- Mike Gannon
- David Isaac
- Ramona Williams
- Jane Wilmot OBE
- Kevin Caulfield

This award is conferred in recognition of their selfless service to improving the lives of disabled people in the borough.

Wards Affected: All

¹ Patricia Quigley also served as a member of the Disabled People's Commission but she is not receiving the Freedom of the Borough with the other commissioners as she is currently a Councillor and Mayor of Hammersmith & Fulham.

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Creating a compassionate council	The work of the Commission improved the lives of disabled people in the borough.
Taking pride in H&F	Voluntary work in civic life is a cornerstone of how residents are able to contribute to Civic renewal.

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 & Fulham on the individuals.

Alex Pygram, Head of Finance, 09/05/2024

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".

Grant Deg, Director for Legal Services, 09/05/2024

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

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
2. The Council supports the request that the Freedom of the Borough be granted to:-
 - Tara Flood
 - Kate Betteridge

- Victoria Brignell
- Ali Buhdeima
- Martin Doyle
- Mike Gannon
- David Isaac
- Ramona Williams
- Jane Wilmot OBE
- Kevin Caulfield

REASONS FOR DECISION

3. The reasons for the awards are attached as Appendix 1.
4. 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.
5. 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 – The H&F Disabled People’s Commission – Statements of Support and Reasons for the Award

Appendix 1 – The H&F Disabled People’s Commission (Statement of Support and Reasons for the Award)

The following statement is provided in support of the members of the H&F Disabled People’s Commission being nominated for a Freedom of the Borough award for Hammersmith & Fulham.

On International Day of Disabled People in December 2015, Hammersmith & Fulham Council embarked on a journey of inclusivity with Disabled people. This marked the beginning of a heartfelt endeavour to ensure that decisions about support and services in the borough were made with the direct input of those they impacted. The aim was to work together to build a culture that values and respects the rights of Disabled People living in Hammersmith & Fulham.

In September 2016 the Disabled People’s Commission held its inaugural meeting in Hammersmith Town Hall. All 10 Disabled People’s Commission commissioners were Disabled People living in the borough who each faced many different barriers in their daily lives.

Through extensive research, consultation and collaboration, the Commission championed the principles of co-production, emphasising the importance of working together to effect meaningful change and to removing the barriers that disabled people face.

Guided by the social model of disability with a human rights approach (based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) and a dedication to inclusivity and accessibility, the Commission crafted eight impactful recommendations aimed at transforming Hammersmith & Fulham into a beacon of accessibility and inclusion within London. The Commission’s journey culminated in the acceptance of their report at Cabinet “Nothing about Disabled People without Disabled People” in December 2017.

The report was launched at a public event in June 2018. It can be read here: www.lbhf.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/resident-led-commissions/disabled-people-s-commission

While the Commission may have concluded its formal activities, its legacy lives on through the ongoing efforts of a new groups of residents, councillors, and officers committed to realising the Commission’s vision of a more inclusive and accessible community for all.

The report was the blueprint for one of Hammersmith & Fulham Council’s biggest policy changes, and today the council has co-production at the heart of the organisation. The Council now co-produces with residents, the community sector, councillors and other partners to build shared solutions. Hammersmith & Fulham was the first local authority in the country to commit to co-production across the whole council in this way.

Some examples of co-production within H&F

- Supporting eight resident led groups co-producing with the Council on digital accessibility, implementing the Disabled People's Housing Strategy, increasing take-up of Direct Payments, the award-winning re-development of the Civic Campus and surrounding area, and creating an inclusive environment in H&F.
- Working with a group of disabled residents and community organisations to review progress on embedding our commitment to co-production.
- Working with families and young people to co-produce new Family Hubs across the borough.
- Training council officers on how to do co-production with residents.
- Working with Action on Disability to deliver Disability Equity & Co-production training programmes to build the capacity of local Disabled people to become active co-producers.
- Supporting a group of local young Disabled people to promote their Inclusion Charter to increase their involvement in co-producing local services for children and young people.

Tara Flood (Chair)

Tara is a disability rights activist. She was Director at the Alliance for Inclusive Education and has been involved with the disability rights movement at a grassroots level for many years. She is committed to creating social and political change, that will deliver equality for all Disabled people at a local, regional, national, and international level.

For over 20 years, Tara has worked with local and national organisations led by Disabled people, allied organisations, voluntary organisations and groups, statutory agencies and government departments, both in a personal and professional capacity. She is committed to the voices and experiences of all Disabled people being at the heart of discussions and decision-making about our lives.

Tara is a former chairperson of Hammersmith & Fulham Action on Disability, member of Hammersmith & Fulham Coalition against Cuts, and a trustee of Inclusion London. Tara currently works as Strategic Lead for Co-Production for H&F Council.

Kevin Caulfield

Kevin Caulfield worked at H&F Council for eight years and played a huge role in supporting Disabled residents. He worked as policy officer to the Disabled People's Commission, which produced the 'Nothing about Disabled people without Disabled People' report, and the eight recommendations on co-production that have become the foundation for co-production across all the council's work. He then took on the role of Strategic Lead for Co-production (job sharing with Tara Flood).

Kate Betteridge

Kate's professional background was in the development of information to support people with long-term conditions to make informed decisions about their health and lifestyle choices.

She has lived in Hammersmith since 2002.

Victoria Brignell

Victoria has been Chair and a trustee of Action on Disability. She worked full-time as a radio producer and is a tetraplegic wheelchair-user.

Victoria is an ambassador for the international disability charity CBM UK, a patron of the Friends of Sunera Foundation, and secretary of Hammersmith & Fulham Amnesty International group.

Previously she was a governor of a White City primary school for eight years. In 2013 she was awarded an honorary doctorate by Anglia Ruskin University for being a disability champion.

She has also been an active Co-opted Member on the Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee since 2018.

Ali Buhdeima

Ali was deaf born and raised in London. His family are all hearing. Going to a mainstream school with a deaf unit helped him develop his communication skills with both hearing and deaf people. He considers himself an advocate for deaf people who may find this to be an obstacle.

As a disabled people's commissioner, he wanted to improve support and services for deaf people and make British Sign Language more accessible.

Martin Doyle

Martin served as Chair of Safety Net – People First (SNPF). SNPF is a charity and self-advocacy group run for, and by, people with learning disabilities. Its priorities are to raise awareness of our rights and the issues faced by people with learning disabilities. They do this by working with other Deaf & Disabled People's Organisations, delivering workshops and having a presence in the wider community.

He joined the commission because he wanted to make Hammersmith & Fulham a better place for people with disabilities, particularly people with learning disabilities and to make the area more accessible, including buildings, information and services.

Mike Gannon

Michael was born in Hammersmith & Fulham and has lived in the borough for most of his life. Up until his retirement he worked as a trade journalist, predominately specialising in the built environment and transport issues. His experience, both as a journalist and a Disabled person, informed his contributions to the Disabled People's Commission, especially in looking at accessibility and facilities in the built environment.

David Isaac

David volunteered for a local charity befriending the elderly in the borough, and was also a volunteer and speaker for the Guide Dogs organisation as well as being a member of the Earls Court Redevelopment Taskforce set up by H&F Council.

He joined the Tenants' and Residents' Association of the West Kensington Estate. Before losing his sight, he worked in the design industry for 20+ years. He has been registered blind since 2013 and has lived in Hammersmith for the past four years.

David now works for H&F as a Co-production Coordinator in Residents Services.

Ramona Williams

Ramona lives in Hammersmith and has volunteered with many different organisations to help people who are blind or partially sighted to become confident and independent in their own home or out and about. She helps people to have a much better understanding of how people live with blindness or partial sight.

Ramona set up her own social enterprise, Eyes For Success CIC to carry on the work she has done volunteering.

Jane Wilmot OBE

Jane is deaf and lived in Hammersmith & Fulham for over 30 years. She has worked with disability organisations at national, London and local level. Jane was a trustee at Action on Disability for 25 years and a lay member for health commissioners who procured healthcare for Hammersmith & Fulham residents.

She is passionate about promoting co-production with patients and carers to improve health services for local people. Jane chaired the Disability Forum Planning Group, advising the council on ensuring access for Disabled people on major planning applications.

Jane also co-chaired the Civic Campus Disabled Residents Team which championed co-production, accessibility, and inclusion for disabled individuals. The team was instrumental in shaping an accessible and inclusive environment, ensuring a welcoming experience for all visitors, staff, and residents. Their proactive approach in addressing accessibility issues early in the planning stages garnered recognition at the 2020 Planning Awards for Highly Commended Stakeholder Engagement in Planning.