


London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham COUNCIL 19 OCTOBER 2016		
HONORARY FREEMAN OF THE BOROUGH – Mr George Cohen MBE		
Report of the Leader of the Council - Councillor Stephen Cowan		
Open Report		
Classification: For Decision		
Key Decision: No		
Wards Affected: All		
Accountable Director: Kim Dero – Director of Delivery and Value		
Report Author: Kayode Adewumi, Head of Governance and Scrutiny		Contact Details: Tel: 020 8753 2499 E-mail: kayode.adewumi@lbhf.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. In recognition of Mr George Cohen’s achievements and contributions to the Borough, the Council is requested to confer on him the title “Honorary Freeman of the Borough”.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That pursuant to Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009), that the Council confer the title “Honorary Freeman of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham” on Mr George Cohen MBE in recognition of his contributions to winning the World Cup in July 1966 and for his many years working as an ambassador for the Fulham Football Club in the local community.

3. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 3.1 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.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 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
- 4.2 Mr Ed Vanson wrote to the Mayor and Members from both sides requesting that the Freedom of the Borough be granted to Mr George Cohen. The reasons for his request is outlined below.

“Following on from the excellent and very welcome news that Fulham Football Club are to erect a statue of George Cohen at their Craven Cottage site, I wanted to contact you and ask if you could perhaps petition Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Council to award him the Freedom of the Borough and/or any other tribute in recognition of his 459 appearances for Fulham FC over many years (since 1955) and of course his role in helping England win the World Cup for the only time thus far in 1966. As I understand it Mr Cohen was born in the area and attended Henry Compton as a school boy. He still works on match days at Craven Cottage and I can see no reason why the Council would not want to mark his many marvellous achievements in the area.

Any celebration or tribute would serve as a reminder to local residents of what an achievement 1966 was and this year, the 50th anniversary of England's sole World Cup win would be the perfect time to do it. After all it is a fact that England cannot win the World Cup without a Fulham player in the team”.

5. REASONS FOR THE AWARD

- 5.1 George Reginald Cohen MBE was born on 22 October 1939 in Kensington. He has been married to his wife Daphne since 1962. They have two sons - Anthony and Andrew as well as five grandchildren. He was awarded the MBE in 2000 for his contribution to winning the only World Cup which took place on 30th July 1966.
- 5.2 Mr Cohen spent his entire playing career at Fulham Football Club from 1956 to 1969 when he retired due to injury. As Fulham and England's right-back, Mr Coehn played 459 times for the Fulham and 37 times for his country. He is the only Fulham player to have won a World Cup winner's medal while at the Cottage. George Best, another Fulham legend, famously called Cohen ‘the best full back I ever played against’, while Sir Alf Ramsey, who managed England’s 1966 World Cup-winning team, dubbed him ‘England’s greatest right back’.
- 5.3 The unveiling of a statue of Mr Cohen took place on Saturday 1st October 2016 at Craven Cottage to commemorate their former player’s achievements. It is displayed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of England's famous World Cup victory in 1966.

- 5.4 For many years, Mr Cohen has been a fantastic ambassador for Fulham Football club in the local community. More than £225,000 had been raised in Mr Cohen's name to benefit dementia sufferers via the Sporting Memories Network, and to improve men's health in the local community. He remains a host of his own George Cohen Lounge on match days at the Cottage, where he delights visitors with anecdotes and tales of his former playing days along with insightful analysis of the Club's most recent performances.
- 5.5 In recognition of his achievements, it is recommended that the Mr George Cohen MBE be bestowed the honour – Freeman of the Borough.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009) 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 or, in the case of HM Services Units, Freedom of the Borough.
- 6.2 Implications verified by: Tasnim Shawkat, Director of Law (020 8753 2700)

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The cost of a small reception for the friends and family of Mr Cohen before the Council meeting would be met from the existing Mayor's budget
- 7.2 Implications completed by: Kayode Adewumi, Head of Governance and Scrutiny (020 8753 2499)

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The equalities implications of this decision has been considered to be neutral.
- 8.2. Implications completed by: Kayode Adewumi, Head of Governance and Scrutiny 020 8753 2499.

9. BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are no business implications.
- 9.2. Implications completed by: Kayode Adewumi, Head of Governance and Scrutiny 020 8753 2499.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT

None.