

Special Meeting of the Council

18 May 2009

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jack Field (Mayor), Councillor Malcolm Hall (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors P Anderson, K Banks, M Braley, J Brunner, M Chalk, G Chance, A Clayton, B Clayton, J Cookson, D Enderby, A Fry, C Gandy, W Hartnett, N Hicks, G Hopkins, D Hunt, R King, W King, C MacMillan, P Mould, W Norton, J Pearce, B Quinney, M Shurmer, D Taylor and D Thomas

Also Present:

D Andrews (Chair, Standards Committee) and M Collins (Vice Chair, Standards Committee)

Lt Col M W Forgrave QGM, Capt S R Hayes and Major R S Prophet (Ret)

Officers:

J Bayley, T Buckley, A Marklew, K Dicks, S Hanley, S Skinner, J Staniland, S Mullins, J Smith, J Smyth and D Sunman

Committee Services Officer:

I Westmore

147. WELCOME

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

148. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Smith and Major L D Crabb and Regimental Sergeant Major Whillock of the Mercian Regiment.

149. NOTICE OF MOTION - FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH - MERCIAN REGIMENT

A Notice of Motion had been submitted by the Mayor, Councillor Field in accordance with Standing Order 6. The Motion was in respect of the admission of the Mercian Regiment to be Honorary

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Chair

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Freemen of the Borough. This was seconded by Councillor Anderson.

Prior to the debate, the Council was upstanding for the entrance of the mascot of the Mercian Regiment, Pte Derby.

The Mayor, Councillor Field, spoke of his great pride, as an ex-Serviceman and as someone born and brought up in Redditch, in being able to move the Motion to grant the Freedom of the Borough to the County Regiment. The seconder of the Motion, Councillor Anderson added to the tributes to the Mercian Regiment, noting that they had borne a heavy load in recent years including tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Following the speeches from the Proposer and Secunder, the Leader of the Council, the Leaders of the other Groups on the Council and a number of other Members added their own tributes and reflections on the occasion of the granting of this honour, only the second occasion on which such an honour had been granted by the Borough. In recognition of the fact that the proposal to confer this honour had been instigated by the Mayor, it was announced by the current Deputy Mayor that, should he in due course be elected to the office of Mayor, he would provide Councillor Field with the opportunity to participate in the official welcome of the Regiment to the Borough.

The Council took a vote on the admission of the Mercian Regiment to be Honorary Freemen of the Borough and the Council approved the proposition unanimously.

Lt Col Martyn Forgrave, Commanding Officer of the Fourth Battalion of the Mercian Regiment spoke in response to the conferring of this honour by the Council. Lt Col Forgrave stated that this represented a special day for the Regiment. It was noted that current Regiment had been formed from several County Regiments but that the Regiment retained and valued its historic links. The Commanding Officer of the Second Battalion of the Regiment currently serving in Afghanistan, Lt Col Simon Banton, had passed on his warm and sincere regards to the Council on the occasion of this honour and he and his troops looked forward to meeting the townsfolk of Redditch on their return to this country at the end of their tour of duty. The Regiment was moved to have received this accolade and it very much appreciated the support forthcoming from the community of Redditch.

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RESOLVED that

- 1) in pursuance of the provisions of Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council admit The Mercian Regiment to be Honorary Freemen of the Borough of Redditch in recognition of the service of generations of Redditch men and women, many who tragically lost their lives or were wounded in the cause of preserving our freedoms, while serving in our County Regiment - The Worcestershire Regiment, The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment, or their successor body The Mercian Regiment, and that the Regiment's name be enrolled on the Freeman's Roll; and
- 2) the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to an Honorary Freedom Scroll to be presented to the Regiment at a separate event , later in the Municipal year, to mark and celebrate the Regiment's return to the United Kingdom, following their current tour of duty overseas."

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.02 pm

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Chair