

COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING Minutes

Place

Victoria Hall - Town Hall, Wellington Street, Woolwich
SE18 6PW

Date

Wednesday 4 October 2021

Time

7.00 pm

Present

The Worshipful Mayor
Councillor Denise Hyland

Councillors

Norman Adams	Leo Fletcher	Christine May
Olu Babatola	Nigel Fletcher	Dominic Mbang
Sandra Bauer	Bill Freeman	Odette McGahey
Linda Bird	David Gardner	Sarah Merrill
Geoffrey Brighty	Pat Greenwell	Anthony Okereke
Peter Brooks	Matt Hartley	Linda Perks
Clare Burke- McDonald	John Hills Adel Khaireh	Denise Scott- McDonald
Ann-Marie Cousins	Averil Lekau	Aidan Smith
Angela Cornforth	Chris Lloyd	Roger Tester
Charlie Davis	Mariam Lolavar	Danny Thorpe
Gary Dillon	Clive Mardner	Miranda Williams

A webcast of the meeting of the Council is displayed on the Royal Greenwich YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXIFRwNOsgw> for a period of twelve months subsequent to the meeting.

Item
No.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were given for Councillors Stephen Brain, Spencer Drury, John Fahy, Mick Hayes, Mark James, Matthew Morrow, Maureen O'Mara, Gary Parker, Pat Slattery and David Stanley

2 Mayor's Announcements

There were none.

4 Declarations of Interest

Resolved –

That the list of Councillors' memberships as Council appointed representatives on outside bodies, joint committees and school governing bodies be noted.

5 Notice of Members wishing to exceed the 5-minute rule

The Mayor noted that that no requests to exceed the five-minute rule had been received.

6 Appointment of Honorary Freemen/Women and Appointment of Honorary Aldermen/Women of the Royal Borough of Greenwich

Councillor Peter Brooks moved the nomination that Dr Kevin Fewster be given the Honorary Freedom of the Royal Borough. Councillor Brooks spoke of Kevin Fewster's background in Australia, that he had been the first director of the South Australian Maritime Museum and of the Australian National Maritime Museum and then director of the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, before becoming director of the Royal Maritime Museum from 2007. He listed Kevin Fewster's achievements at the Royal Maritime Museum including bringing the

Cutty Sark under the museum, various works to the buildings, the use of the museum as a venue during the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, and enhancing the museum's art collection. Kevin Fewster had also served on the British Museum World Heritage Site Executive Committee and as president of the International Congress of Maritime Museums. He had been made a Member of the Order of Australia and a CBE.

Councillor Denise Hyland seconded the nomination. She recollected her personal experience of working with Kevin Fewster on the World Heritage Site Steering Group.

The Mayor put the proposal that Dr Kevin Fewster be given the Honorary Freedom of the Royal Borough to the vote and it was carried unanimously.

Dr Kevin Fewster thanked the Council for the award. Dr Fewster indicated that he regarded the award as something to be shared with everyone who he worked with at the museum, staff, trustees and volunteers, and he thanked them all for their dedication to the museum. He commented on the collaboration between the museum and the Council on various projects and he thanked Greenwich Leaders, Mayors and Councillors for their support. He recollected his experience of moving to Greenwich. He drew attention to the linking of the name Greenwich to the Museum in 2011, as part of Royal Museums Greenwich, which served to highlight the Museum's unique distinction of being in Greenwich.

Councillor Danny Thorpe moved the nomination that Bernardine Evaristo OBE be given the Honorary Freedom of the Royal Borough. Councillor Thorpe noted that Bernardine Evaristo was born in Eltham and raised in Woolwich. He commented on her award winning career, highlighting that she was the first black woman and first black British person to win the Booker Prize, and noting that *Girl, Woman, Other* had been added to the A-level syllabus for English literature. He expressed the hope that her work would be built on to give all of the country's young people the greatest possible exposure to a diverse and wide education. He drew attention to her article in *The Guardian* the previous month in which Bernardine Evaristo had written of how her creativity and the influences that shaped her life could be traced back to her early years in southeast London, including having been a member of the Greenwich Young People's Theatre. He commented on her recent work as the Woolwich Laureate and with the Greenwich + Docklands International Festival. He concluded by reading an extract from Bernardine Evaristo's forthcoming book.

Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald seconded the nomination. She commented that one of the things that excited her about Greenwich was the people and

diversity, and she felt that the work that Bernardine Evaristo had done captured that. She highlighted that Bernardine Evaristo's father had been the first black councillor in Greenwich. She noted Evaristo's involvement with the Greenwich Young People Theatre, and commented on how art can transform lives and change society. She drew attention to Evaristo's work with the Theatre of Black Women, the book series 'Black Britain: Writing Back', and as the Sky Arts Ambassador for Literature. She emphasised that Bernardine Evaristo had made a difference for so many people.

The Mayor put the proposal that Bernardine Evaristo OBE be given the Honorary Freedom of the Royal Borough to the vote and it was carried unanimously.

Bernardine Evaristo OBE thanked the Council for the award. Bernardine Evaristo recollected her childhood in the borough, and being of a mixed race family. She had been in the arts all her life, in the theatre and as a writer. She explained that she had become a writer because she was a reader, and devoured books at the library. She explained how Greenwich Young People's Theatre had also led to her being a writer, it had been a very welcoming community; she was now an ambassador for its successor the Tramshed. She wished that arts provision were available for every child everywhere, particularly theatre as it gave young people confidence and the idea of community and working together. She said she had a strong connection to the borough and in many ways Greenwich represented a kind of multicultural ideal that all could aspire to.

The Mayor reminded Council that the Tramshed was the Mayor's charity for her year. She noted the refurbishment that was now being undertaken to the Tramshed building. The Mayor thanked Councillors Danny Thorpe, Roger Tester and Matt Hartley, who had all run the London Marathon in support of the Tramshed charity.

Councillor Sarah Merrill moved the nomination that Dr Barry Gray be given the Honorary Freedom of the Royal Borough. She spoke on his work with the campaign to stop the proposed South East London River Crossing cutting through Woodlands Farm and Oxleas Woods, and then campaigning to stop later plans to build houses on Woodlands Farm. Along with others he formed the Woodlands Farm Trust. The farm was now the largest inner city working farm in the whole of the UK, and it also hosted events; it was inclusive and accessible to all. She commented on how Dr Gray had also campaigned successfully for the restoration of Severndroog castle.

Councillor Averill Lekau seconded the nomination. She said Dr Barry Gray was a community champion and that his campaigning was a blueprint on how to run an effective campaign. Dr Gray as a proponent of telling the full history of Severndroog Castle was ahead of his time with regards to recognising the significance and symbolism of monuments and buildings associated with Britain's colonial past, and which help reinforce that much of black history is part of English history. She noted his campaigning to stop the proposed East London River Crossing prevented the potential destruction of homes in Plumstead and Thamesmead.

The Mayor put the proposal that Dr Barry Gray be given the Honorary Freedom of the Royal Borough to the vote and it was carried unanimously.

Dr Barry Gray thanked the Council for the award. He recalled attending the first evening session of the public inquiry into the South East London River Crossing in the Public Hall of the Town Hall some 35 years previously. It was the longest inquiry in British legal history into a single road scheme. Although the Inspector recommended the scheme, following challenges in court it was finally ditched. He recollected his childhood and schooling. He felt all the hundreds of people he had met and who had helped should be with him in receiving the award. His advice for organising a community campaign was not to be afraid of questioning the current government, do your homework, and don't be daunted by the enormous voices against you; he noted that no one today laughed at the idea of the effect of air pollution on health.

Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins moved the nomination that Mavis Best MBE be made an Honorary Alderwoman of the Royal Borough. Councillor Cousins read a submission from Professor Gus John in which he stated that it was fitting that Mavis Best be an Honorary Alderwoman because hers was a career of dedicated service and struggle to make local and central government aware of the pernicious manifestations and destructive consequences of structural and institutional racism and how that buttressed and encouraged cultural and personal racism. He commented on her work among young people and her leadership of the anti-sus law movement. He highlighted that her struggle against school exclusion to ensure that learning opportunities were provided for excluded students informed in large measure the responses of the council to the needs of vulnerable young people in the borough and across south London generally; it was noteworthy to witness the various ways in which Mavis Best promoted and delivered lifelong learning especially enabling young people and communities to empower themselves. Councillor Cousins concluded with her personal support for the nomination.

Councillor Gary Dillon seconded the nomination. Councillor Dillon highlighted that Mavis Best had been a former councillor of the borough. She had been awarded the MBE for services to the community. He noted that Mavis Best had dedicated her life to campaigning for people's civil rights, and had been a true champion for equality. He added that he was seconding the nomination personally and also on behalf of the Royal Borough of Greenwich's BME council forum.

The Mayor put the proposal that Mavis Best MBE be made an Honorary Alderwoman of the Royal Borough to the vote and it was carried unanimously.

Fabian Best thanked Council on behalf of Mavis Best, who could not be present, for acknowledging the work that she had done.

Councillor Peter Brooks moved the nomination that Allan MacCarthy be made an Honorary Alderman of the Royal Borough. Councillor Brooks noted that Allan MacCarthy was the last holder of title of alderman under the old system in the borough. He commented on Allan MacCarthy's work history, his years of community involvement including with schools and with arts. Councillor Brooks highlighted that Allan MacCarthy had been a councillor for many years and had also been Mayor.

Councillor Danny Thorpe seconded the nomination. He recollected his personal experiences of Allan MacCarthy's time as a councillor, noting that Allan MacCarthy was well respected by colleagues from across the chamber. He commented that Allan MacCarthy continued to serve the community, serving on the board of Woolwich Works.

The Mayor put the proposal that Allan MacCarthy be made an Honorary Alderman of the Royal Borough to the vote and it was carried unanimously.

Allan MacCarthy thanked Council for the award. He recollected his years with Greenwich Council and working with schools and various organisations such as Greenwich Theatre and Dance Greenwich. He explained about being the last alderman under the old system.

Resolved unanimously -

That in pursuance of the power vested in the Council by virtue of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council agreed to:

- a. award Dr Kevin Fewster the Honorary Freedom of the Royal Borough;
- b. award Bernardine Evaristo OBE the Honorary Freedom of the Royal

- c. Borough;
- d. award Dr Barry Gray the Honorary Freedom of the Royal Borough;
- e. make Mavis Best MBE an Honorary Alderwoman of the Royal Borough;
- f. make Allan MacCarthy an Honorary Alderman of the Royal Borough.

The meeting closed at 8:25 pm

Chair