

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN CIVIC HEADQUARTERS, COLERAINE ON
FRIDAY 8 DECEMBER 2017 AT 12.30 PM**

In the Chair : The Mayor, Councillor Joan Baird

Members Present : Alderman Sam Cole
Alderman Maura Hickey
Alderman Norman Hillis
Alderman William King
Alderman Tom McKeown
Alderman Sharon McKillop
Alderman Alan Robinson

Councillor Aaron Callan
Councillor Trevor Clarke
Councillor Boyd Douglas
Councillor George Duddy
Councillor Mark Fielding
Councillor David Harding
Councillor Sandra Hunter
Councillor Michelle Knight-McQuillan
Councillor James McCorkell
Councillor Alan McLean
Councillor Stephanie Quigley
Councillor Ian Stevenson
Councillor Russell Watton

Present : Her Majesty's Deputy Lieutenant, Mr Desmond Hill
Chief Executive and Town Clerk
Mr Alan Campbell
Mr Richard Chambers
Reverend John Stanbridge
Director of Corporate Services
Democratic and Central Services Manager
Corporate Communications Manager
Civic Support Officer
Guests
Press (1)

1. **CONFERMENT OF THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH ON MR ALAN CAMPBELL, MR RICHARD CHAMBERS AND MR PETER CHAMBERS (in absentia)**

The meeting commenced with the arrival of the Deputy Lieutenant for Co Londonderry, followed by the Members of Council. The Mayor, the Clerk and Chief Executive, Mr Alan Campbell, Mr Richard Chambers and the Mayor's Chaplain entered the Council Chamber, preceded by the Mace Bearer.

The Mayor welcomed those present to the Special Meeting of Council and stated that although Peter Chambers was not present for proceedings the Freedom of the Borough would be conferred on him in absentia.

The Mayor invited the Clerk and Chief Executive to read the summons convening the meeting.

The Chief Executive stated that notice was given to Members of the Council on 1st December 2017 of a special meeting of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council to be held in The Council Chamber, Civic Headquarters on Friday 8th December 2017 at 12.30pm for the purposes of conferring the Freedom of the Borough on Mr Alan Campbell, Mr Richard Chambers and Mr Peter Chambers (in absentia).

The Mayor invited her Chaplain, Reverend John Stanbridge to offer prayer. The Mayor's Chaplain offered prayer.

The Mayor invited the Chief Executive to read the Resolution of the Council conferring the Freedom of the Borough on Mr Alan Campbell, Mr Richard Chambers and Mr Peter Chambers.

The Chief Executive advised that Council resolved on 10th November 2016, proposed by Councillor McCandless, seconded by Alderman Hillis

that our Olympic oarsmen Alan Campbell, Richard Chambers and Peter Chambers have honoured this Borough and particularly the town of Coleraine. It is only fitting that we acknowledge their achievements with the Freedom of the Borough. We can be justifiably proud of them. They are people of distinction and great ambassadors for the area.

He continued stating that, "The Honorary Freedom of Boroughs Act 1885 was an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that gave the councils of municipal boroughs the power to award the title of honorary freeman to "persons of distinction and any persons who have rendered eminent services to the borough".

Prior to the reform of town and city government in the 1800s, the rank of "freeman" existed in all boroughs. Freeman enjoyed exemption from tolls and other special privileges, and in most cases were the only persons eligible to vote at parliamentary elections. The 1885 Act was a short one, consisting of only three sections:

..the council of every borough may from time to time, at a meeting of the council specially called for the purpose with notice of the object, admit to be honorary freeman of the borough persons of distinction and any persons who have rendered eminent services to the borough...

Freedoms have been made on 19 occasions since Coleraine became a Borough in 1934, when the first 'Freedom' was presented. In Ballymoney it was awarded on ten occasions to groups and individuals. In 2015 St Vincent de Paul and the Salvation Army were awarded the Freedom of Limavady. The historic move was unanimously agreed just two months before Limavady Borough Council merged.

It is sometimes asked if our new Freeman will be able to graze cattle or drive sheep in the Borough or park their cars for free. The award is symbolic and sadly, grazing rights are not part of the modern freeman's privileges. So what use is being given the freedom of the city? Dr Philip Whiteman, from the Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Birmingham, says "It is effectively the only way that a local authority can confer honours." Dr Whiteman says that a Council vote for a freeman is about "civic pride".

But you do get a certificate? Murray Craig, the clerk of the Chamberlain's Court at the City of London, says that this is a "symbolic" modern version of a tradition which began in the 13th Century as an "economic transaction". "You would pay a fee or a fine and it would give you economic trading rights in the richest part of the kingdom," he says. He says the belief that it allows freemen the right to drive sheep and cattle over London Bridge probably comes from the exemption from tolls and charges given in the earlier times. Traders could take their beasts over the bridge to Smithfield market and save themselves the cost of paying the toll.

Sporting success certainly seems to be a good way of getting the honour. For example Michael Vaughan became a freeman of Sheffield after he captained the England cricket team to the Ashes.

In summary, the Freedom of the Borough is simply highest accolade that Council can make to a group or individual, and acknowledges their work and contribution to the Borough."

The Mayor, on behalf of Council, presented Mr Alan Campbell and Mr Richard Chambers with the Freedom Certificate to mark the conferment of the Freedom of the Borough remarking that they were fully deserving of this honour.

The Mayor, Mr Campbell and Mr Chambers and the Clerk and Chief Executive signed the Council's Freedom Register. On signing the Register and accepting the Certificate, Mr Alan Campbell and Mr Richard Chambers were invited to address the Council. Mr Campbell and Mr Chambers thanked the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors for the great honour bestowed.

Following the addresses by the new Freemen, the Mayor declared proceedings complete and the meeting closed.

The Mayor, the new Freemen, the Clerk and Chief Executive and the Mayor's Chaplain left the Chamber led by the Mace Bearer.

The meeting closed at 12.50pm.

Mayor