

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH**

**HELD AT 12.05 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 29 JULY 2021**

**ONLINE 'VIRTUAL' MEETING - [HTTPS://TOWERHAMLETS.PUBLIC-I.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home)**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Mohammed Ahbab Hossain Speaker of the Council  
(Chair)  
Councillor Sabina Akhtar  
Councillor Peter Golds  
Councillor Denise Jones  
Councillor Rajib Ahmed  
Councillor Victoria Obaze  
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman

**Co-opted Members Present:**

Councillor Rachel Blake  
Councillor Sirajul Islam  
Mizan Choudhury  
Leslie Morgan OBE  
Mike Smith

**Officers Present:**

Patricia Attawia	– (Democratic Services)
Matthew Mannion	– (Democratic Services)
Muhammed Uddin	– (Democratic Services)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. However, it was noted that all panel members were likely to know of many, if not all, nominees through local work, community activities or socially.

In most cases this was ok and the Member could contribute to the discussion. However, where a Member had an extremely close personal or work relationship with a nominee (such as it being a family member) it was agreed that they should not take part in discussion of that nomination and should leave the meeting if appropriate.

### **3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Panel meeting held on 27 May 2021 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

### **4. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Given the need to discuss individual nominations for the Freedom of the Borough and the commercial details of potential venue hires it was agreed that the full discussion of both reports would need to be held after the exclusion of the press and public:

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the remaining agenda item contained information defined as exempt or confidential in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

### **5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **5.1 Nominations for Freedom of the Borough**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and handed over to Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services, to administratively run the meeting and introduce the report.

Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services, presented a report on Nominations for Freedom of the Borough.

He explained that the nominations received to date were presented in the Appendix to the report. These were set out in different groups for ease of reference.

The Panel discussed the nominations and agreed a provisional shortlist for further consideration. It was agreed that Members would take the shortlist away to consider and to each identify any that should be given the award. Responses would be collated to help the Panel come to a collective view.

In deciding, it was suggested that in addition to the main criteria for considering awarding Freedom of the Borough the panel should also look at whether the nominee's contribution was:

- Across the whole borough and all communities
- For a long period of time
- Over and above their paid job

The information from the returned forms would be collated and presented at the next meeting for the panel to then pick their final choices for the award.

There were queries about checking whether nominees live in the borough, but it was clarified that this is not a requirement as long as their contribution/the services they are being nominated for took place in Tower Hamlets.

The panel stressed that there would need to be confidence that the final nominations would be unanimously accepted at Council.

## **RESOLVED**

1. To circulate a provisional shortlist agreed at this meeting and any further nominations received up to the closing date, for the panel to consider for their preferred choices for the Freedom of the Borough award.
2. To consider the results at the next panel meeting for a final decision to be made.

### **5.2 Freedom of the Borough Award and Venue**

Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services, presented a report on the Freedom of the Borough Award and Venue.

The panel reviewed the table of potential venues and associated costs. They were advised that there was still information being chased which would be brought to the next meeting.

It was agreed that whichever venue is chosen will need to be accessible, and at this point we would continue to work to obtain information for the Tower of London. The date of the event was provisionally scheduled by the panel for early October.

There was some discussion over whether the council meeting and ceremony should be held separately in order to better manage the event, or whether the full council meeting should form part of the event. If the meeting formed part of the event, the presentation ceremony would take place after any council business, followed by the reception. It was suggested that potentially an extraordinary Council meeting could be held straight after the September meeting to agree the awards. The formal ceremony could then be held at a later date.

The panel discussed whether there should be a dress code for the event and agreed due to the formal and prestigious nature of the ceremony, there should be.

**RESOLVED**

1. To hold an extraordinary meeting of the Council for the ceremony with the reception.
2. To review the information on venues at the next meeting, ensuring that the chosen venue is accessible.

**6. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT**

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 1.02 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Mohammed Ahbab Hossain  
Freedom of the Borough