

REPORT TO:	Council (Special Meeting)	
DATE:	15 May 2025	
REPORT AUTHOR:	Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services)	
TITLE OF REPORT:	Appointment of Honorary Aldermen & Freemen	
EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)	No	Not applicable
KEY DECISION:	No	If yes, date of publication: n/a

Purpose of Report

1.1 To approve the appointment of new Aldermen and Freemen of the Borough for 2025 for the following:

Freemen

- Mrs Hilary Austin
- Mr Stephen Hutchinson BEM
- Mr Rawden Kerr
- Mr Zack Kerr
- Ms Anne Lincoln

Aldermen

- Mr Peter Britcliffe
- Mr Graham Jones
- Mr Abdul Khan
- Mr Malcolm Pritchard

Recommendations

2.1 That in accordance with Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, Mrs Hilary Austin, Mr Stephen Hutchinson BEM, Mr Rawden Kerr, Mr Zack Kerr and Ms Anne Lincoln be conferred with the title of Honorary Freeman of the Borough and be presented with the award at the Mayor Making Council on 31st May 2025, or should that not prove possible due to the unavailability of the recipients, at some stage during the remainder of the Municipal Year 2025/26.

(The above names to be moved, seconded and voted upon en bloc prior to Recommendation 2.2 being considered)

2.2 That in accordance with Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council appoints the following as Aldermen: Mr Peter Britcliffe, Mr Graham Jones, Mr Abdul Khan and Mr Malcolm Pritchard with the formal presentation to be made at the Mayor Making Council on 31st May 2025, or should that not prove possible due to the unavailability of the recipient, at some stage during the remainder of the Municipal Year 2025/26.

(The above names to be moved, seconded and voted upon en bloc following consideration of Recommendation 2.1);

2.3 That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make the necessary arrangements.

3. Reasons for Recommendations and Background

Freemen Appointments

3.1 To qualify for appointment as a freeman the proposed recipient must be:

- (a) persons of distinction, or
- (b) persons who have, in the opinion of the authority, rendered eminent services to that place or area.

3.2 The individuals proposed are notable as follows:

3.2.1 Mrs Hilary Austin

Hilary is the Chairperson for the Church & Oswaldtwistle Royal British Legion Branch and the Chairperson for Accrington & District Royal Airforce Air Cadets.

Hilary's work and dedication to the Community and all the events that are organised is valued within this borough.

3.2.2 Mr Stephen Hutchinson BEM

Stephen is Lieutenant of RNR and Chair, Accrington and District Unit Sea Cadets. He was awarded the British Empire Medal in 2022.

Stephen also works for the local company Prospects as the Low Carbon Community Buildings Officer.

3.2.3 Mr Rawden Kerr

Rawden is the Town Crier for Great Harwood and is often called upon to officiate at events, not only throughout Hyndburn, but also in other parts of East Lancashire. Rawden excels at his craft, having been town crying for the past 15 years and is one of the best in UK. He scooped the award for British Championships 'best content of cry' in 2023.

3.2.4 Mr Zack Kerr

Zack is a Changing Places ambassador who won the Positive Role Model for Disability Award at the National Diversity Awards in 2021. He continues to successfully campaign for disabled facilities and raise awareness for other notable causes in the Hyndburn area.

3.2.5 Anne Lincoln

Anne is a Pastor at Clayton Baptist Church whose charitable work supports struggling individuals and families across Hyndburn and beyond. From Food Parcels and Free Lunches to Christmas Markets and Warm Spaces Provider Anne's impact can be felt across the borough.

Aldermen Appointments

- 3.3 To qualify for appointment as an aldermen the proposed recipient must have rendered eminent services to the Council as a past member of the Council, but must not currently be a member of the Council (section 249(1) Local Government Act 1972).
- 3.4 Additional guidance as to eligibility is provided in the Civic Protocol, including the following:

- 12 years' service.
- Consideration will be given to members not having 12 years' service but who have, during their years of office, held the title of Mayor, Mayoress, Consort, Leader of the Council or Leader of an Opposition group (providing the latter office was held for three years or more).

- 3.5 The proposed recipients Mr Peter Britcliffe, Mr Graham Jones, Mr Abdul Khan and Mr Malcom Pritchard all have lengthy and distinguished former service with the Council, or are former Mayors of the Borough, or have been Leader of an Opposition group for the relevant qualifying period. As such, they are all considered to meet the eligibility criteria.

4. Voting Requirements

The legislation requires that a principal council may, by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, may confer the honours as set out above.

5. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 None.

6. Consultations

6.1 The proposed recipients have also been consulted and have agreed to accept the title offered.

7. Implications

Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)	<p>Funding was identified from within the 2024/25 budget for the purchase of 11 commemorative badges and cases at a cost of £393.28 each (£4,326.08 in total) in anticipation of the allocation of the 2025 honours and to provide a small stock for future awards.</p> <p>Funding will also be required from within existing budgets in respect of the extra costs to be incurred at the Mayor Making event, assuming the usual protocol is followed of permitting each recipient up to 8 free guests. Based on the estimated cost of £30 per head for the meal, additional costs of up to £2,430 are estimated to be incurred in 2025/26. In addition, freemen and aldermen are generally presented with a small gift at the ceremony, for which there will be a nominal cost.</p> <p>The above sums can be met from within the 2025/26 Mayoralty budget.</p>
Legal and human rights implications	<p>The recommendations comply with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>
Assessment of risk	<p>None.</p>
Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i>	<p>Not applicable.</p>

**8. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:
List of Background Papers**

8.1 None.

9. Freedom of Information

9.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.