

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

29 SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 27 JULY 2021

HONORARY ALDERMAN – EXCEPTIONAL AWARD OF STATUS

Issue for Decision

A request has been received to consider the award of Honorary Alderman status to former Councillor Wendy Hinder. The award would not meet the Honorary Alderman protocol as set out in the Constitution, however, there are exceptional circumstances that the Council are asked to consider.

Recommendations Made

That an exception to the protocol be granted in the case of former Councillor Wendy Hinder's consideration for Honorary Alderman status.

Reasons for Recommendation

A request has been received for the Council to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Wendy Hinder. Sadly, Mrs Hinder passed away whilst in office as Deputy Mayor of Maidstone in February 2020 after serving on the Council for 15 years and 9 months.

Although the appointment does not meet all the criteria of the adopted protocol, there are exceptional circumstances that need to be considered. Had Mrs Wendy Hinder not died in office she would have gone on to meet the 16 years threshold and would have been Mayor of Maidstone. That then means that Mrs Hinder would have been a past Mayor with the civic status that brings. The Honorary Alderman status affords the recipient an equivalent civic status, with, for example, invitations to the same civic events and a name on a roll of honour in the Town Hall.

At its meeting on 27 July 2021, the Committee agreed that exceptional circumstances applied in this case, and that it would be recommended to Council that Mrs Hinder be considered for Honorary Alderman status.

Alternatives Considered and Why Not Recommended

One alternative option would be to consider amending the protocol such that the time period is less than 16 years and awards can be made posthumously with an appropriate recommendation to Council, and officers continue with the process as for an Honorary Alderman appointment with the decision on the award ultimately being for Council.

This is not recommended as a significant amount of work by the Democracy and General Purposes Committee and others went into forming the existing protocol. It is therefore felt more appropriate to consider the specific circumstances of this case and determine whether it should go ahead.

The second alternative option would be to deny the request on the basis that it does not meet the Council's adopted Honorary Alderman protocol. This is not recommended as there are exceptional circumstances that apply in respect of former Councillor Wendy Hinder.

Background Documents

Protocol for the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen – Maidstone Borough
Council Constitution – Dated May 2021

Appendices

None