

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH COMMITTEE

19TH JANUARY 2017

POTENTIAL NOMINATION FOR FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CABINET & PUBLIC RELATIONS IN
CONSULTATION WITH THE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To enable the Committee to consider the nominations received for the Freedom of the Borough and subsequently make a recommendation to Full Council

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note and consider the three nominations received
- 2.2 To consider recommending conferring the Freedom of the Borough on one or more of the nominees list, to Full Council
- 2.3 Agree for the selection of recipients for the Mayor's Good Citizen Award to be undertaken as a function of this committee.
- 2.4 Authorise the Service Director of Cabinet Office & Publications to take forward promotion of the Good Citizen awards and the development of future selection categories and criteria
- 2.5 Members of the Committee should consider the timing of this year's Freedom of Borough for this Municipal Year.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Freedom of the Borough is the highest accolade that the County Borough can bestow and is usually granted for outstanding service to, or achievement associated with, the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf. It is generally considered that the number of people receiving this status should be few in number to maintain the importance of the accolade. To date, the Freedom of the County Borough of Rhondda has been awarded to the Royal Welsh Regiment, Stuart Burrows, the Miners of South Wales, Bernard Baldwin MBE, Elaine Morgan OBE, the Welsh Guards, Matthew James and Dai Dower.

4. NOMINATIONS RECEIVED

4.1 The following nominations have been received:

Cory Band

The Cory Band is a brass band from Cwmparc that was established in 1884, and are recognised as Wales' most successful brass band. The Cory Band recently made history by being the only band ever to win all four Major Brass Band titles in the same year. These titles include British Open Champions, National Champions, the Brass in Concert Champions and European Champions. The Cory Band have continued to be successful at the height of competitive brass playing, and their ten consecutive years ranked as number one brass band in the world is testament to this. The Cory Band's global success has shined a light on Wales and Rhondda Cynon Taff in particular, highlighting local talents and showcasing them to the world.

First nominated by Cllr Sêra Evans-Fear. Other nominations from Owen Smith MP, Chris Bryant MP, Mick Antoniw AM and Cllr Robert Smith.

David Roberts CBE

David Roberts CBE is a Paralympic Swimmer from Llantwit Fadref who is one of Wales' most decorated Paralympians with eleven gold medals, four silver and one bronze. Since his success as a Paralympic swimmer, David Roberts CBE has continued to coach disabled swimmers, continuing the legacy of strong para-athletes in Rhondda Cynon Taff. In recent years David Roberts CBE has also been a strong advocate for disabled rights, addressing the Human Rights Council in Geneva on the matter. His efforts to encourage disabled athletes and ensure disabled rights are at the forefront of current political discussions are valuable to the disabled community of Rhondda Cynon Taff, and highlight the talent and passion within our community on a global stage.

First nomination by Cllr Joel James. Subsequent nomination by Gareth Bennett AM.

Paralympians from RCT

Rhondda Cynon Taff is host to several Paralympic athletes who have shown the talent and support in our community to the World through competing at many Paralympic Games at locations worldwide. Some of these athletes include Sarah Head, a Paralympic and former World Champion table tennis player from Beddau, David Roberts CBE a Paralympic and former World Champion swimmer from Llantwit Fadref and 22 year old Rhys Jones from Clydach Vale who is now ranked sixth in the World in the T37 sprinting category. These athletes have proudly represented Team GB on world stages and have actively promoted Rhondda Cynon Taff to world media as they highlight the importance of the training and structures in place for disabled athletes in the County.

Nominated by Mick Antoniw AM.

Rio 2016 Paralympians

Two athletes from Rhondda Cynon Taff represented Team GB at last year's Paralympic Games in Rio; Sarah Head, a Paralympic and former World Champion table tennis player from Beddau, and 22 year old T37 sprinter Rhys Jones from Clydach Vale. Both athletes qualified for the later stages of the competition in their respective sports at the Rio Games and showed that disability is no obstacle in achieving at the highest level in sport, and are therefore role models to aspiring athletes in Rhondda Cynon Taff. Their services to promoting disabled sports in the County and publically emphasising the importance of grass roots disabled sports programmes is the basis for their nomination.

Nominated by Owen Smith MP.

5. SCHEDULES FOR PRESENTATION

In previous years the timetable for awarding the Freedom has allowed for the awarded before the close of the serving Mayor's Municipal year. However local elections taking place in May 2017 and the pre-election create a number of complications for this time line. Members will therefore need to consider the timeline for awarding the Freedom of the Borough this Municipal Year.

6. GOOD CITIZEN AWARDS

During the 2015/16 Municipal Year the then Mayor, County Borough Councillor Barry Stephens initiated the Mayor's Good Citizen Awards to recognise the achievements and contributions made by local residents to their communities. A number of individuals were recognised with this award at the same ceremony as the Freedom of Borough last year.

The awards were well received in their first year where individuals were selected by the Mayor and his Civic Office based upon the supporting information received as part of the nomination process. It is proposed in the future that the selection of recipient in future should become a function of the cross party Freedom of Borough Working Group.

It is proposed that a formal public process should be developed and promoted to seek nominations for specific categories of award for 2016/17.

7. CONCLUSION

Rhondda Cynon Taf has a proud record of recognising and honouring those who have given extraordinary service to the County Borough and has a well established tradition of conferring the Freedom of the Borough on worthy candidates. This accolade is highly prestigious and is intentionally relatively scarcely awarded to preserve its importance.