

Local Council stalwarts up for local honour

15 November 2023



In a proposal put to the Strategy and Resources Committee of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council on 14th November, councillors were urged to consider bestowing the prestigious title of Honorary Alderman upon three distinguished figures: former Councillors **Eber Kingston**, **Chris Frost**, and the late **Clive Smitheram** (to be awarded posthumously).

The proposed honours come as a customary practice at the commencement of a new municipal term, wherein the Council contemplates honouring Councillors of longstanding and outstanding service, typically those who have held the position of Mayor of the Borough.

A formal nomination for the former Councillors has been submitted to the Council's Chief Executive, underscoring their significant contributions to the community.

Former Councillor Eber Kingston, a stalwart in local governance, dedicated an impressive 36 years of service as an Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillor, presiding as Mayor of the Borough in 1999-2000 and Deputy Mayor in 2000-2001.

Similarly, former Councillor Chris Frost, with 24 years of devoted service from May 1999 to May 2023, held the role of Mayor of the Borough in 2015-2016 and Deputy Mayor in 2014-2015.

Tragically, the late Former Councillor Clive Smitheram, who served for 23 years until April 2022, is being considered for the posthumous title. His term included the role of Mayor of the Borough in 2010-2011 and Deputy Mayor in 2011-2012.

Eber Kingston last served Ewell Court Ward until he switched to his new home ward of Horton where he lost out in this year's May election. He still serves as a County Councillor. Chris Frost for many years served his local ward of Woodcote and the late Clive Smitheram was a councillor in Ewell West. All three represented Residents Associations.

Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers Local Authorities to appoint both Honorary Freeman and Honorary Aldermen. The criteria for appointment, whether as Freeman or Aldermen, hinge on an individual's distinguished service to the community or the Council.

The Act stipulates that the appointment must take place at a Special Meeting of the Council, convened exclusively for that purpose. The endorsement requires a two-thirds majority of Members in attendance. While Honorary Aldermen do not enjoy legal or social precedence, it is customary for them to be invited to Civic ceremonial events.

The proposal contemplates posthumously awarding the title of Honorary Alderman to the late Clive Smitheram, an unprecedented move prompted by his exceptional service to the council.

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