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Staines Ali G fans hope for Massiv support for statue

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A petition has been launched calling for a statue celebrating Ali G to be installed in Staines – tying in with the release of his new film.

The petitioners want Spelthorne Borough Council to explore a “temporary” Ali G attraction in the town linked to the upcoming release of ‘Ali G: Who Iz I?’, while also looking at options to fund a permanent landmark.

Nearly 15 years have now passed since Staines voted to change its name to Staines-upon-Thames – partially in response to negative associations with the character.

But the new petition wants the town to “embrace the attention with humour and pride” – and even asks the council to reach out to actor Sacha Baron Cohen himself to get involved.

It reads: “Ali G and the Staines Massiv have given Staines a distinctive place in British popular culture.

“The release of a new film provides an opportunity to celebrate that connection, promote the town centre and create a lasting community benefit.”

While the petitioners want the council to invest in a permanent statue or landmark to celebrate Ali G, it adds that this should only happen “if external funding is secured for its design, installation and maintenance”.

The petitioners explicitly state they do not want a statue to be bought and upkept using council tax receipts, and want the project to “include a secure donation facility supporting affordable sport, arts, leisure and community activities for children and young people in Staines”.

They add: “We believe Staines should embrace the attention with humour and pride, while using it to support the next generation of the Staines Massiv.”

Just ten people have signed the petition at time of writing, which will run on Spelthorne Borough Council’s website until August 24.

Played by Sacha Baron Cohen, Ali G rocketed to global notoriety following the release of ‘Ali G Indahouse’ in 2002.

While the film was broadly well received with critics and audiences, many people felt the spoof character left viewers with an undeservedly bad impression of Staines.

Staines’ name was officially changed to Staines-upon-Thames in 2012, in a move that was widely seen as being a reaction to Ali G’s depiction of the town.

However, then Spelthorne Borough Councillor Colin Davis told the BBC at the time: “Ali G may have had a role, but I think it goes back further than that.

“I regard Ali G as someone who put Staines on the map, we’re just telling people where it is.”

The character’s new film ‘Ali G: Who Iz I?’ is due to be released on October 23, 2026.

Chris Caulfield Local Democracy Reporter

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Photo: Ali G Indahouse (Universal Pictures)

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