

North Tyneside Council

Report to Council

Date: 24 September 2020

Title: Freedom of the Borough

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): N Redfearn

Report from Service Area: Law and Governance

Responsible Officer: Bryn Roberts, Head of Law and Governance

Tel: (0191) 643 5339

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

This report informs the Council of nominations received for Ylana First and the North Tyneside Carers Centre to be awarded the Freedom of the Borough and invites the Council to consider these nominations.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

The Council is recommended to (1) ratify the award of the Freedom of the Borough to Ylana First; and
(2) consider the nomination of the North Tyneside Carers Centre for the award of the Freedom of the Borough.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 7 August 2020.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report has no direct relevance to the Our North Tyneside Plan priorities.

1.5 Information:

Background

1.5.1 The eligibility criteria for nominations for Freedom of the Borough are as follows:

Nominees for the award of Freedom of the Borough of North Tyneside must be persons/organisations of distinction who, in the opinion of the Council, have rendered eminent service to the borough and have either:

- (a) lived in the borough; or
- (b) worked or been based in the borough; or
- (c) been born in the borough

The nominee for Freedom of the Borough can be an individual or an organisation. Serving councillors, serving members of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, the Elected Mayor or serving Council employees will not be considered.

Nominations can only be made through Councillors or the Elected Mayor of North Tyneside Council.

- 1.5.2 In accordance with the Authority's Constitution, responsibility for the assessment of nominations for the award of the Freedom of the Borough lies with the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee.
- 1.5.3 The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy and Development Committee may recommend a maximum of two nominations to full Council for final consideration.
- 1.5.4 On 2 March 2020, the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee received a report which gave details of two eligible nominations that had been submitted.
- 1.5.5 The Committee agreed to recommend the following nominations for consideration by the Council:

a) Ylana First

Nominated by Norma Redfearn, Elected Mayor and seconded by Councillor S Day. Supported by Councillors B Burdis, C Burdis, S Cox and M Hall.

I would like to nominate Ylana First for the hard work that she has carried out over the years to bring about the restoration of Tynemouth Station.

Back in 1978 Ylana spearheaded a campaign to save the 1882 station. She then, with the help of the Friends of Tynemouth Station, successfully established a range of relationships with anyone who could help her progress her campaign, both from within the Tynemouth community and beyond.

Ylana was the driving force to have the listed station and its expanse of ornate, glazed cast iron canopies restored. As a result of Ylana's work Tynemouth Station today is architecturally stunning. It is considered to be one of the finest examples of Victorian railway architecture in Britain. The grade II* Listed structure underwent an extensive restoration and was completed in 2012, its 130th anniversary year, and opened by HRH The Princess Royal.

The restoration has given a new lease of life to this station providing a memorable welcome to any first-time visitor arriving by train to Tynemouth. One of the key features of the Station is the artwork. Ylana worked hard with artists young and old, local and international to create the unique art installation across the bridge at the Station that people still see today.

So successful was Ylana's campaign that we now see the station bustling with thousands of people every weekend as it hosts markets selling books, antiques, collectables and military collectables. It is also used as a performing arts space for events including music, dance and theatre.

Tynemouth Station has a unique character and it is fantastic to see the 138 year old station as a key feature in the borough so many years after Ylana's campaign began.

I am sure that Ylana will be absolutely overwhelmed by the suggestion of awarding her the Freedom of the Borough for her work and will be the first to recognise that she hasn't done all of this alone. However, she has certainly put many years of hard work, passion, enthusiasm and of course her heart and soul into Tynemouth Station.

It is for this reason that I am proud to nominate Ylana First for the award of Freedom of the Borough.

b) North Tyneside Carers Centre

Nominated by Councillor C Davis and seconded by Councillor M Wilson.
Supported by Councillors G Bell, M A Green, J L L Harrison and J Mole.

North Tyneside Carers Centre provides practical and emotional support for young and adult carers living in the borough of North Tyneside. Established in 1994 as an independent charity the teams of workers support carers from everything to advocacy to mental health through one to one sessions and peer support groups. They also provide specialist training and information sessions to help carers cope with what can often be difficult circumstances. As well as providing education, health and wellbeing groups together with counselling breaks/social activities and events.

The Centre is recognised as one of the leading voluntary organisations in North Tyneside with a solid track record of delivering high quality support to carers. They have built strong relationships across health and social care and are a key partner in the development of delivery of North Tyneside's Commitment to carers. Carers' views and experiences shape the planning of individual care and are integral to designing local service provision. Recently they have been working collaboratively with two other carer centres in Newcastle and Northumberland and have been successful in attaining a grant from the North of Tyne to support carers returning to employment.

A 2011 census identified 22,008 carers living in the borough and highlighted a 19% increase in the number of people caring for over 20 hours per week. This is the point where caring starts to significantly impact on a carer's health and wellbeing and their ability to have a life alongside caring. As regards young carers the figure is estimated that up to 7000 young carers are living in North Tyneside, but this figure could be higher with one in six young carers in every secondary school class. 2776 adult carers and 364 young carers are registered with the centre and they predict an increase of 10% over the next 12 months. As these figures demonstrate this service is vital in meeting this need.

The Centre is very often a lifeline in providing support to people who are our borough's unsung heroes those who support and care for others. The staff at the centre help improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of these people as well as helping them reach their potential. It is important we recognize this work in the borough and it is these reasons I would like to nominate North Tyneside Carers Centre for the Freedom of the Borough.

1.5.6 The Authority's Constitution requires any nominations received for Freedom of the Borough to be included with the business for the Annual Council Meeting. However, due to this year's Annual Council Meeting being cancelled in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the nominations are submitted to this Council meeting for consideration.

The full Council is asked to consider the above nominations taking into account the provisions of section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, which permits the Council to admit to be honorary freemen persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Borough. Any decision to admit the nominees must be approved by not less than two thirds of Members voting thereon at the Council meeting.

1.5.7 Council is asked to note that, due to exceptional circumstances, the award of the Freedom of the Borough to Ylana First was approved, following urgent consultation with the Elected Mayor and the Group Leaders, and the presentation was carried out on 22 July 2020. Council is therefore asked to ratify that award.

1.6 Decision options:

The Council can agree to award or not to award the Freedom of the Borough to the nominees.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

The recommendation is procedural and a recognised part of the business of the full Council.

1.8 Appendices:

None.

1.9 Contact officers:

Dave Brown, Law and Governance (0191) 643 5358
Janice Gillespie, Head of Resources (0191) 643 5701

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information has been used in the compilation of this report and available at the office of the author:

The Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
Report to and Minutes of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee – 2 March 2020.
Nomination Forms.

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The estimated expenditure of up to a maximum of £1,000 if an award was to be made, would be met from existing budgets in Law and Governance.

2.2 Legal

The Council is authorised to award Freedom of the Borough by virtue of section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

There is little scope for the award of Freedom of the Borough to be driven by the views of external consultees. The Member approval process, as set out in section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, therefore provides the key element to the consultation process.

2.4 Human rights

The proposals within this report do not themselves have direct implications in respect of the Human Rights Act 1998.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no direct equalities or diversity implications arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

As the recommendation is procedural and a recognised part of the business of the full Council, no further risk assessment has been undertaken.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no direct environment and sustainability implications arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive x
- Head of Service x
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) x
- Chief Finance Officer x
- Monitoring Officer x
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service x