

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 14 May 2019

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)

SUBJECT: Granting the Freedom of East Lothian to the Lothians and Border Yeomanry

1 PURPOSE

To seek the Council's agreement to grant the Freedom of East Lothian to Lothians and Border Yeomanry.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council grants the Freedom of East Lothian to Lothians and Border Yeomanry. It should be noted that in line with statutory provision, two-thirds of Members present must vote in favour of granting the freedom of East Lothian to the 'freeman'.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Local Authorities may award the freedom of their area in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The freedom is now awarded as a mark of respect, although historically it once offered certain rights and rights to the 'freeman'. In 2004, East Lothian Council granted the Freedom of East Lothian to the world-renowned artist John Bellany from Port Seton, and in 2009 to Catriona Matthew, Women's Open Golf Champion from North Berwick. In 2012, The Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland – or 1 SCOTS – was granted the Freedom of East Lothian. It is now proposed to grant the Freedom of East Lothian to Lothians and Border Yeomanry.

3.2 Under the terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, Section 206 – 'Admission of Honorary Freemen', the Council has the following powers in respect of granting the Freedom of East Lothian:

A local authority may, by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the authority the notice of which specifies the proposed admission as an item of business, admit to

be honorary freemen of their area persons of distinction and any persons who have rendered eminent service to their area.

- 3.3 Under this legislation, an officer designated for the purpose by the local authority shall keep a roll containing the names of persons admitted to be freemen under this section. In East Lothian Council's Scheme of Delegation, the Head of Council Resources holds this roll.
- 3.4 The Lothians and Border Yeomanry (L&B Yeomanry) have a long and distinguished connection with East Lothian with the East Lothian Yeomanry Cavalry operating from 1797. The Dunbar troop was raised in 1803 and joined the existing Seton, Salton and Gifford troops. These troops were eventually disbanded and morphed into the Lothian and Berwickshire (L&B) Yeomanry Cavalry and then the L&B Imperial Yeomanry. During the Great War a squadron was assembled at Dunbar and training took place to convert the unit from an infantry to a cavalry role. In 1921, horses were displaced and replaced with armoured cars for many Yeomanry regiments including Lothian and Borders (adapted from: <http://www.1stlothiansandborderyeomanry.co.uk/history.html>).
- 3.5 In 2014 the L&B Yeomanry reformed and would like to make a public announcement of their new squadron by holding a rededication event at the memorial in Dunbar. This memorial commemorates the men of the Lothians and Border Horse Yeomanry who were killed or missing in World War I and World War II, and the men of the Lothians and Berwickshire Imperial Yeomanry who were killed in the Boer War. The L&B Yeomanry currently operate from Redford Barracks, Edinburgh.
- 3.6 Through the East Lothian Armed Forces Covenant Oversight Group, for which Cllr Jim Goodfellow is the Armed Forces Champion, discussions have progressed with a view to holding this rededication ceremony on the morning of Saturday 6 July 2019.
- 3.7 The arrangements made for that day could incorporate the formal Freedom ceremony. The formal presentation would take place at Dunbar Town House followed by a civic reception hosted by the Cabinet Member for Housing & Community Wellbeing and Armed Forces Champion, Cllr Jim Goodfellow, on behalf of the Provost.
- 3.8 Invitations to the rededication ceremony will be made to veterans and their families, the British Legion, and Cadets, along with the wider community. The (draft) outline of the event is:
- An exhibit within Dunbar Museum of the military treasures which have recently been returned to the Yeomanry
 - A parade along Dunbar High Street - ending at the memorial
 - A civic reception at the Town House
 - A family event hosted by the British Legion
- 3.9 All public events in East Lothian are subject to the Council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG) requirements, i.e. health and safety and community engagement prior to the event etc., to ensure the event organiser's (in this

case, the Yeomanry) oversee their event safely in a public place. The SAG meetings for the Parade planned for 6 July 2019 are progressing well.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None identified.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial: Lothian and Borders Yeomanry have agreed to finance the rededication event. The Council will provide the Town Hall venue and civic reception as a gesture of goodwill, provided by Cllr Goodfellow on behalf of the Provost (who is on leave on the date of the event), and funded from the approved corporate hospitality budget, along with a commemorative scroll and corporate gift to mark the granting of the Freedom of East Lothian to the Yeomanry.

6.1 Personnel: East Lothian Council staff will support the planning and delivery of the rededication event where relevant.

6.2 Other - None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Report to East Lothian Council, 9th November 2004, Proposal for the Award of the Freedom of East Lothian

7.2 Members Library Report, 8th June 2005, Freedom of East Lothian: Supplementary Report

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