

CHARTER TRUST FOR THE CITY OF DURHAM

6 December 2017

Honorary Freedom of Entry to the City - RAF



City of Durham

Report of Bryan Smith, Clerk to the Charter Trustees

Purpose of the Report

1. To allow Trustees to consider granting the honorary Freedom of Entry to the City of Durham to No. 607 (County of Durham) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air force.

Background

2. The Council and the Charter Trustees have been notified by Group Captain TC Willbond (retd) RAF of the forthcoming celebrations for the RAF 100th anniversary next year and in particular the possibility of a northern regional event in the summer.
3. It has been suggested that the Charter Trustees may wish to pay tribute to the RAF on this important anniversary and Number 607 (County of Durham) squadron Royal Auxiliary Air force has been suggested for consideration of the granting of the honorary Freedom of Entry to the City. Brief details have been supplied confirming that 607 squadron came into existence in 1930 and served with great distinction until it was disbanded in 1957. Whilst the squadron was based at RAF Usworth during 1940 it took part in the great Northern battle on 15 August 1940 in which a large enemy advance was repelled to great effect. A squadron standard was presented at a ceremony on Palace Green in 1960 and laid up in the Cathedral. The squadron is now back in being and based at RAF Leeming. It is intended that both 202 squadron RAF and 607 squadron RAuxAF will take part in the RAF 100 regional celebrations next year.
4. Following an acknowledgement and request for further details a briefing note is now supplied as attached to this report.
5. Charter Trustees may wish to consider if this is an opportunity to bring the RAF in line with the Army (Rifles) and Navy (HMS Bulwark) who have previously been granted honorary Freedom of Entry.

6. The Rifles were granted honorary Freedom of Entry in 2007 in recognition of the long and close association between the City of Durham and the Durham Light Infantry.
7. HMS Bulwark was granted honorary Freedom of Entry in 2010 in recognition of the close association with County Durham and as a mark of respect and gratitude for the vital support by County Durham's affiliated warship to our beloved Sovereign and County.
8. The last individual to receive honorary Freedom of the City was also in 2010 when granted to Mr William Jeffrey Holmes Lodge MBE for his long distinguished service and wholehearted commitment to his local community, the City of Durham, Local government and the royal British Legion.
9. Charter Trustees are reminded that under 249 (5) Local Government Act 1972 they may admit to be honorary freemen or honorary freewomen of the place or area for which it is the authority:
 - (a) persons of distinction, and
 - (b) persons who have, in the opinion of the authority, rendered eminent services to that place or area.
10. Charter Trustees previously agreed at a meeting on 28 June 2012 that certain criteria be adopted for considering the granting of Freedom of Entry to the City of Durham namely:
 - (a) To recognise and celebrate the long and close links between the City and other organisations.
 - (b) To recognise and celebrate a contribution to the culture and life of our City and/or an ambassador for our region.
 - (c) To recognise the unstinting support for local charities by a resident of our City.
 - (d) To recognise and celebrate a long and outstanding career by someone born and raised in our City.
11. Charter Trustees should consider whether honorary Freedom of Entry to the City of Durham should be conferred.
12. If conferred a proposed citation is as follows:

"That at a meeting of the Charter Trustees of the City of Durham specially convened for the purpose and held at County Hall, Durham City on 6 December 2017 it was resolved that, in recognition of the close association with County Durham and as a mark of respect and gratitude for the vital service to our beloved Sovereign and County, this City does confer upon no.607 (County of Durham) squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force the honorary Freedom of Entry to the City of Durham and thereby the right privilege and honour of marching through the streets of the City on ceremonial occasions."

Recommendation

13. That consideration be given to conferring honorary Freedom of the City of Durham to no. 607 (County of Durham) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Detailed within the report.

Staffing - None specific within the report.

Risk - None specific within the report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - None specific within the report.

Accommodation - None specific within the report.

Crime and Disorder - None specific within the report.

Human Rights - None specific within the report.

Consultation – Information contained within the Report as supplied by the RAF.

Procurement - None specific within the report.

Disability Issues - None specific within the report.

Legal Implications – Exercising powers under the Local Government Act 1972 s249.