



Council

Proposal to Award Honorary Aldermanic Titles

Date: 15 May 2024

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Director of Law & Corporate Governance

Outline and recommendations

Council is asked to award the following former members Honorary titles of Alderman, Alderwoman or Alder:

- (1) Jim Mallory
- (2) Obajimi Adefiranye
- (3) Mee Ling Ng
- (4) Stella Jeffrey

These proposals were considered by the Standards Committee on 1 May 2024. The recommendations in this report were unanimously agreed for recommendation to Council at that meeting.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

The statutory rights to confer Honorary titles of Alderman and Alderwoman are given under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972. This provision gives the rights to councils to confer the title of honorary alderman or alderwoman on persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent, exceptional and distinguished services to the council, above such duties as are expected of councillor, as past members of that council.

The Council adopted a revision of The Constitution, to include explicit option of conferring the title of Honorary Alder at full council on 2 March 2022. The Council also adopted the Protocol on Conferring the Title of Honorary Alderman, Alderwoman and Alder to Ex-Members of the Authority. This protocol establishes the basis on which valid aldermanic awards could be made.

1. Summary

- 1..1. This report recommends the award of Honorary Alderman, Honorary Alderwoman or Honorary Alder to Jim Mallory, Obajimi Adefiranye, Mee Ling Ng & Stella Jeffrey.

2. Recommendations

Council is recommended to agree that pursuant to Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972:

- 2..1. Jim Mallory is to be awarded the title of Honorary Alderman, Honorary Alderwoman or Honorary Alder.
- 2..2. Obajimi Adefiranye is to be awarded the title of Honorary Alderman, Honorary Alderwoman or Honorary Alder.
- 2..3. Mee Ling Ng is to be awarded the title of Honorary Alderman, Honorary Alderwoman or Honorary Alder.
- 2..4. Stella Jeffrey is to be awarded the title of Honorary Alderman, Honorary Alderwoman or Honorary Alder.

3. Policy Context

- 3..1. The Council's Corporate Strategy makes an explicit commitment to strong corporate governance. The ability to retain the involvement of experienced former members could lend assurance to the decision-making process.

4. Background

- 4..1. Under the provisions of Section 249 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 a principal council may, by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, confer the title of honorary alderman or alderwoman or alder on persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent, exceptional and distinguished services to the council, above such duties as are expected of councillors, as past members of that council.
- 4..2. Jim Mallory was first elected in 1986 and was Lewisham a councillor for 28 years, representing Grinling Gibbons in Deptford for 16 years and Lee Green for 12 years. From 1995 to 1998 he was Leader of the Council. At the Town Hall he was an innovative and effective Committee Chair, who oversaw and led on work as diverse as introducing wheelie bins to the borough – the first Council in England to adopt them – to helping Lewisham schools adapt to life and fewer resources under the Council after the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority. As Leader he worked to widen the support for and influence of the community and voluntary sectors, and later went on to help create local assemblies as a member of Mayor Steve Bullock's sustainable communities' commission. In the community he has been a committed activist, joining and founding many organisations, most notably as founding Chair (2010-22) of Lee Green Lives, which runs a community centre and supports other local groups. Through Lee Green Assembly, he was responsible for securing funding for Manor Park and other local services. He has also been a trustee for Deptford Challenge Trust since 2007, and chaired Abbey Manor College governors for the borough's excluded students since 2006.
- 4..3. Obajimi Adefiranye was first elected a Lewisham Councillor in 1990 – the first African on the Council and he served for 28 years. During that time, he was Chair (Civic Mayor) of the Council for 7 years. Naturally he also served competently and effectively on several Council committees chairing several of them. He was a Lewisham Schools/College governor for over four decades and he represented Lewisham Council on the Deptford Challenge Trust, in addition to being Council's nominee to several external bodies including the ALG, Albany Theatre; Lewisham Parochial Charities, Lewisham Law Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau, Lewisham Race Equality Council, Community Health Council and the Local Authorities Working Party on South Africa. As Chair of the Race Committee, he initiated the Council's first participation in Black History Month.

He served as the Chair of the National Association of Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority Councillors for many years during his time on the Council and continues to hold this position to this day. Obajimi was the London Borough of Lewisham's Delegate on the Intercultural Cities (ICC), a Council of Europe-funded body with membership from various continents for a few years. The reputation of Lewisham as a welcoming, integrative and diverse city was greatly enhanced, recognised and appreciated by his contributions to the ICC meetings during his membership of this international body.

- 4..4. Mee Ling Ng represented the Evelyn area for 4 terms between 1986 and 2002 and served as Deputy Leader. She has contributed greatly and continues to contribute to Lewisham Communities. Part her legacy is her support of the Lewisham Indochinese Centre in Deptford ward which is one of the very few, and possibly the largest bilingual Chinese-English nursery as well as having elder care and youth activities. She also supported the Vietnamese Family Partnership in Evelyn ward which is currently undertaking work to commemorate ESEA heritage across Deptford.
- 4..5. Stella Jeffrey represented Lewisham Central for two terms between 2010 and 2018. Along with being an exceptional councillor, Stella Jeffrey has been a phenomenal leader locally not only in Lewisham Central but also in her home ward of Ladywell. She is Chair of the St Marys Parochial Charitable Board. Former Director of Lewisham Youth Theatre. Stella is active in the St Mary's church community and choral group, who perform at civic events. Stella is also an active and supportive member of the Positive Aging Council. Stella has dedicated herself to helping the most vulnerable in Lewisham consistently over many years, she has sat as a trustee for a number of charities, including Lewisham Relief in Need Charity, The London Churches Fund for Destitute Asylum Seekers, Lewisham General Trust Charity, Lewisham Almshouse Charity of John Thackeray, Lewisham Educational Charity and Lewisham Churches for Asylum Seekers, to name just a few. There is probably a lot more that Stella does within various communities in Lewisham, but true to her nature, she quietly and unassumingly gives her time and supports in any way she can.

5. Financial implications

- 5..1. Recipients will each be given a certificate conferring the title, a badge of office, and their name will be placed on an honours board in the Civic Suite and the Council website. All costs concerning the awarding of four aldermanic titles can be met from existing budgets.

6. Legal implications

- 6..1. Section 249 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to, by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, confer the title of honorary alderman or alderwoman or alder on persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent, exceptional and distinguished services to the council, above such duties as are expected of a councillor, as past members of that council.

7. Risk Implications

- 7..1. There are no specific implications.

8. Equalities implications

- 8..1. There are no specific implications.

9. Climate change and environmental implications

- 9..1. There are no specific implications.

10. Crime and disorder implications

- 10..1. There are no specific implications.

11. Health and wellbeing implications

- 11..1. There are no specific implications.

12. Background papers

March 2 2022 – Adoption of Protocol for the Awards of Honorary Alderman Alderwoman and Alder titles:

<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s96671/Aldermanic%20Protocol.pdf>

March 2 2022 – Protocol on Conferring the Title of Honorary Alderman, Alderwoman and Alder to Ex-Members of the Authority:

<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s92647/Appendix%20Aldermanic%20Protocol.pdf>

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