

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL COUNCIL

3.30pm 12 DECEMBER 2013

COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Cobb (Chair), Randall (Deputy Chair), Barnett, Bennett, Bowden, Brown, Carden, Cox, Daniel, Davey, Deane, Fitch, Gilbey, Hamilton, Hawtree, Janio, Jones, J Kitcat, Lepper, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Meadows, Mitchell, Morgan, A Norman, K Norman, Peltzer Dunn, Pissaridou, Powell, Robins, Smith, Summers, Sykes, C Theobald, G Theobald, Wealls, West and Wilson

PART ONE

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 There were no declarations of interests in matters appearing on the agenda.

2. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

2.1 The Mayor apologised that the lift access to the Council Chamber was out of order, and noted that it had not been possible to move the venue of the meeting due to the very short notice.

3. HONORARY FREEMAN

46.1 The Mayor stated that the Council was asked to consider the appointment of Dick Knight as an Honorary Freeman of the City of Brighton & Hove and she would be calling on the Leader of the Council and the respective Group Leaders to move and second the motion.

46.2 Councillor J. Kitcat stated Mr Knight had been in the advertising industry for 30 years, and commended his fortitude and determination to save Brighton & Hove Albion from relegation. By the time Mr Knight had stood down as Chairman of the club the new stadium at Falmer was under construction, and the club had benefited enormously from Mr Knight's tireless energy. Councillor J. Kitcat congratulated Mr Knight on his career; achievements and his personal integrity.

46.3 Councillor G. Theobald stated that he welcomed the opportunity to second the report, and explained that Mr Knight has always acted, in his role as Chairman, with the best interests of the club at heart. He went on to add how close the club had been to relegation at the time Mr Knight became Chairman, and how instrumental he had been

in turning the fortunes around. Mr Knight had also made significant contributions to the community in his time as Chairman, and been able to grow the organisation by winning sponsorship from bodies such as American Express. Councillor G. Theobald stated he was delighted to support Mr Knight as an Honorary Freeman of the city.

- 46.4 Councillor Morgan highlighted his own family's historic ties to the football club and drew on his own personal experiences as a child. Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club had also helped to unify the towns of Brighton and Hove long before they were unified formally as one city. The sport was enjoyed by all ages and backgrounds and acted as a key economic player in the city. Tribute was paid to his role in turning the fortunes of the club around and mention was made of the work of 'Albion in the Community' working locally to tackle inequality. Thanks were extended for his contributions made to the city.
- 46.5 Councillor Bennett stated how worthy Mr Knight was of the honour, and highlighted the desperate plight of the club during the 1980s; in particular when matches had to take place at Gillingham. Mr Knight had helped to save the club from extinction; his time as Chairman had demonstrated his own personal passion and integrity and many people in the city were eternally grateful for his contributions.
- 46.6 Councillor Hawtree commented that he enjoyed visiting the new stadium at Falmer; he had been impressed with the family friendly atmosphere and realised how much this had been bought into being by Mr Knight.
- 46.7 Councillor Littman described himself as a lifelong fan of the football club, and stated that the current achievements of the club would have been impossible without his contributions.
- 46.8 Councillor Peltzer-Dunn anecdotally noted that Mr Knight's achievements as a 'Hove school boy saving the club' represented the 'best home win ever.'
- 46.9 Councillor Randall congratulated Mr Knight, and highlighted the economic impact of the club in the city in relation to the number of local employment opportunities it created.
- 46.10 Councillor Carden anecdotally noted that Mr Knight was from Portslade, and added that he was proud to have been the Chair of the Planning Committee that approved the new stadium at Falmer.
- 46.11 Councillor Smith noted that he had not always agreed with Mr Knight, but he recognised his extensive work in the community, and gave specific recognition to the 'fantastic' training facility. He hoped that the stadium would encourage more young people to play sport.
- 46.12 The Mayor thanked Members for their comments. She stated that in accordance with legislation, a motion to appoint Dick Knight as an Honorary Freeman had been moved and seconded and she would therefore put it to the vote, bearing in mind that two-thirds of those voting needed to be in favour of the motion for it to be carried.
- 46.13 **The motion was carried unanimously.**

- 46.14 **RESOLVED:** That Mr. Dick Knight be appointed an Honorary Freeman of Brighton & Hove.
- 46.15 The Mayor then invited Freeman Knight to come forward to collect a certificate in recognition of his appointment and to address the Council.
- 46.16 Freeman Knight thanked the Council, and stated that he had also achieved an honorary from the University of Brighton. He had recently bought out his autobiography, and highlighted the extent of the task he had faced working to secure the new stadium at Falmer which had become a very significant building for the city. He was delighted to be given this honour, and wished to receive it on behalf of the football club and Albion in the Community. The football club had been important in uniting the two towns long before they formally became a city, and it was important that once the city was unified there was never support to change to club name as the historic name was of such significance. Albion in the Community had been an important means to give something back to the community that had supported the club, and it offered services in health; social inclusion and disability – as well as teaching awareness across the city. A driving force had always been to understand the amazing potential of sport to improving people’s lives, and Albion in the Community helped to place the club at the heart of the city. Thanks were extended to the Council, and it was stated that the new stadium was a monument to perseverance, power and the community of the club helped to make the heart of the city beat faster.
- 46.17 The Mayor noted the comments and offered her congratulations to Freeman Knight on his appointment.

4. CLOSE OF MEETING

- 4.1 The Mayor then closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 4.07pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of