

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL COUNCIL

3.00pm 18 MAY 2017

COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors West (Chair), Marsh (Deputy Chair), Allen, Atkinson, Barford, Bell, Bennett, Bewick, Brown, Cattell, Chapman, Cobb, Daniel, Deane, Druitt, Gibson, Gilbey, Greenbaum, Hamilton, Hill, Horan, Hyde, Inkipin-Leissner, Janio, Knight, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Meadows, Miller, Mitchell, Moonan, Morgan, Morris, Nemeth, A Norman, K Norman, O'Quinn, Page, Peltzer Dunn, Penn, Phillips, Robins, Russell-Moyle, Simson, Sykes, Taylor, C Theobald, G Theobald, Wares, Wealls and Yates.

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 welcomed everyone to the meeting which was being held to recognise the terrific achievement of Brighton & Hove Albion football club in securing promotion to the Premiership. He noted that after a gap of over 30 years it was wonderful to be able to come together and congratulate everyone involved at the club on their historic achievement and to acknowledge the tremendous benefit it would bring to the City.

3 HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE CITY

3.1 The Mayor stated that the Council was asked to consider the appointment of Mr. Tony Bloom and Mr. Chris Hughton as an Honorary Freeman of the City of Brighton & Hove. He would be calling on the Leader of the Council and the respective Group Leaders to move and second the motions.

3.2 Councillor Morgan thanked the Mayor and stated that Brighton and Hove Albion was part of this city's history, it was part of the fabric of this place, it was so important to so many in this place as the sea of blue and white that washed over Hove Lawns last Sunday showed to the world.

It is four years since this council awarded Dick Knight the Freedom of the City in recognition of his role in saving Brighton and Hove Albion. Twenty years ago, just as

this council was coming into existence, so our football club teetered on the edge of going out of existence. A club founded in 1901, a club that was the first body to unite our two towns, a club my family has supported for almost a century. A club that is valued so highly by so many, across generations, across every part of our community. The Albion, as we saw on the last day at the Goldstone, in the demonstrations for a new stadium, in the fans on the pitch a month ago, and in the thousands on the seafront at the weekend, transcends mere fixtures and statistics. It is an emotion which binds us.

Today Brighton and Hove Albion has once again joined the top flight of English football, is in the Premier League for the first time, and in just three months will emerge on to the global sporting stage. That is down to the club and the team led by the two men we, on behalf of the people of the City of Brighton and Hove, meet to honour today. It is fitting that it is exactly eight years ago today that Mr Tony Bloom took over as Chairman of Brighton and Hove Albion. The gratitude of tens of thousands of Brighton and Hove Albion fans goes to him, a man whose family is steeped in the club, a man whose support of the club has been unparalleled not just in financial terms, but in heart and soul as well. He is that rare thing in football, an owner and investor who is also a loyal, diehard, lifelong fan. No-one can doubt, seeing him celebrate goals, victories and promotion home and away, not just from the directors' box but from the terraces alongside the travelling supporters, just what the club means to him. The millions he has invested in the team will now reap the rewards, for the club, for the fans and for this city.

After almost winning promotion to the Premier League at the first few attempts following the move to the fantastic American Express Community Stadium, in December 2014 it seemed our opportunity had slipped away and relegation threatened. The appointment of Mr Chris Hughton, a football professional of the highest calibre, with an illustrious career as a player at Spurs and for the Republic of Ireland, and as a manager at Newcastle behind him, heralded a return to success. Under his inspired leadership the Albion have won an astonishing 50% of their games, coming agonisingly close to promotion last season, but this year making it certain with three games to spare. For me no moment this season summed up what he inspires in his players more than the team lifting Antony Knockaert's shirt aloft following the death of his father. His calm, confident and determined leadership is an inspiration to all in sport and beyond. His contribution to the sport and success at every level has won him a long list of awards. In March Football's "Black List" recognised his achievements in coaching, a week after he won coach of the year at the British Ethnic Diversity Sports Awards. He has been awarded Championship Manager of the Month nine times, more than any other manager.

He was League Managers Association Manager of the Year in 2010 and 2016. He holds two FA Cup winners medals, a UEFA cup winner's medal, and two Championship promotion honours.

It is my honour as Leader of Brighton and Hove City Council, and my pleasure as a lifelong Albion fan, to propose that Tony Bloom and Chris Hughton are awarded the Freedom of the City of Brighton and Hove today.

In making this award we recognise the achievement of everyone associated with the club, from the board to the backroom staff, the players and coaches, the sponsors and Albion in the Community, and of course the fans who stuck with the team, who fought for survival and the new home at Falmer that Tony Bloom and Martin Perry delivered.

Together, we are Brighton and Hove Albion, and we are on our way to the Premier League. On Sunday tens of thousands cheered and applauded Tony Bloom, Chris Hughton and the team from one side of the city to the other, on a day none of us who were there will forget. Today Mr Mayor I move that we honour the Albion's Premier League success by awarding these leaders, these heroes of our football club, the Freedom of the City of Brighton and Hove.

- 3.3 Councillor G. Theobald formally seconded the motion and stated that it was a privilege to be able to do as one of his last acts as the Leader of the Conservative Group. It was the highest honour that any City Council could give to its citizens. He could still recall standing on the East Terrace at the Goldstone but now enjoyed the wonderful stadium at the Amex, one that Tony Bloom had ensured was for the fans' enjoyment and comfort. The Amex was now on the sight-seeing list for visitors from Japan following their team's success in the rugby world cup and he hoped it would prove to be a venue for success in the premiership. He also noted that during his time as Mayor of Brighton, the football club had enjoyed reaching the cup final and playing at Wembley, and whilst the final result had not been to the club's favour; he was looking forward to the club getting to play at Wembley again when they meet Spurs in the league.

In regard to Chris Hughton, he also noted that Chris had played for Spurs and for the Republic of Ireland at the highest level. As a manager he was a person that players looked up to and his record was undeniable even though he was probably the most under-rated manager in the country. He hoped that Chris would have every success next season and may even lead the team to better Spurs.

- 3.4 Councillor Mac Cafferty stated that he wished to echo the words of the two Group Leaders and noted just how far the club had now come following its almost demise into non-league football. As a life-long fan, Tony Bloom had been able to do what all fans would love to and actually invest in their club. That investment had changed the club's fortunes and led to the success that was being recognised today. The appointment of Chris Hughton was another important factor and he had inspired the team and fans. He had been the first mixed-race player to represent the Republic of Ireland and was the first to manage a premiership team. He was one of only two managers of the 92 football league teams from the BME community and this was something that needed to be challenged. As a previous Chair of the Planning Committee he was pleased to have been involved in the decision to expand the Amex; and noted that promotion would see a growth in the local economy. The challenge would be to remain in the top flight but he believed the club could not be in safer hands.
- 3.5 Councillor Littman stated that he wished to congratulate Tony and Chris on their amazing success. As a life-long Albion fan in a family of Spurs supporters it was no surprise that Chris came to the club. Both Tony and Chris epitomised Brighton and Hove and the club and city should be grateful for their contributions.
- 3.6 Councillor Wares stated that he wished to add his congratulations to Tony and Chris and the club. He had attended his first Albion match over 40 years ago and could recall the promotion to the Championship and how he felt then but that had been surpassed by this year's achievement. As a councillor he was very grateful for what the success would mean for the city and had to acknowledge that Brighton and Hove was the greatest club in the world.

- 3.7 Councillor Robins stated that he supported everything that had been said but also noted in 1970/71 as a 14 year-old boy he had had a trial at the Albion but had never heard back; and just wondered if his services were needed. He wanted to offer his congratulations to everyone involved at the club.
- 3.8 Councillor Penn stated that she had first watched the Albion at the Goldstone and then followed their journey through the ups and downs and especially the wilderness years with no real home and could now enjoy this special occasion and take the opportunity congratulate and thank everyone at the club for what they have achieved.
- 3.9 The Mayor thanked Members for their comments and stated that in accordance with legislation, a motion to appoint Mr. Tony Bloom as an Honorary Freeman had been moved and seconded. He would therefore put the motion 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.
- 3.10 **The motion was carried unanimously.**
- 3.11 **RESOLVED:** That Mr. Tony Bloom be appointed an Honorary Freeman of Brighton & Hove.
- 3.12 The Mayor congratulated Freeman Bloom on his appointment and invited him to come forward to receive his framed certificate and to address the Council.
- 3.13 Freeman Bloom thanked the Council and the Mayor. He stated that he was delighted to be given this honour, and wanted to receive it on behalf of the football club that was his passion and remained an important part of the City. It had been a remarkable season and although the team did not quite win the league, the achievement to gain promotion could not be under-estimated and he hoped that it would be the catalyst for a successful future in the premier league. He wanted to thank everyone involved at the club as well as his family and the city council for the honour it had bestowed.
- 3.14 The Mayor noted the comments and stated that in accordance with legislation, a motion to appoint Mr. Chris Hughton as an Honorary Freeman had been moved and seconded. He would therefore put the motion 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.
- 3.15 **The motion was carried unanimously.**
- 3.16 **RESOLVED:** That Mr. Chris Hughton be appointed an Honorary Freeman of Brighton & Hove.
- 3.17 The Mayor congratulated Freeman Hughton on his appointment and invited him to come forward to receive his framed certificate and to address the Council.
- 3.18 Freeman Hughton thanked the Council and the Mayor. He stated that it was an honour to have been given such recognition and one that he would cherish. He had loved coming to the City and the club and was pleased to have been able to oversee the team's success but noted that the success was down to all those involved at the club.

He hoped that the team would be able to continue its success and stay in the premiership. In the meantime he wished to thank the city council for this recognition.

- 3.19 The Mayor noted the comments and offered his congratulations to both Freeman Bloom and Freeman Hughton.

4 CLOSE OF MEETING

- 4.1 The Mayor closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 3.40pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2017