

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A
Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **23rd January, 2025**

Report Subject: **Freedom of the Borough Cross Party Working Group**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor S. Thomas – Leader/Cabinet Member – Corporate & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Ceri Edwards-Brown - Democratic Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
X							23.01.25	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present the recommendation of the Freedom of the Borough Cross Party Working Group for consideration in respect of an application received to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on an individual.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Freedom of the County Borough is the honorary title given to a person or organisation of distinction who has rendered outstanding services to the Borough. The honour does not confer any legal rights but is the highest tribute a Borough can bestow.
 - 2.2 Historically, due to the infrequent nature of requests to award the Freedom of the County Borough, the Council adopted a protocol outlining the approach for considering all future requests received. This included the establishment of a Cross Party Working Group to consider requests and presentation of the recommendation to Full Council for formal consideration.
 - 2.3 If the recommendation to grant approval is agreed, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council will be convened to bestow the honour.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Freedom of the Borough**

To consider the recommendation to bestow the honour on Steve Jones, MBE.

Option 1a: To agree the recommendation of the Cross Party Working Group to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on Steve Jones, MBE.

Option 1b: To not agree the recommendation of the Cross Party Working Group to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on Steve Jones, MBE.

4. ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

4.1 There is a cost associated with bestowing the Freedom of the Borough. There is currently no dedicated budget available to support this and, therefore, any expenditure incurred will need to be identified from within existing resources.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 Report of Freedom of the Borough Cross Party Working Group*

FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP

Report of Meeting held on 18th December, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor C. Smith (Chair)

Councillors D. Bevan
J. Hill
W. Hodgins (substituting for L. Parsons)

AND: Service Manager – Policy & Partnerships
Professional Lead – Engagement, Equality & Welsh Language
Democratic Officer

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Parsons and D. Wilkshire)

FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH – APPLICATION

The Working Group considered the following application:

Steve Jones, MBE

Members were advised that an application had been received to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on Steve Jones MBE to recognise his outstanding achievements and contributions to athletics but to also celebrate his role as a symbol of perseverance and excellence.

Steve Jones MBE's extraordinary contributions to athletics and his inspiring journey from Ebbw Vale to the world stage make him an exemplary candidate for the Blaenau Gwent Freedom of the Borough. His list of achievements is a testament to his unparalleled talent and unwavering determination.

Steve's career was marked by several significant milestones, including his historic win at the Chicago Marathon in 1984, where he not only clinched victory but also set a new world record with a time of 2:08:05.

Beyond his world record in Chicago, his triumphs include winning the London Marathon in 1985 and securing a second consecutive victory at the Chicago Marathon in 1985, further cementing his status as one of the finest marathon runners of his era. Notably, Steve's British Marathon Record stood unchallenged for 24 years until it was finally broken by Sir Mo Farrah in 2018. In addition to these victories, he also claimed victories at the New York Marathon and the Toronto Marathon, further showcasing his versatility and dominance in long-distance running.

Following a discussion, Members unanimously agreed that in recognition of his great contributions and outstanding achievements in athletics, Steve should be awarded the Freedom of the Borough.

Upon a vote being taken, it was unanimously,

RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council that the:

- (i) application to bestow the Freedom of the Borough on Steve Jones, MBE be acceded to.

The Chair, thereupon, thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed.
