



<b>Full Council (Extraordinary)</b>	<b>Tuesday, 30 March 2021</b>	<b>Matter for Information and Decision</b>
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**Report Title:** **Conferment of the Freedom of the Borough  
on the University of Leicester**

**Report Author(s):** **Anne Court (Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service)**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	The purpose of this report is to put before the Council a proposal from the Mayor to confer upon the University of Leicester ("the University") the honour(s) of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough and, accordingly, to admit the University as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough.
<b>Report Summary:</b>	As the University of Leicester celebrates its second centenary year in 2021, the Council supports the University's commitment to showcasing the contribution and impact of its people, places and events, which demonstrates the University's full and diverse history and steadfast commitment to inclusivity, and thereby marking its distinguished and eminent services and associations with/in the Borough.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<p><b>A. That the Council confer upon the University of Leicester the honour(s) of Honorary Freedom of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston and that, accordingly, the said University of Leicester be admitted as a Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston, in recognition of the University's distinguished and eminent services and associations with/in the Borough and upon the occasion of its 2021 centenary in marking the year in which its first students enrolled at the University.</b></p> <p><b>B. That the Common Seal of the Borough Council of Oadby and Wigston be affixed to the certificate, scroll or similar token to be presented to the University upon conferment and admission of the Freedom of the Borough and as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston;</b></p> <p><b>C. That arrangements be made to procure the relevant certificate, scroll or similar token and to formally bestow the honour(s) at an appropriate civic ceremony and/or reception to be held on a future date to be confirmed and at such a time when the coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions either permit or have ended in their entirety.</b></p>
<b>Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):</b>	<p>Anne Court (Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service) (0116) 257 2602 <a href="mailto:anne.court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">anne.court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p> <p>David Gill (Head of Law &amp; Democracy / Monitoring Officer) (0116) 257 2626 <a href="mailto:david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Philippa Fisher (Head of Customer Service &amp; Transformation) (0116) 257 2677</p>

	<a href="mailto:philippa.fisher@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">philippa.fisher@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a> Samuel Ball (Assistant Solicitor) (0116) 257 2643 <a href="mailto:samuel.ball@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">samuel.ball@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a>
<b>Corporate Objectives:</b>	Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities (CO1)
<b>Vision and Values:</b>	"A Stronger Borough Together" (Vision) Respect (V2) Teamwork (V3)
<b>Report Implications:-</b>	
Legal:	The implications are as set out at paragraph(s) 2 of this report.
Financial:	The implications are as set out at paragraph(s) 4 of this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Regulatory Governance (CR6) No other corporate risk(s) identified.
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	The implications are as set out at paragraph(s) 5 of this report.
<b>Statutory Officers' Comments:-</b>	
Head of Paid Service:	As the author, the report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
<b>Consultees:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor Nishan Canagarajah (President &amp; Vice-Chancellor)</li> <li>• Pritty Moman (Executive Assistant to President &amp; Vice-Chancellor)</li> <li>• Paul Angrave (Head of Public Affairs, University of Leicester)</li> <li>• Ather Mizer (Public Affairs Advisor, University of Leicester)</li> </ul>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Constitution of the Borough Council of Oadby and Wigston</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">University of Leicester: Celebrating 100 Years of Change (Webpage)</a></li> </ul>
<b>Appendices:</b>	None.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is to put before the Oadby and Wigston Borough Council ("the Council") a proposal from the Mayor to confer upon the University of Leicester ("the University") the distinguished and eminent honour(s) of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough and, accordingly, to admit the University of Leicester as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), as amended by the Local

Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, gives relevant authorities the power to bestow the honour(s) of Honorary Freeman and the Freedom of the Borough to persons and/or organisations of distinction and persons and/or organisations who have, in the opinion of the relevant authority, rendered eminent services to that place or area.

- 2.2 The practice provides a dignified, celebratory and satisfactory means of enabling the Borough to honour a highly distinguished higher education public research institution of the University of Leicester with close ties, associations and presence with/in the Borough.
- 2.3 The title of Honorary Freeman and designate of Freedom of the Borough is the highest honour the Borough can bestow, although it carries no privileges save for the right to use the title of 'Freeman' and to receive invitations to attend or be represented at civic events.
- 2.4 To this end, an extraordinary meeting of the Council must be convened to specifically consider the matter, with two-thirds of those Members present and voting in favour of resolving to grant the University the honour of Honorary Freeman and the Freedom of the Borough under the Act and paragraph 1.1.7 of Section 3 of Part 3 of the Constitution.
- 2.5 Accordingly, under Rule 3.1.2 of Section 1 of Part 4 of the Constitution, the Mayor has requested the Chief Executive to convene this extraordinary meeting of the Council, at which the finance and resource implications of the proposed granting of the honour of Honorary Freeman and the Freedom of the Borough will also be duly considered.

### **3. Information**

- 3.1 Founded as a living memorial to honour those who made sacrifices during The Great War, the University was inaugurated in 1921 with just 11 students and two staff. Since then, the University has grown into a diverse and inclusive community of 18,000 students, 4,000 staff from more than 100 countries, and 200,000 alumni from 194 countries. A great number of alumni also notably includes past and present residents of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston and even past and present Members and Officers of this Council.
- 3.2 The University has existed to improve lives, and its motto '*Ut Vitam Habeant*' ('So That They May Have Life') is its driving and motivating force. The students and staff at the University are aptly-styled 'Citizens of Change', with a collective social conscience that pushes it to build better futures in its community and the wider society. This laudable sentiment cannot be truer in and resonates throughout the Borough of Oadby & Wigston.
- 3.3 The Borough's culturally-diverse population is vastly enriched by a large presence of young people by the University's Halls of Residence ("The Village"). The Village is based in the Oadby Grange Ward and an integral part of the Oadby Hill Top and Meadowcourt Conservation Area spanning Stoughton Drive South, Knighton Grange Road and Manor Road. It is a home-away-from-home popular with over 1,300+ mostly first-year undergraduates, offering a vibrant social life and a wide variety of first-rate facilities. It is a nurturing place to settle into university life, to make new friends and to launch one's academic journey.
- 3.4 There are eight halls of residence in The Village, each with its own distinctive and unique features comprising of mostly Edwardian villas and lodges, built in fashionable Arts and Crafts styles before the First World War, and boasting quintessential focal points including wood-panelled walls and gardens. The appeal of The Village halls is not just the buildings, but also the generous amount of green space around them. This includes the University's own idyllic Botanic Gardens, focusing on global biodiversity, where residents and visitors can see and learn about a range of plants that grow in its extensive worldwide collections.
- 3.5 As the University celebrates its second centenary year in 2021, the Council supports the University's commitment to showcasing the contribution and impact of its people, places and events, which demonstrate the University's full and diverse history and steadfast

commitment to inclusivity. As such, the Council joins it in marking this momentous milestone, to reflect on its joint past and look ahead to how we can shape our shared future.

#### **4. Financial and Resource Implications**

- 4.1 Section 249(9) of the Act (as amended) states that a relevant authority may spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address or casket containing an address to a person and/or organisation on whom the authority has conferred the title of Honorary Freeman of the place or area for which it is the authority.
- 4.2 The costs of the procurement and presentation of an actual certificate, scroll or similar token conferring the honour(s) for presentation are minimal. However, there may be a greater cost associated in making the arrangements for formally bestowing the honour(s) and arranging a civic ceremony and/or reception should the Council be minded to grant it.
- 4.3 These costs include, but are not limited to, staff time in making the arrangements (including event planning meetings with external bodies) and costs associated with any civic ceremony and/or reception arranged as part of an all-inclusive celebratory event.

#### **5. Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

- 5.1 In light of the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this proposal comes at a time when COVID-19 continues to present risks to public health. Whilst it would ordinarily be the case that the bestowment and presentation of the honour(s) would take place in-person at such extraordinary meetings convened for this purpose, it is recommended that an appropriate civic ceremony and/or reception to be held in lieu on a future date to be confirmed and at such a time when the COVID-19 restrictions permit or have ended.