

**Committee:** Extraordinary meeting of the Council

**Date of meeting:** 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2008

<b>Subject:</b>	Appointment of an Honorary Freeman of the Borough
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Chief Executive [Mayor's Secretary]
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Roy Taylor, the Leader
<b>Link to Council Priorities:</b>	
<b>Exempt information:</b>	None
<b>Delegated status:</b>	For resolution

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

To consider a proposal that the title of Honorary Freeman be conferred upon Mr. Michael Aspel, OBE, in recognition of the eminent service to the community and local charities, which he has given consistently for more than 30 years.

In addition to being very involved with cancer charities, he has continued to support local events, whether to celebrate a resident's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday or give his time freely to help raise the profile of local charities.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT THE COUNCIL CONFER THE TITLE OF HONORARY FREEMAN TO MR. MICHAEL ASPEL, OBE, WITH THE FORMAL PRESENTATION BEING UNDERTAKEN AT THE MAYOR'S CIVIC RECEPTION ON 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2008.**

### **REPORT:**

1. The Local Government Act 1972, Section 249(5), allows a Borough Council to admit 'persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the City, Borough or Royal Borough' as Honorary Freemen.
2. Such a resolution of the Council must be passed by no less than two-thirds of the Members voting at a specially convened meeting.
3. The Mayor, Councillor Mrs. Rosemary Dane, has proposed that the title of Honorary Freeman of the Borough should be conferred upon Mr. Michael Aspel OBE, in recognition of his service to the Elmbridge community, specifically in relation to his unstinting support for local charities over more than 30 years, in addition to his work with the national Charity, Cancer Research UK.
4. Mr. Aspel is Vice-President of the Princess Alice Hospice in Esher and was Patron during their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, helping enormously to raise the profile of the Hospice through, for example hosting various events and being the voice on their DVD.

5. He is also President of both the Hinchley Manor Operatic Society and the Claygate Dramatic Society and is Vice-President of the Claygate Flower Show and Patron of the Weybridge Society.
6. Over many years, Mr. Aspel has given his time to local events and, when other commitments have allowed, has actively supported many of the Mayor of Elmbridge's Charities, including national charities, where they have worked to support the local community within the area, including the Walton Firs Foundation, Stephanie Marks Diabetes Appeal, Asthma UK, Rotary, the Shooting Star Children's Hospice and the Alzheimers Society.
7. On the national and international front Mr. Aspel is a supporter, and takes an active interest in Riding for the Disabled, Bliss and Plan International, an organisation committed to helping children of the third world. He is the President of the Evacuees Association.
8. He is also a committed supporter of many charities based in Surrey including The Children's Trust at Tadworth and Orpheus in Godstone, an organisation created by Richard Stilgoe for handicapped young people, using the art of music and drama to enrich their lives and where Mr. Aspel visits and works regularly.
9. Mr. Aspel is also celebrating 50 years of broadcasting and will retire in 2008 from the popular Antiques Roadshow programme, which he has presented since 2000.
10. A long time resident of the Borough, he is a person of distinction who has given freely of his time in support of deserving causes and organisations and has been a great ambassador for and inspiration to, the people of Elmbridge.
11. The Council has previously conferred the title of Honorary Freeman to Sir Cliff Richard, OBE.
12. The status of Honorary Freeman does not confer any specific rights other than the honour and prestige of the title and the knowledge that the person is one of a small select grouping. Provision would be made to provide the recipient with a commemorative scroll and Honorary Freeman badge in recognition of the award.

**Financial implications:**

There are minimal costs associated with awarding the Freedom of the Borough, and these can be met from existing budgets.

**Environmental / Sustainability Implications:** None

**Legal implications:** None

**Equality Implications:** None

**Risk Implications:** None

**Community Safety Implications:** None

**Principle Consultees:** Group Leaders

**Background papers:** None

**Enclosures/Appendices:** None

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