

Freedom of the Borough – Ministry of Defence Joint Hospital Group

Purpose

To consider conferring the Freedom of the Borough on all ranks of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Joint Hospital Group (South East) located at Frimley Park Hospital.

Introduction

1. In 1996, Frimley Park became the first NHS hospital in the country to host a military medical unit following the closure of the Cambridge Military Hospital in nearby Aldershot. The Joint Hospital Group employs over 1200 single Service medical staff from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force who are embedded within the NHS throughout the country supported by 5 tri-Service Joint Hospital Group units.
2. The group form part of the Surrey Heath local Community Covenant Group, which was established on the 31st January 2012.
3. Given the longstanding links between the Borough, Frimley Park Hospital and the MOD Joint Hospital Group and in recognition of the extra ordinary service provided during the pandemic, it is proposed to mark and celebrate its contribution to the Borough and our community, by conferring the Honorary Freedom of the Borough on all ranks of this military unit.

Freedom of the Borough

4. The right to confer Freedom of the Borough was first established through the Honorary Freedom of the Boroughs Act 1885, subsequently incorporated into other legislation. The current authority lies with the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Proposal

5. It is proposed that the Council exercises its powers under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer the Honorary Freedom of the Borough on all ranks of the MOD Joint Hospital Group and to invite them to march through the streets of the Borough on the 12th September, with the full privileges conferred thereon.

Resource Implications

6. Any staff implications will be met from within existing resources, but it is suggested that a budget of up to £10,000 is made available if required and managed as a delegated authority by Louise Livingston, Executive Head, Transformation.

Recommendation

7. The Council is advised to RESOLVE that:
- (i) in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council of the Borough of Surrey Heath, DO HEREBY CONFER upon All Ranks of the Ministry of Defence Joint Hospital Group located at Frimley Park Hospital, the HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH OF SURREY HEATH and thereby the right, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets of the Borough on all ceremonial occasions with colours flying, bands playing, drums beating and bayonets fixed; and the Chief Executive be authorised to cause the Common Seal of the Council to be affixed to the Scroll signifying the Grant of the Freedom of the Borough to the Ministry of Defence Joint Hospital Group;
 - (ii) the Commanding Officer of the Joint Hospital Group (South East), Lt Col Tessa J Grieves RRC, be invited to consider the Royal Military Academy marching ceremonially through the Borough, on Sunday 12th September 2021, with Colours flying and bayonets fixed; and
 - (iii) a budget of up to £10,000 be made available if required and authority be delegated to the Executive Head, Transformation to manage this budget.

Annexes None

Background Papers: None

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