

***Supplementary Report  
of the Cabinet***



**The CABINET reports and recommends as follows:-**

**4. Honorary Freedom of the City**

That at its meeting on 23 March, Cabinet will be giving consideration to a report of the Interim Head of Paid Service (copy attached) recommending that the Council consider formally conferring the Honorary Freedom of the City upon former Sunderland AFC footballer, Jimmy Montgomery, BEM and John Hays, founder of Hays Travel, to recognise their outstanding contributions to the wellbeing and community spirit of the City.

The Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council that:-

- (i) it agrees to the conferring, in accordance with the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, of the Honorary Freedom of the City upon Jimmy Montgomery, BEM and John Hays, and
- (ii) authority be given for the Interim Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree all appropriate arrangements for the formal ceremony at an extraordinary meeting of the Council.

The recommendations of the Cabinet will be reported to the Council meeting.



**CABINET**

**23 MARCH 2016**

## **HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE CITY**

### **Report of the Interim Head of Paid Service**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

To consider recommending Council to formally confer the Honorary Freedom of the City upon former Sunderland AFC footballer, Jimmy Montgomery, BEM and John Hays, founder of Hays Travel, to recognise their outstanding contributions to the wellbeing and community spirit of the City.

#### **2.0 Description of Decision**

To recommend to Council that:-

- (i) it agrees to the conferring, in accordance with the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, of the Honorary Freedom of the City upon Jimmy Montgomery, BEM and John Hays, and
- (ii) authority be given for the Interim Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree all appropriate arrangements for the formal ceremony at an extraordinary meeting of the Council.

#### **3.0 Background**

The Council has traditionally honoured notable citizens of Sunderland who have made significant contributions to the wellbeing and community spirit of the City by conferring on them the Honorary Freedom of the City.

Members of the Council have now nominated two candidates for consideration:-

### **3.1 Jimmy Montgomery, BEM**

Jimmy Montgomery, BEM has been nominated in recognition of his services to the City as an ambassador, footballer, youth team manager and coach in addition to his involvement with many fundraising events for a number of Wearside charities.

Jimmy, fondly known as 'Monty,' was born in Hendon, Sunderland and as a youngster joined Sunderland AFC in 1960. He went on to make a record 627 appearances for Sunderland.

Jimmy played a pivotal role in the 1973 F.A. Cup Final against Leeds United where he made an iconic double save to seal a 1-0 win. This was considered by many to be the greatest double save ever seen at Wembley. He remained at Sunderland for a further three seasons until the departure of manager Bob Stokoe before spells at Southampton, Birmingham City and Nottingham Forest. After Jimmy retired as a player he became the SAFC youth team manager before moving into coaching.

In 2012 Jimmy became the first official Club Ambassador, to be a host on match days and represent SAFC at outside events. He was the driving force behind the SAFC Former Players' Association and has arranged and hosted many fundraising events for a number of Wearside charities. He received an Honorary Fellowship from the University of Sunderland in 2014 and then in June 2015 he was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List and awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for his services to football.

Jimmy is held in very high esteem by residents of Sunderland and having dedicated over half a century to football he is hugely respected in the footballing world.

### **3.2 John Hays**

John Hays, after graduating from Oxford and gaining an MBA from Manchester, began his career in the city of London as a merchant banker. He quickly realised this wasn't for him and decided to start his own business, finally choosing travel over that of funeral director.

John's first office in 1980 was in the back of his mother's children's wear shop in Seaham, with garden trellis dividing the clothes from the travel agency. Those humble beginnings, he believes, have kept his feet firmly on the ground throughout his career.

John Hays has now been in the travel industry for more than three decades. Hays Travel now employs more than 1,000 people, including 406 at its Sunderland headquarters in Vine Place. Very recently Hays Travel was voted as one of the Best Companies to Work for by The Times.

Hays Travel continues on with its expansion beyond the northeast but no matter how large the business becomes, Sunderland-born John is committed to remaining in the city centre.

John says that he is very proud of the teams at head office for their attitude, work ethic and superb morale. He is also proud of training staff from apprentices to senior positions in Hays Travel, and the company has a long-term commitment to apprentices, taking on another 100 this year. He has contributed a huge amount to the city in which he was born and grew up.

John Hays' impressive achievements have brought him many prestigious national awards from the travel industry. This award from his home town brings together and recognises two key priorities of John's life – business success and Sunderland success.

#### **4.0 Current Position**

Given Sunderland's long tradition of conferring the Freedom of the City on those notable individuals who, through their various achievements, have contributed to the wellbeing and community spirit of the City, it is considered appropriate to recommend the Council to confer the Freedom of the City upon the two nominees.

#### **5.0 Reasons for Decision**

The proposal will formally seal the relationships between the nominees and the City of Sunderland and will recognise their contributions to the wellbeing and community spirit of the City.

#### **6.0 Alternative Options**

There are no alternative options submitted for consideration, as the conferring of honorary freedoms is considered to be appropriate in order to recognise the outstanding contributions made by the nominated individuals.

#### **7.0 Background Papers**

None.

