

COMMITTEE: COUNCIL REF NO: C/19/02
DATE: 24 JULY 2019
SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY
RECORDER
PROPER OFFICER: RUSSELL WILLIAMS

Short description of report content and the decision requested:

Ipswich has the right to appoint an Honorary Recorder under the Courts Act of 1971. Whilst the post is now a purely honorary title, its existence signifies the strong links between the Council, the Courts and the Ipswich community.

His Honour Judge Devaux recently retired from the post of Honorary Recorder, having served in the role from April 2000.

It is proposed to appoint His Honour Judge Martyn Levett as the Borough's Honorary Recorder.

List of Appendices included in this report:

None

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This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Cllrs D Ellesmere, I Fisher and I Lockington
- Ms S Jarlett – Monitoring Officer

The following policies form a context to this report:

(all relevant policies must also be referred to in the body of the report)

Building a Better Ipswich 2017

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(papers relied on to write the report but which are not published and do not contain exempt information)

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| 1. None |
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OTHER HELPFUL PAPERS

(papers which the report author considers might be helpful – this might include published material)

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| 1. 'The Lord Chief Justice's Guidelines for the Appointment of Honorary Recorders' published on 1 st August 2007 |
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The first mention of a Recorder in Ipswich was in 1574. The title appears to originate from the fact that in certain Courts precedents were not reduced to writing, but were certified verbally by the officer, who was therefore called the Recorder.
- 1.2 The first Recorder of Ipswich was John Clenche who was paid a £13/6s/8d fee yearly and was expected to reside permanently in the town and to assist and almost certainly to preside at all courts in which the presence or the judgement of the Bailiffs was required.
- 1.3 Another notable holder of the post was Nathaniel Bacon, who, as well as being Recorder, represented Ipswich in the Parliaments of 1654-1660 and was the compiler of 'The Annals of Ipswich'.
- 1.4 The Courts Act of 1971 abolished Courts of Quarter Sessions and with them the office of Recorder. As a consolation to Boroughs like Ipswich, which previously had a separate Court of Quarter Sessions, the 1971 Act empowered the Council of such a Borough to appoint a person to be Honorary Recorder provided he was a Circuit Judge. The office of Honorary Recorder does not carry with it any involvement in the administration of justice in Ipswich and is purely an honorary title. In the order of precedence the Honorary Recorder ranks immediately behind the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- 1.5 The first Honorary Recorder appointed by Ipswich Borough Council under the 1971 Act was His Honour Judge Bertrand Richards, who held the post from 1975-1999. In 2000 His Honour Judge John Devaux was appointed following HHJ Richards' retirement. HHJ Devaux retired from the role in November 2018.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The four Circuit Judges who sit at Ipswich Crown Court and are therefore eligible for the position of Honorary Recorder were written to notifying them of the Council's intention to appoint to the role. Responses were received from all of the Circuit Judges and His Honour Judge Levett expressed an interest in the role. His Honour Judge Levett is also Ipswich's Resident Judge.
- 2.2 Council is invited to consider appointing His Honour Judge Martyn Levett to the position of Honorary Recorder. The appointment is proposed to be for 4 years i.e. until the Annual Meeting of Council in 2023.

3. Relevant Policies

- 3.1 Building a Better Ipswich 2017 – The Council's Corporate Plan
By appointing an Honorary Recorder the Council will promote strong links with the judiciary contributing to Priority 6 - Safe Communities.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 Consultation has been carried out with the previous Honorary Recorder, those Judges eligible for the role and the political group leaders.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 **That Council consider appointing His Honour Judge Martyn Levett to the position of Honorary Recorder until the Annual Meeting of Council in 2023.**