



**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

# **COUNCIL MEETING**

**16 March 2021**

**7.00 pm**

**Virtual Meeting**

## **Contact**

Sandra Hancock

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**Publication date: 8 March 2021**

8 March 2021

Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend an extraordinary meeting of the Council of the Borough of Watford to be held on Tuesday, 16 March 2021 starting at 7.00 pm, the Virtual Meeting to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects, namely: -

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Disclosure of Interests**
- 3. Nomination for Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Watford (Pages 3 - 6)**
  - (a) That, in pursuance of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, this Council does hereby admit LUTHER BLISSETT to be an HONORARY FREEMAN OF THE BOROUGH OF WATFORD, the most honourable distinction which it is their privilege to bestow, in recognition of the eminent services rendered by him to the Borough. He has been involved and supported many community events over the years and throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. He has used his role model status as a football player to spread the anti-racism message in football and the whole Watford community. He is dedicated and always focused on doing his best for whatever project he is supporting.
  - (b) That the Corporate Seal be affixed to the presentation scroll embodying the above mentioned resolution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donna Nolan', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Donna Nolan, Managing Director**

Part A

**Report to:** Extraordinary Council

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday, 16 March 2021

**Report author:** Democratic Services Manager

**Title:** Nomination for Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Watford

## 1.0 Summary

1.1 The Standards Committee's terms of reference include the consideration of nominations received relating to the position of Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Watford.

1.2 On 27 January 2021 the Standards Committee considered a nomination received from Mayor Peter Taylor.

1.3 The committee unanimously recommended to Council that Luther Blissett is made an Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Watford.

## 2.0 Risks

2.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

## 3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That Luther Blissett be made Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Watford.

### **Further information:**

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Tel: 01923 278377

**Report approved by:** Donna Nolan, Managing Director

## 4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 Criteria which has been set by Council for the consideration of nominations for Freedom of the Borough are:

- persons who have given a lifetime of service to the Borough through their work in the community or business;

- persons who have influenced and achieved major change, which resulted in significant improvement in the social, environmental or economic wellbeing of the Borough;
- persons who have made a significant contribution to the Borough through their employment in the public services or their appointment in public office;
- a resident of the Borough who has made a significant contribution nationally to the Arts, Sport, the Voluntary Sector or Uniformed Services;
- a leading international figure who, through their actions and statesmanship would be seen as improving the wellbeing of a community, where a significant number of members of that community live in the Borough.

Candidates must be able to command respect from the people of the Borough, work as a civic figure in an ambassadorial role and be a role model for young people.

4.2 Standards Committee on 27 January considered a nomination made by the Mayor nominating Luther Blissett for the honour. The Mayor's submission presented to Standards Committee is attached at Appendix 1.

4.3 The Standards Committee unanimously recommended to Council the nomination.

4.4 Council is therefore asked to agree to Luther Blissett being made an Honorary Freeman.

4.5 If approved it would be hoped to have a formal award ceremony in the Town Hall when current COVID restrictions are lifted.

## 5.0 **Implications**

### 5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that if approved the council would usually hold a ceremony where the nominee would be given a robe and scroll this cost would need to be met from the civic expenses budget.

### 5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that Section 249 Local Government Act 1972 requires that the matter is considered at a special meeting of the Council convened for the purpose and that at least two thirds of those members present must support the recommendation for the honour to be bestowed.

### **5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, it is considered that there are no equalities implications in this report.

### **5.4 Staffing**

5.4.1 Not applicable.

### **5.5 Accommodation**

5.5.1 Not applicable.

### **5.6 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 Not applicable.

### **5.7 Sustainability**

5.7.1 Not applicable.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1** – Elected Mayor's written submission nominating Luther Blissett

## **Background papers**

Standards Committee 27 January 2021 – report and minutes

To Whom It May Concern

I would like to nominate Luther Blissett for the Honour of Freedom of the Borough.

Over many years Luther has been involved in literally scores of community events and projects. In the latest Covid-19 pandemic he has organised fundraising events, promoted other people's events including my own virtual fund raising quiz for the Covid Appeal and many raffles and auctions with Watford & Three Rivers Trust. He has also worked with many other local charities including supporting Veterans in Watford and Hertfordshire.

Luther has also had an outstanding career as a professional footballer and the first black footballer to score a hat-trick for the English National Team. Luther is an inspirational character and he has used his role model status as a football player to help get across the anti-racism message and educate the younger generation about racism. He has become a leading figure against racism and not just in football but within the whole community in Watford. Luther has been involved in Show Racism the Red Card (SRtRC) since the late 1990's when he was assistant Manager to Graham Taylor at Watford Football Club.

Luther has spoken up about his experiences of living with a family member with dementia and promoting Golden Memories, a reminiscence programme for people living with low to moderate dementia and their carers at Watford Football Club. Luther is very good at talking to many different groups of people and has had a huge impact on so many, he is an absolute football legend in their eyes

Luther will always speak up for his local community and challenge injustices. He works tirelessly and gives his time generously. He is dedicated and always focused on doing his best for whatever project he's supporting. He is calm and positive and never seeks any personal recognition or gain.

For all these reasons I have no hesitation in putting forward this nomination. Watford is lucky to have such a genuine and generous "local hero". If anyone ever deserved to have the honour of Freedom of the Borough, it is Luther Blissett.

Peter Taylor  
Elected Mayor of Watford