

**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING**  
**OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COVENTRY**

19<sup>th</sup> March, 2013

PRESENT

Lord Mayor (Councillor Sawdon)  
Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Crookes)

Councillor Mrs Abbott	Councillor Lakha
Councillor Akhtar	Councillor Lancaster
Councillor Ali	Councillor Mrs Lepoidevin
Councillor Andrews	Councillor Mrs Lucas
Councillor Auluck	Councillor McNicholas
Councillor Bains	Councillor Maton
Councillor Mrs Bigham	Councillor Mrs Miks
Councillor Blundell	Councillor Mulhall
Councillor Caan	Councillor J. Mutton
Councillor Chater	Councillor Mrs M. Mutton
Councillor Clifford	Councillor Noonan
Councillor Duggins	Councillor O'Boyle
Councillor Mrs Fletcher	Councillor Ruane
Councillor Foster	Councillor Sandy
Councillor Galliers	Councillor Sehmi
Councillor Gannon	Councillor Singh
Councillor Gingell	Councillor Skinner
Councillor Hammon	Councillor Mrs Sweet
Councillor Mrs Hetherton	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Howells	Councillor Thay
Councillor Innes	Councillor Thomas
Councillor Kelly	Councillor Townshend
Councillor Kershaw	Councillor Walsh
Councillor A. Khan	Councillor Welsh
	Councillor Williams

Apologies: Councillor Harvard, T. Khan and Councillor Skipper

Honorary Aldermen present: Mr D. Batten and Mr J.Gazey

**Public Business**

**138. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**139. Conferring the Freedom of the City to Her Majesty's Ship Diamond**

The City Council considered a report of the Director of Customer and Workforce Services which sought approval to confer the Freedom of the City on Her Majesty's Ship (HMS) Diamond and for an appropriate ceremonial event to be arranged on a date yet to be determined to mark the award of the Freedom of the City on the Ship's company.

The City of Coventry was last associated with a Royal Naval Ship when the City Council resolved on 13th September 1988 to grant the title of Freedom of the City to H.M.S. Coventry with the privilege conferred in a ceremony on 22nd July 1989. The ship was affiliated to the City until January 2002 when she was decommissioned.

In October 2007, to resume the City's long tradition of being affiliated to a naval ship, the then Lord Mayor and Leader of the Council were honoured to be approached by the Royal Navy and agreed that the City should become affiliated with H.M.S. Diamond. They were witness to the ship's launch in Glasgow in November 2007 and since that time the City has strengthened its affiliation in a number of areas. As a mark of dedication to this new affiliation, the refurbished ground floor space in the Council House was named 'The H.M.S. Diamond Suite' and unveiled by the Lord Mayor and Commodore Munns on 17th September 2008.

Whilst undertaking her Royal Naval duties, H.M.S. Diamond is a flagship for the City and promotes the name Coventry during all her activities. Throughout this relatively short time, the ship has forged strong links in a number of areas of the City:

- Coventry Cathedral: The Cross of Nails was presented to H.M.S. Diamond on her commissioning in May 2011 and holds prime position outside the Captain's Cabin on board ship. This same Cross of Nails was originally presented to H.M.S. Coventry that was sunk during the Falklands War in 1982. Rescued by divers, the Cross of Nails was presented to the next H.M.S. Coventry, but returned to the Cathedral for safe-keeping on her decommissioning in 2002. H.M.S. Diamond continues to carry forward the city's international message of peace and reconciliation and through the Cross of Nails maintains our historical links with the former H.M.S. Coventrys.
- Jaguar Land Rover: To mark H.M.S. Diamond's commissioning, a Captain's table was designed and manufactured by local craftsmen at JLR in Coventry and depicts the city's Coats of Arms through advanced design and bespoke use of their coloured veneers. Furthermore, as part of the launch of HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebration, Jaguar Land Rover presented a custom-made red leather Captain's chair for the bridge similarly manufactured by JLR craftsmen.
- UHCW Coventry & Warwickshire: H.M.S. Diamond has pledged to fundraise in support of the UHCW NHS Trust Charity with donations designated for the neonatal unit. They will be supporting the Trust Charity for the life of the ship which could last for up to 20 years.
- City of Coventry Freeman's Guild: It is customary for Royal naval ships to be associated with historical livery companies. As well as Coventry Freeman's Guild, the ship is associated to The Worshipful Company of Barbers and The Worshipful Company of Playing Card Makers.

Coventry and its partner organisations gain value from being affiliated with H.M.S. Diamond through them carrying the City's name. If the City did not confer the Freedom of the City (which it did to the City's previous affiliated ship H.M.S. Coventry), this could be seen as unappreciative of their acting as international ambassadors for the City. The value of this ambassador role was evident from a presentation made by the Commanding Officer, Andy Ingham, to the Council in January 2013.

Therefore, in order to affirm the bond between the City of Coventry and the Royal Navy through its affiliated ship, it was recommended that the City Council confers the Freedom of the City on H.M.S. Diamond and that an appropriate bespoke gift bearing the City's Coat of Arms and an Illuminated Minute under the Common Seal of the Council be presented for display on board as a symbolic gesture of the value of the affiliation.

For the citizens of the City to feel engaged and witness the privilege that has been granted, it was recommended that officers arrange a ceremonial Freedom Parade and reception, in consultation with the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Cabinet Member (Community Safety & Equalities). The date would be determined in full liaison with H.M.S. Diamond to take account of the Ship's naval programme.

Whilst it was anticipated that the one-off costs would be shared across the existing 2012/13 Lord Mayor's hospitality budget and the 2013/14 hospitality budget, the Council noted that it was hoped to attract private sponsorship towards the costs.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1) That in order to affirm the bond between the City of Coventry and the Royal Navy through its affiliated ship, the City Council confers the Freedom of the City on H.M.S. Diamond and that the following formal resolution, in traditional script, be passed:**

**“That the Council of the City of Coventry, being deeply sensible of the distinguished record and glorious tradition of those Ships of the Line bearing the name H.M.S. Diamond, over many years of loyal service to Sovereign and Country, and being desirous of reaffirming the respect and friendship of the City and sincerely wishing for this association to be fostered and strengthened, do confer upon Her Majesty's Ship Diamond the Freedom of Entry into the City and the right in perpetuity on all ceremonial occasions of honouring the City by exercising the privilege by marching through the City with colours flying, drums beating and bayonets fixed.”**

- 2) That an appropriate bespoke gift bearing the city's Coat of Arms and an Illuminated Minute under the Common Seal of the Council be presented for display on board ship as a symbolic gesture of the value of the affiliation.**
- 3) In order for the citizens of the city to feel engaged and witness the privilege that has been granted, that officers arrange a ceremonial Freedom Parade and reception at a date still to be determined, in consultation with the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Cabinet Member (Community Safety & Equalities).**

(Meeting closed at 2.15 pm)

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Lord Mayor