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**Extraordinary Meeting of the City Council**

**23 June, 2026**

**Name of Cabinet Member:**  
**Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership – Councillor G Duggins**

**Director approving submission of the report:**  
Director of Law, Governance and Safer Communities

**Ward(s) affected:**  
Not applicable

**Title: Conferring the Honorary Freedom of the City on Coventry City Football Club**

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**Is this a key decision?**  
No

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**Executive summary:**

In accordance with the Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is asked to confer the Honorary Freedom of the City on Coventry City Football Club in recognition of their achievement during the 2025/26 football season, culminating in winning the Championship League title and securing promotion to the Premier League and to show the City's appreciation of this achievement, together with recognising the important role the Club has played in the life of the City since 1883.

**Recommendations:**

In order to recognise the recent achievement of winning the Championship League and securing promotion to the Premier League, together with recognising the important role the Club has played in the life of the City since 1883 it is recommended:-

- 1) That the City Council confers the Honorary Freedom of the City on Coventry City Football Club and that the following resolution be passed:-

“That the Council of the City of Coventry, being deeply aware of the exceptional and outstanding achievements and the important role it has played in the life of the City since 1883, and being desirous of recognising the commitment and devotion of all those involved, whilst expressing appreciation, support and admiration for its achievements, does confer upon Coventry City Football Club the Honorary Freedom of the City of Coventry.”

- 2) That an Illuminated Minute under the Common Seal of the Council be presented at a suitable event on a future date for display at Coventry City Football Club as a symbolic gesture of the conferment.

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Background papers:**

None

**Other useful documents**

None

**Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

Yes - Extraordinary Meeting of Council – 23 June, 2026

## **Report title: Conferring the Honorary Freedom of the City on Coventry City Football Club**

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables Councils to confer the title of Honorary Freedom of the City on persons or organisations “of distinction who have in the opinion of the Council rendered eminent services to the City.”
- 1.2 This Resolution must be passed at a specially convened meeting of the Council by not less than two thirds of the Members voting.
- 1.3 Previous recent recipients of the Honorary Freedom of the City include The Right Honourable Dr Marjorie (Mo) Mowlam MP, HMS Coventry and subsequently HMS Diamond, Mr Ratan N. Tata GBE, Professor Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya KB CBE and University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust.
- 1.4 The Freedom of the City is a rare honour and is only given to those individuals and organisations that have made an outstanding contribution to the City of Coventry and the lives of its residents.
- 1.5 It is the highest honour a Local Authority can confer and it is proposed to be given to the Club in its entirety, recognising the players, management, staff, owner and the supporters and communities who have proudly stood behind the Club throughout its history.
- 1.6 The return to the Premier League after 25 years and all the Club has been through is a truly magnificent achievement. The Club is now on the biggest football stage in the world and is bringing recognition to the City.
- 1.7 Beyond the sporting achievement, Premier League status represents a significant opportunity for Coventry. The wider benefit to the City and region is expected to be felt across hospitality, retail, tourism and the visitor economy, with Premier League fixtures placing Coventry on a global stage every week.
- 1.8 The recent sporting achievements of Coventry City Football Club would merit the award by itself, but this award recognises far more. Since 1883, the Club has been a part of Coventry. In recent years, the Club has shown incredible determination and has toiled to bring success back to the Team and the City of Coventry.
- 1.9 The supporters too have played their part. Their support has been unwavering and it is clear how the success of the Club has uplifted the City. Tens of thousands of Coventry residents have flocked to the Coventry Building Society Arena for home games, and the knock-on effect and feel-good factor has been seen across the City. It has been clear how much the Club means to the people of Coventry and how the Football Team has been inspired by that.
- 1.10 The incredible scenes at the victory parade attended by an estimated 200,000 people, followed by almost 50,000 cheering the team at the ‘We Are Back’ event at the War

Memorial Park on 4 May, 2026 showed clearly what the Club means to so many and why it deserves this honour.

- 1.11 Coventry City Football Club is an integral part of the life of the City. The Honorary Freedom of the City recognises all the Club has done for Coventry and its residents, not just this year, but since 1883.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 In recognition of their achievement during the 2025/26 football season, culminating in the winning of the Championship League title and securing promotion to the Premier League and to show the City's appreciation of this achievement, together with recognising the important role the Club has played in the life of the City since 1883 it is recommended that the City Council confers the Honorary Freedom of the City on Coventry City Football Club.
- 2.2 If approved, it is proposed that an Illuminated Minute under the Common Seal of the Council will be presented at a suitable event to the Football Club at a later date for display at Coventry City Football Club as a symbolic gesture of the conferment.

## **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 The Leader of the Council, Councillor George Duggins, publicly indicated his intention to put this Recommendation to Council following the Club's securement of promotion to the Premiership.

## **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 If approved, the presentation of the Illuminated Minute under the Common Seal of the Council will be presented at a suitable event on a future date.

## **5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law, Governance and Safer Communities**

### **5.1. Financial Implications**

There are one-off financial implications arising from this report, predominantly the costs associated with a suitable event to mark the privilege. These include:

- Costs associated with the suitable event
- An Illuminated Minute
- A plaque for display at Coventry City Football Club

These costs will be met from the civic budget.

## 5.2. Legal Implications

The Recommendations are in accordance with the provisions set out in Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

## 6. Other implications

### 6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

The conferment recognises the civic pride felt by many residents across the City in the Football Club. This was clear to see during the parade and event held in the City on 4 May, 2026. Promotion to the Premiership also affords the City economic opportunities linked to having a Football Club in the City in the top flight of English football.

### 6.2. How is risk being managed?

Not applicable

### 6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

There is a one-off financial impact which will be met from within the budgets allocated to the civic office.

### 6.4. Equalities / EIA?

Not applicable

### 6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

Not applicable

### 6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

The conferment recognises the achievement of one of the Council's partner organisations.

**Report author(s):**

Name: Suzanne Bennett

Title: Governance Services Co-ordinator

**Service Area:**

Law, Governance and Safer Communities

**Tel and email contact:**

Tel: 02476 972299

Email: [Suzanne.Bennett@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:Suzanne.Bennett@coventry.gov.uk)

Enquiries should be directed to the above person

<b>Contributor/approver name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Date doc sent out</b>	<b>Date response received or approved</b>
<b>Contributors:</b>				
Adrian West	Head of Governance	Law, Governance and Safer Communities	01/06/26	08/06/26
John West	Internal Comms Co-ordinator	Communications and Policy	01/06/26	01/06/26
Other Members				
<b>Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)</b>				
Finance: Barry Hastie	Director of Finance and Resources	Finance and Resources	09/06/26	12/06/26
Director/Legal Julie Newman	Director of Law, Governance and Safer Communities	Law, Governance and Safer Communities	01/06/26	08/06/26
Members: Councillor G Duggins	Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership	-	09/06/26	12/06/26

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