

Date: 15th July, 2021



Doncaster Council

To the Chair and Members of
The COUNCIL

FREEDOM OF ENTRY – COLDSTREAM GUARDS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report asks Members to consider conferring the Freedom of Entry to the Borough to the Coldstream Guards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Council is asked to support the application and agree to bestow the Freedom of Entry to the Borough to the Coldstream Guards.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

3. The Freedom of Entry is the highest honour that the Council can give to a military unit. Conferring the Freedom of Entry to the Borough to the Coldstream Guards would allow the citizens of Doncaster to recognise and celebrate the long and proud history that the town shares with the regiment.

BACKGROUND

4. The Freedom of Entry is granted by full Council to a military contingent and bears the same honour and respect as granting the Honorary Freedom of the Borough to an individual. Freedom of Entry allows the unit the right to march through the town bearing arms, if they so choose.
5. In accordance with the Council's protocol a panel consisting of the Civic Mayor and leaders of each of the political groups (see consultation - paragraph 21 below) met to consider the nomination and gave it their full and unequivocal support.
6. The decision to bestow this honour must be approved by a formal resolution of Full Council. A vote will be taken and if it is supported by no less than two thirds of those members present then 'Freedom of Entry' will be granted to the nominee.
7. Doncaster has given the Freedom of Entry to three military contingents. The first was granted to the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (KOYLI) in 1946. This was transferred to the re-named Rifles Regiment in 2007. The second

honour was granted to RAF Finningley on 12th October 1975. In 2008 the 150 (Yorkshire) Transport Regiment Royal Logistic Corps (Volunteers) were given the honour.

Background to the Coldstream Guards and its History/connection to Doncaster.

8. On the thirteenth of August 1650 at the small border town of Coldstream which is found between England and Scotland, a new Regiment was raised as part of Cromwell's New Model army. The Regiment then was named General Monks regiment of foot, or Monks foot. Today that Regiment has the distinction of being the British Army's oldest and longest serving Corps in continuous existence, but also the sole representative by lineal descent of the first regular army raised by Oliver Cromwell under the title "New Model". This illustrious Regiment which many Doncaster men have served, fought and died in is now known as The Coldstream Guards.
9. In 1660 the Regiment marched from Coldstream to London to assist in the restoration of Charles II to the throne. The regiment stopped off to rest and gather provisions in Doncaster. History has it the first "Donny lads" followed the drum. Thus began a connection and history with Doncaster which stretches back over 361 years.
10. The Regiment has served with great distinction when called upon to do so in many conflicts. The Regiment helped capture Gibraltar 1704, served under Wellington in the peninsular wars and held the Chateau of Hougoumont a pivotal battle within the battle of Waterloo. Service in the Boer wars and the first and second world wars followed.
11. In the First World War two local men George Harry Wyatt and Thomas Norman Jackson won the highest award that can be bestowed for bravery the Victoria Cross. George Wyatt is buried at Cadeby, and Thomas Jackson in Swinton.
12. In recent years the Coldstream Guards have served in Malaya, Aden, Cyprus (UN), Northern Ireland, Bosnia (UN), The Gulf, Kosovo and Afghanistan. Since the Boer war (1899-01) a Doncaster man has served with the Regimental in every conflict or operation it has undertaken. Poignantly, proof of this can be found on a large number of war graves and war memorials spread in and around the Borough.
13. The Coldstream Guards Association was formed in 1913 as a regimental charity. Doncaster's branch number nineteen was formed in 1934. The branch meets regularly at the Comrades of the Great War social club on the second Tuesday of the month. It has a current strength of a hundred and 125 former Guardsmen. As well as raising funds for its own veteran's it donates a percentage of monies raised to an annually nominated local charity. Currently this is the internationally acclaimed Deaf school.

14. Over the past twenty-nine years, on or as near to St George's Day as possible, veterans of the Regiment descend on Doncaster in vast numbers for the 2nd Battalion Annual Remembrance weekend. One of only two functions held outside of London by former Guardsmen.
- 15 The Regiment has many battle honours starting with "Tangier, 1680" to the latest addition "Gulf, 1991" The Queen's and Regimental colours of the 2nd Battalion have been placed in St Georges Minster Doncaster for safe keeping. An honour which is only given by permission of Her Majesty the Queen.
16. The Regiment nationally has five permanent recruiting sergeants one of which when manning allows is always from and posted to the Doncaster Army Recruiting office. This is in recognition to the high quality and large numbers of people from the town who have always been eager to serve in the Regiment.
17. Where possible the Regimental band and serving soldiers visit Doncaster in a variety of ways either performing for the public or demonstrating their skills and recruiting.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASON FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

18. Option one (**recommended option**) is to recommend that Council supports the application and confer the Freedom of the Entry to the Borough on the Coldstream Guards. This is the recommended to recognise and celebrate the long and proud history that the town shares with the regiment.
19. Option two is to decline the application to confer the Freedom of Entry to the Borough on the Coldstream Guards

RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS

20. If the Coldstream Guards are granted this honour it is likely that there would be an outdoor ceremony that would incorporate a march through Doncaster by the Regiment. This would lead to a closure of parts of the town centre for a short period and would be managed in consultation with, and the support of the Police, highways personnel etc. working to a planned programme. A date for such an event would be subject to the availability of the unit and is likely to take place in 2022 although a smaller, interim ceremony could be arranged when the Guards visit Doncaster in September

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (Name: SRF Date 24.06.2021)

21. Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 deals with the admission to the Freedom of the Borough of "persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Borough". The Council is required to consider this application.
22. Associated with the Freedom of the Borough is the 'Freedom of Entry'.

Freedom of Entry allows the unit to march through the streets of the borough with bayonets fixed, drums beating and colours flying.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

23. Those being honoured are given a civic reception, hosted by the Civic Mayor at the Mansion House, to include a buffet and beverages at an approximate cost of £800. Recipients also receive a framed Freedom Scroll that costs approximately £1000. The total cost of £1800 will be funded from the Civic Mayor's budget.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

24. Doncaster Council aims to be outstanding in all aspects of equality and diversity. The Council seeks to create an environment that promotes, values and celebrates equality and diversity ensuring everyone feels welcome and that individuals are treated fairly, equally and with respect and are not discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation. We will advance equality of opportunity, intend to eliminate unlawful discrimination and foster good relations. All of these aims will be considered and upheld during the decision making process associated with this report.

CONSULTATION

25. The application has been considered initially by the Civic Mayor along with representatives of the Labour Group, Conservative Group and Putting Mexborough First Group, who have given their unanimous approval for the application to be taken forward to be considered by Council.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

26. Freedom of Entry Application from Peter Dodd plus letters of support from Bobbie Roberts and FireFly

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

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