

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Council

7 November 2018

TITLE:	Honorary Freedom of The Borough
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Ashton - Council Leader
CONTACT OFFICER:	Linden Vernon – Senior Officer (Governance and Member Support)
WARDS INVOLVED:	Non-Specific

Appendices Attached – None

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 This report asks members to confer the Honorary Freedom of the Borough upon the High Peak branches of the Royal British Legion in recognition of their long service to the residents of the Borough.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That in pursuance of the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, in recognition of their eminent services to the people of the Borough over many years, the Council do hereby confer the Honorary Freedom of the Borough upon the branches of the Royal British Legion within the High Peak.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Council has powers to confer the Honorary Freedom of the Borough under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972. This may be granted where, in the opinion of the Council, people or organisations have rendered eminent services to the Borough.
- 3.2 It is proposed that this honour be conferred upon the local branches of the Royal British Legion within the High Peak given its support to serving members of the armed forces, veterans and their families, its campaigns to improve their lives and to remember the fallen.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report relates to the ceremonial aspects of civic life and links to the Council's priority to work with and support our partners.

5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 There are two options: to support the recommendations or not to do so. The Council is recommended to support the proposal to recognise the High Peak branches of the Royal British Legion.

Mark Trillo

Executive Director (People) and Monitoring Officer

Web Links and Background Papers

[Local Government Act 1972](#)

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6. **Detail**

- 6.1 The Council has powers to confer the Honorary Freedom of the Borough under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972. This provides that the Council may “by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the Council specifically convened for the purposes, admit to be Honorary Freeman of the Borough persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Borough”.
- 6.2 Authorities have sometimes used this power to confer the Honorary Freedom of the Borough on organisations rather than individuals. In the case of High Peak, it has previously awarded the honour to the Mercian Regiment.
- 6.3 It is therefore proposed that, in recognition of their eminent services to the people of the Borough over many years, the Honorary Freedom of the Borough be conferred on the High Peak branches of the Royal British Legion.
- 6.4 The Royal British Legion has existed for almost a century and helps members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans and their families all year round. It also campaigns to improve their lives, organise the Poppy Appeal and remember the fallen.
- 6.5 The organisation’s website gives the following information on the history of the Royal British Legion:

“The British Legion was formed on 15 May 1921, bringing together four national organisations of ex-Servicemen that had established themselves after the First World War.

The main purpose of the Legion was straightforward: to care for those who had suffered as a result of service in the Armed Forces during the war, whether through their own service or through that of a husband, father or son. The suffering took many forms: the

effect of a war wound on a man's ability to earn a living and support his family, or a war widow's struggle to give her children an education.

Even those who had come through the war relatively unscathed struggled with employment. As a result of the war, Britain's economy plummeted and in 1921 there were two million unemployed. Over six million men had served in the war - 725,000 never returned. Of those who came back, 1.75 million had suffered some kind of disability and half of these were permanently disabled. Added to this figure were the families who depended on those who had gone to war - the wives and children, widows and orphans as well as the parents who had lost sons in the war, who often contributed to the household income.

The situation so moved Lancastrian Lance Bombardier Tom Lister, that he decided that if the government was either unable or unwilling to do anything to improve the lives of ex-Servicemen, he would do something about it himself. This eventually led to the formation of The British Legion.

When the Legion's leaders looked around them, they saw the gigantic task of looking after those who had suffered in the recent war and also the need to prevent further sacrifice by reminding the nation of the human cost of war and to work actively for peace.

By the time of the Legion's formation in 1921, the tradition of an annual Two Minute Silence in memory of the dead had been established. The first ever Poppy Appeal was held that year, with the first Poppy Day on 11st November 1921."

- 6.6 The organisation was granted 'Royal' status in 1971, and extended its membership to serving members of Her Majesty's Armed Forces, as well as ex-Service personnel, in 1981. Now, anyone can become a member of The Royal British Legion and it welcomes men and women of all ages, whether they have served in the Armed Forces or not, to continue the work that was begun nearly 100 years ago.
- 6.7 The Borough has been served by a number of branches since 1921. The table below lists those which currently provide support to the communities of the High Peak together with the date that the branch was opened.

Branch	Originally Opened
Bamford	1943
Buxton	1921
Chapel-en-le-Frith	1928
Glossop	1930
Hayfield	1922
Whaley Bridge	1928