

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – 12TH DECEMBER 2023

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 12TH DECEMBER 2023 AT 10:15AM AT THE MICHAEL JONES JEWELLER CHAMPIONS SUITE, CINCH STADIUM, FRANKLIN'S GARDENS, WEEDON ROAD, NORTHAMPTON

PRESENT: Councillor S Hibbert (Town Mayor)

COUNCILLORS: J Alwahabi, J Birch, M Hallam, E Haque, K Holland-Delamere, F Ismail, L Marriott, C Russell, D Soan and A Stevens.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr S Carter (Town Clerk), Mrs J Thorneycroft (Assistant Town Clerk), Miss F Barford (Democratic Services Officer), Mr C Osborn (Community Engagement Officer), Caroline Burke, Miss J Haines and Mrs L Hanam-Jones (Events and Project Officers)

OTHERS PRESENT: Miss L Cox (Mayoress), Canon M Webber (Mayor's Chaplain), Courtney Lawes, Chantelle Cameron, Members of the Northampton Freeman & Women, Guests of Courtney Lawes and Chantelle Cameron, Staff of Northampton Saints, Members of the Public and Students of Northampton International Academy, St James Primary School, Malcolm Arnold Academy, Earl Spencer Primary School, Guilsborough School.

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were submitted by Councillor G Eales, Meredith, Joyce and Lane.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

27. OPENING ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR OF NORTHAMPTON

The Mayor welcomed Chantelle Cameron and Courtney Lawes, Councillors, school children and the public to the Town Council's first Freedom of the Town meeting.

The Mayor explained the Freedom of the Town was an ancient honour dating back to medieval times and it was obtained by honour of the Mayor, via apprenticeship or hereditary. He continued, the privileges for Freeman & Women was rights to trade and participate in the governance of the Town and provided them with right to have their sheep graze on common land. The Mayor stated in present-day the title was the highest honour the Council could bestow upon an individual or group.

The Mayor highlighted throughout the history of the former Northampton Borough Council there had been few female Freedom nominations and were proud to announce Chantelle Cameron would be first, of hopefully many female sportspersons to receive this honour.

The Mayor concluded his address and provided thanks to the Town Council Officers, Matchroom Staff, Northampton Saint, Cinch Stadium and the special guests of Chantelle Cameron and Courtney Lawes.

28. TO BESTOW THE TITLE OF HONORARY FREEMAN OF NORTHAMPTON TO COURTNEY LINFORD LAWES OF NORTHAMPTON

Councillor Birch proposed that Courtney Linford Lawes be bestowed the title of Honorary Freeman in recognition for his contribution to sports locally and nationally. She highlighted Lawes's dedication to his hometown of Northampton and the Northampton Saints and his country. Councillor Birch expressed how Lawes was a role model to many within Northampton and how he continued to inspire.

Councillor Soan seconded the motion and explained how Lawes was a steadfast figure who embodied commitment and the values of Northampton. He continued, that Lawes was rightfully deserved to be bestowed with the Freedom of the Town for Lawes' contributions to Northampton, sport and history.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with section 249(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 that Courtney Lawes be bestowed the title of Honorary Freeman of Northampton.

Courtney Lawes recited the oath of the Freemen & Women of Northampton, signed the declaration and received the honour from the Mayor.

29. COURTNEY LINFORD LAWES TO ADDRESS THOSE PRESENT IN RESPONSE TO THE HONOUR BESTOWED UPON HIM

Courtney Lawes addressed the meeting and expressed gratitude at being elected an Honorary Freeman of Northampton Town. Lawes continued that he begun playing rugby from the age of 13 years old therefore, no one should be dissuaded from pursuing something because of their age. Lawes stated he owes his success and achievement to many, his wife, family, the coaching team, Saints Rugby Club and his fans.

30. TO BESTOW THE TITLE OF HONORARY FREEWOMAN OF NORTHAMPTON TO CHANTELE CAMERON

Councillor Hallam proposed that Chantelle Cameron be bestowed as an Honorary Freewoman of Northampton. He continued to express how proud, himself and Northampton were of Cameron and her journey in international boxing whilst continuing to champion her hometown.

Councillor Hallam recounted how he had met Cameron at Far Cotton Boxing Club and how the coach explained how young Cameron would make-it one day. He highlighted Cameron's continued persistence and determination despite recently losing her World Champion title.

Councillor Birch seconded the motion and explained how Cameron started boxing at the age of 18 and now at the age of 31 had become known internationally and continued to fight representing her country. Councillor Hallam expressed his desire for a rematch with Cameron and Katie Taylor to be held in Northampton.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with section 249(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 that Chantelle Cameron be bestowed the title of Honorary Freewomen of Northampton.

Chantelle Cameron recited the oath of the Freemen & Women of Northampton, signed the declaration and received the honour from the Mayor.

31. CHANTELE CAMERON TO ADDRESS THOSE PRESENT IN RESPONSE TO THE HONOUR BESTOWED UPON HER

Cameron expressed her gratitude for the acknowledgement of her boxing career and her contribution to the Northampton community. Cameron highlighted she wished to open her own boxing gym in Northampton to work with local young people and aspired to find the next boxing champion. Cameron stated that her loss to Katie Taylor had contributed to her story and made her more determined.

32. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The Mayor concluded the meeting and provided thanks to the Town Council Officers, Matchroom Staff, Northampton Saint, Cinch Stadium and the special guests of Chantelle Cameron and Courtney Lawes. He informed attendees that there would be rugby and boxing activities for the young people and anyone present was welcome to observe.

MEETING CONCLUDED 10:55AM