

# *Stannington Parish Council*

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**2 April 2024**

**Conferment of Honorary Freedom of the Parish of Stannington**

**St Mary's Parish Church – 7pm**

Order of procession to the meeting:

Church Warden  
Reverend White  
Cllr Scott  
Cllr Nixon  
Cllr Tolson  
Clerk  
Cllr Dickinson  
Cllr Philipson  
Church Warden

**Processional music to the front of the church**

## **1. Welcome from the Chairman**

Lord Ridley, Freemen and women, Reverend White, Councillors, Clerk, distinguished guests and members of the public, may I welcome you to this meeting of the Council to mark the conferment of the role of Honorary Freeman on three of our distinguished guests. May I thank The Venerable Catherine Pickford, Karen Carins and Eileen Armstrong for coming along to receive this honour and to their family and friends for supporting them tonight. We are here to celebrate this occasion and to mark the meritorious service of these three people over many years in this parish. May I now ask Reverend White to say prayers?

## **1. Prayers**

Reverend White – Prayers

## **2. Apologies for absence**

**Chairman** – We now move to the formal business. Council, please note and approve the apologies of:

Cllr Brown and Cllr Lyle Darwin of Northumberland County Council

## **3. Conferment of the role of Honorary Freedom of The Parish of Stannington**

**Chairman** - Clerk will you please explain the statute relating to the awarding of the Honorary of Freemen of this parish.

**Clerk** - Mr. Chairman, Lord Ridley, Freemen and Freewomen, Reverend White, Councillors, distinguished guests, and members of the public - A Freeman was a man who had served his apprenticeship and was free to conduct his trade in his own town or parish. 'Free men' enjoyed a special status, the details of which varied according to special charters, but usually included the exclusive right of trading and of voting at elections for (and sitting upon) the Council. The power to vote at parliamentary elections was usually confined to freemen.

This title has long since disappeared and it has been replaced by the title 'Honorary Freeman' which is bestowed upon certain individuals, or past Members, who have, in the opinion of the Parish Council, rendered eminent service to the Council, or conducted exceptional work, service or other worthy undertakings that benefit the community in the Civil Parish of Stannington in Northumberland, formed in England under the Reforming Local Government Act 1894.

From a point of law, a local Council is permitted by legislation (Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the 2009 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act) to admit, further to a Council resolution, the title of Honorary Freemen or in these days of equality, Freewoman of the place or area for which it is the authority. It may confer this honour to (a) persons of distinction, and (b) persons who have, in the opinion of the authority, rendered eminent services to that place or area. Indeed, contrary to popular belief this honour does not grant them rights to graze their sheep or pigs on the parish field, nor does it allow them to bear arms or control law and order, not least of which because society has moved on over the years and in many respects, we wouldn't have enough acorns to feed all their animals.

The Honorary Freedom of this great parish of Stannington confers no powers on the individual. It is entirely ceremonial. The Parish Council officially thanks people who conduct exceptional work, service or other worthy undertakings that benefit their community by presenting them with a Freedom Scroll as a timeless thank you. The scrolls are highly regarded by recipients. A sealed and illuminated certificate of the grant of Honorary Freedom, containing a copy of the formal resolution, is presented to the newly appointed Honorary Freewoman by the Chairman, with an opportunity being given for the recipient to reply.

**Chairman** – We now move to the business of conferring the title of Honorary Freeman of this Parish.

Councillor Scott, I invite you to address the meeting in proposing that Eileen Armstrong be granted Honorary Freedom of this parish of Stannington.

**Councillor Scott** – Eileen was and will always be a great friend and supporter of Stannington Parish. Eileen became a County Councillor after the sad death of her husband Mel and continued his good works and expanded her own causes. She chaired the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and was a member of all the liaison committees that were Stannington Parish related. Eileen was part of the Wind farm group that stopped a wind farm causing harm to neighbouring residents. She has been kind enough to support various functions in the Parish and open events for us. She attended development site visits and her counsel and experience were always welcome. She was a great supporter to the Parish Council and helped push through traffic calming schemes, road safety arrangements outside Stannington school and bus arrangements at St Mary's Park. Eileen chaired and sat on many committees for Northumberland County Council, including Planning and Health and Wellbeing, she spoke at the Boundary Commission, and championed the End of Life Care Working Group to raise the profile of End of Life issues. Eileen runs her own business and has worked and lived in Ponteland all her life. She

has 3 beautiful daughters and lovely grandchildren and has been an active member on the Ponteland Town Council and championed all issues to the benefit of residents and businesses residing there. Eileen has the most infectious laugh and can lighten an issue in an instant!

It is fitting that Eileen Armstrong be granted Honorary Freedom of this parish of Stannington. I therefore wish to propose that:

We the Council grant the highest honour we can bestow for valuable and devoted services rendered to the Parish of Stannington. Over the many years you served in the high office of County Councillor, were Chairman of the Stannington Neighbourhood Plan group, provided much needed funds for traffic calming and parish projects and were a leading light in End-of-Life Care in Northumberland. Most of all you were a great friend and advocate of Stannington Parish Council. We loudly applaud your sterling service whilst thanking you most sincerely.

**Chairman** – I am proud to second this proposal.

**Chairman** – Councillors, I put it to the vote: all those in favour....

**Clerk** – Chairman that motion is carried unanimously.

**Chairman** – I call upon Lord Ridley to present this illuminated scroll and therefore to bestow this honour on behalf of the Council and I also call upon Eileen Armstrong to receive it and respond.

**Clerk** – Chairman as the proper officer of the Council I will formally record this resolution in the minutes of the Council.

**Lord Ridley presents the scroll.**

**Eileen Armstrong** – responds.

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**Chairman** – Councillor Dickinson, I invite you to address the meeting in proposing that Karen Carins be granted Honorary Freedom of this parish of Stannington.

**Councillor Dickinson** – Karen and her family moved to Stannington in 1986 with her wonderful family Mike, George, Jimmy and Elizabeth, when she project managed their beautiful barn conversion. She soon became part of parish life, volunteering at our school, where she is now a Governor and as part of the Stannington Players where she raised funds, put on pantomimes, and organised the annual Burns Supper. Karen has been treasurer for several organisations including 10 years for the Village Show and for the Ridley Leek Club where she was the only lady winner. She was a stalwart of the Village Hall, serving on three occasions as minute secretary and booking secretary.

On joining the Parish Council over fourteen years ago Karen was instrumental in raising over £200K through her involvement with Banks Mining and Hargreaves Opencast and was a member of resident association committees and mining and development liaison committees. In her ten years as Chairman, she became one of only two Planning Champions in Northumberland during the making of the Stannington Neighbourhood Plan and was a guest lecturer at Newcastle University on planning and the controversy it can evoke. Karen was a founder of TWAG to fight a wind farm development that was threatening residents by its proximity to houses, raising £20K to successfully fight it. She was a driving force as a member of the WW1 and WW2 group and instrumental in community events from the Millennium to the Coronation more recently as chair of Stannington Art Group. She is currently the chair of a Coping With Cancer and a volunteer for Northern Cancer Voices, a grandma

to 3 beautiful children and a mum to 2 Border Terriers. She has been nominated for the Northumberland County Council Local Community Hero Awards to be held in June this year.

It is fitting that Karen Carins be granted Honorary Freedom of this parish of Stannington. I therefore wish to propose that:

We the Council grant the highest honour we can bestow for valuable and devoted services rendered to the Parish of Stannington. Over the many years you served in the high offices of Councillor and Chairman of the Council. As a Planning champion you led the creation of the Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan. You raised significant funding for the Parish, served as a School Governor, Village Hall Trustee, and on many local groups whilst overseeing the delivery of professional events to commemorate the end of WW1, WW2, the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee and the Coronation of King Charles III. We loudly applaud your sterling service whilst thanking you most sincerely.

**Chairman** – May I have a seconder to this proposal?

**Cllr Nixon** – I am proud to second this proposal.

**Chairman** – Councillors, I put it to the vote: all those in favour....

**Clerk** – Chairman that motion is carried unanimously.

**Chairman** – I call upon Lord Ridley to present this illuminated scroll and therefore to bestow this honour on behalf of the Council and I also call upon Karen Carins to receive it and respond.

**Clerk** – Chairman as the proper officer of the Council I will formally record this resolution in the minutes of the Council.

**Lord Ridley presents the scroll.**

**Karen Carins** - responds.

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**Chairman** – I wish to address the meeting in proposing that The Venerable Catherine Pickford be granted Honorary Freedom of this parish.

Catherine has had a long career in parish ministry as a team rector in inner-city Newcastle, where she was also a police chaplain and was heavily involved in youth and inter-faith work. At the Diocese of Newcastle Catherine served as Rector of St James' Church, Benwell between 2009 and 2015. She became priest-in-charge of Stannington in 2015 and she gave meritorious service to this parish until 2020. She is a member of the General Synod of the Church of England She became Archdeacon of Northolt in the Diocese of London, Church of England.

Catherine was admired and loved by all she met. Her work with the schoolchildren was impressive and her sermons were incredibly relevant and inspiring. She certainly increased Church attendance. Catherine loved supporting local dances and events, she served on the Village Hall Committee and when Covid 19 hit the world she was a pivotal member of the local support group for the elderly and vulnerable, giving support, doing errands or just being at the end of the telephone. She gave quiet counsel to the Parish Council and was empathetic to all the issues faced by residents and businesses alike. Her family, husband John and children

Freya, Jack and Alex are an enormous miss to the Parish but everyone is so proud of her achievements!

It is fitting that The Venerable Catherine Pickford be granted Honorary Freedom of this parish. of Stannington. I therefore wish to propose that:

We the Council grant the highest honour we can bestow for valuable and devoted services rendered to the Parish of Stannington. As a well-loved vicar of Stannington you were a friend to everyone you met. Your work with the local school was laudable, your sermons were always well thought, heartfelt and sincere. You supported parishioners in their times of need and gave quiet counsel to them and the Parish Council. You gave consideration, empathy and love to the issues faced by residents and businesses alike whilst playing a full role in the parish with the clubs and organisations. We loudly applaud your sterling service whilst thanking you most sincerely.

**Chairman** – May I have a seconder to this proposal?

**Cllr Philipson** – I am proud to second this proposal.

**Chairman** – Councillors, I put it to the vote: all those in favour....

**Clerk** – Chairman that motion is carried unanimously.

**Chairman** – I call upon Lord Ridley to present this illuminated scroll and therefore to bestow this honour on behalf of the Council and I also call upon The Venerable Catherine Pickford to receive it and respond.

**Clerk** – Chairman as the proper officer of the Council I will formally record this resolution in the minutes of the Council.

**Lord Ridley presents the scroll.**

**Catherine Pickford** - responds.

#### **4. Blessing**

**Chairman** - Reverend Fergusson White may I ask you to give a blessing to these proceedings and to all those present?

**Reverend White** – to say a blessing.

#### **5. Conclusion of business**

**Chairman** – That now concludes the business of the Council on this prestigious occasion. Thank you all for attending this momentous and historical meeting of the Council. I wish you all a safe and onward journey but, in the meantime, refreshments be served at the rear of the church.

**Recessional music as the Council and Reverend white take leave to the rear of the church.**