

# **PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**

**23 JUNE 2021**

## **PROPOSAL TO GRANT FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF PERTH TO ST JOHNSTONE FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Report by Interim Chief Executive (Report No. 21/104)**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report proposes to grant the Freedom of the City of Perth to St Johnstone Football Club (the Club) to officially mark their double success in winning the Scottish League Cup and the Scottish Cup in the season 2020/2021.

### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 St Johnstone Football Club, Perth was first established in 1884 and played its first game on 7 March 1885 at the South Inch.
- 1.2 The Club have occupied several sites in Perth, starting off at the South Inch then moving to St Johnstone Recreation Ground between 1885 to 1924. A further move took them to Muirton Park, Dunkeld Road on the northern edge of the city from 1924 to 1989.
- 1.3 The Club's stay at Muirton Park brought some great success with promotion being achieved on various occasions including three championship seasons. The best spell was, arguably, when the Club reached the Scottish League Cup Final for the first time in its history in 1969, followed by a third place in the Scottish Football League, thereby securing a place in European competition for the first time.
- 1.4 Following a number of financial issues and poor performance, the Board of Directors approached local businessman, Geoff Brown, which resulted in his appointment as Chairman of the Company.
- 1.5 In December 1986, an approach was made to the new Chairman to buy Muirton Park to turn it, and the adjoining Ice Rink, into a retail superstore, with the Club relocating to a brand new stadium on the western edge of the city. The first match played at McDiarmid Park was on 19 August 1989 – St Johnstone beat Clydebank 2-1.
- 1.6 McDiarmid Park was the UK's first all-seated purpose-built football stadium, which provided first class facilities for spectators with an all seated stadium for over 10,000, parking for 1,000 cars and 100 coaches; a synthetic playing surface adjacent to the stadium and conference facilities within the main stand.
- 1.7 In 2014, the Club won their first Scottish Cup – the first national trophy in its 130 year history.

- 1.8 On 28 February 2021, St Johnstone won the Scottish League Cup, beating Livingston 1-0 in the final. Less than three months later, on 22 May 2021, St Johnstone won the Scottish Cup, defeating Hibernian 1-0. This result is significant, as only three sides in the history of Scottish football have ever won a double - Aberdeen FC, Celtic FC and Rangers FC. The success of season 2020/21 means St Johnstone join this small, exclusive club.
- 1.9 Perth has many things to be proud of, and its football team has always been one of them. The Club's success this season sees them returning to European football this summer as they will enter the third qualifying round of the Europa League. This will in turn, highlight the City of Perth to a wider audience with the potential for increased tourists and visitors to the area and associated economic benefits as a result.
- 1.10 Aside from the football, St Johnstone Football Club is at the heart of the City of Perth and the local community through the Club's charitable Community Trust - Saints in the Community – which provides a link between the Club and the wider community.

The Council has a Service Level Agreement in place for four specific community projects - Football Memories; Show Racism the Red Card; SAINTS (Inclusion Through Sport) and Street Sports - all of which were affected by pandemic restrictions. However, the Trust has responded positively during the pandemic by continuing to maintain connections and vital support to community members. In addition, a number of additional community support initiatives were introduced due to coronavirus.

- 1.11 St Johnstone have completed their greatest season and secured a place in the history books. It was a significant achievement to win the Scottish League Cup, and even more remarkable to win the Scottish Cup months later in the same season. To achieve a historic cup double, in a year that has been particularly challenging in terms of the ongoing covid pandemic, is an incredible success.
- 1.12 St Johnstone Football Club have given their fans, and the people of Perth and Kinross, something great to celebrate, during what has been the most challenging times many of us have ever faced. This season, as a result of the cup double, St Johnstone Football Club has added to the positive reputation of Perth, with the exciting prospect of European football in season 2021/22.

## **2 PROPOSALS**

- 2.1 Section 206 of the Local Government Scotland Act 1973, as amended provides as follows:

206 (1) states:

*A local authority may by resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting therein at a meeting of the authority, the notice of which specifies the proposed admission as an item of business admit to be Honorary Freemen of their area persons of distinction and any persons who have rendered eminent service to their area*

*(2) An officer designated for the purpose by the local authority shall keep a roll containing the names of persons admitted to be Freemen under this section.*

- 2.2 It is proposed that the Council exercises its power under Section 206 of the Local Government (S) Act 1973 to grant St Johnstone Football Club the Freedom of the City of Perth to celebrate their double success in attaining the Scottish League Cup and the Scottish Cup in season 2020/2021.
- 2.3 It is envisaged that the Freedom of the City of Perth ceremony would take place at a time and place to be mutually agreed between the Council and St Johnstone Football Club, when Coronavirus restrictions have been relaxed.
- 2.4 Members of The Society of High Constables of the City of Perth will accompany the Provost and play a ceremonial role in this event.
- 2.5 Given the Club's success and their ongoing contribution and unwaivering support to the local Perth community, it is considered appropriate to acknowledge their greatest season in an official way.

### **3. HISTORY OF FREEDOM CEREMONIES IN PERTH**

- 3.1 The last Freedom ceremony took place in August 2019 to mark the retirement of the previous Lord-Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross, Brigadier Sir Melville Jameson.
- 3.2 The following table details the list of Burgesses and Freemen of the City of Perth since 1933.

29 September 1933	John Buchan, CH LLD MP (later Lord Tweedsmuir) of Elsfeld Manor, Oxford
29 September 1933	Francis Norie-Miller JP FEIS of Cleeve, Perth
10 August 1935	Albert Frederick Arthur George, Duke of York, Earl of Inverness and Baron Killarney, KG PC KT GCMG GCVO
10 August 1935	Elizabeth Angela Marguerite, Duchess of York GBE
18 March 1938	Sir William MacKenzie, Lord Amulree FC GBE KC LLD
18 March 1938	Arthur Kinmond Bell of Kincarrathie, Perth
19 July 1947	The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) (Freedom of entry into the City and Royal Burgh of Perth on ceremonial occasions with bayonets fixed, drums beating and colours flying)

19 July 1947	Field Marshall the Right Honourable Earl Wavell PC GCB GCSI GCIE CMG MC
27 May 1948	Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, OM CH FRS MP
12 May 1956	Anthony Eden KG MC MP (later Lord Astor)
14 September 1961	Stanley Norie-Miller, Baronet MC DL JP of Murrayshall, Perth
24 July 1970	William Gordon Farquharson MC LLD CA of Tay Park, Isla Road, Perth
26 August 1978	Sir Neil Cameron KCB CBE DSO DFC
30 October 1982	David K Thomson CBE TD OStJ JP DL
8 May 2004	The Royal British Legion Scotland
8 May 2010	51st Highland, 7th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland (7 Scots) (Freedom of entry into the City and Royal Burgh of Perth on ceremonial occasions with bayonets fixed, drums beating and colours flying)
6 July 2012	HRH Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh
18 August 2019	Brigadier Sir Melville Jameson KCVO CBE

- 3.3 The above illustrates that there is a precedent for such honour of the Freedom of the City of Perth being conferred to a collective body, i.e. the Black Watch in 1947, the Royal British Legion Scotland in 2004, and 51st Highland, 7th Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Scotland in 2010.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Given the outstanding achievement of St Johnstone Football Club in season 20/21, which took place during the global Covid pandemic and the particular challenges that has brought, it is considered appropriate to grant the Club the Freedom of the City of Perth in recognition of their success.
- 4.2 It is recommended that the Council agrees:
- (i) to exercise its power under Section 206 of the Local Government (S) Act 1973 to grant St Johnstone Football Club the Freedom of the City of Perth to celebrate their double success in attaining the Scottish League Cup and the Scottish Cup in the season 2020/2021.
  - (ii) that the Freedom of the City of Perth ceremony takes place at a date and venue to be mutually agreed with St Johnstone Football Club when Coronavirus restrictions have been relaxed.

- (iii) that the Interim Chief Executive be requested to report to the Provost Sub-Committee once full details of the Freedom ceremony are known.

**Author(s)**

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**Approved**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Date</b>
Barbara Renton	Interim Chief Executive	9 June 2021

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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	None
Corporate Plan	None
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	N/A
Strategic Environmental Assessment	N/A
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	N/A
Legal and Governance	N/A
Risk	N/A
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	Yes
External	No
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	No

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2017-2027 sets out five strategic objectives. The proposals in this report support the promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy.

#### Corporate Plan

- 1.2 Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2018-2022 sets out five strategic objectives. The proposals in this report support the promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy.

### 2. Resource Implications

#### Financial

- 2.1 The costs associated with the Civic event are unknown at this time and a report will be presented to the Provost's sub-committee for approval of the expenditure when this information is available.

### Workforce

- 2.4 There are no direct workforce implications arising from this report.

### Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.5 There are no asset management issues arising from this report.

## **3. Assessments**

### Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Not applicable.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 Not applicable.

### Sustainability

- 3.3 Not applicable.

### Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted on the proposals detailed in this report.

### Risk

- 3.5 Risks and the controls required to mitigate any risks will be reported through the Council's risk management process.

## **4. Consultation**

### Internal

- 4.1 The Provost and the Interim Chief Executive have been consulted during the preparation of this report.

### External

- 4.2 Consultation will take place with external organisations should the report be agreed.

## **5. Communication**

- 5.1 Following approval, the Freedom of the City of Perth ceremony will be advertised in social media and local press.

## **2. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

## **3. APPENDICES**

None