

NOTICE OF MOTION – CLLR S DORSETT – RENAMING OF HENRY PLAZA

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 1 December 2022, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor S Dorsett

“The passing of Her Majesty Queen is one of the most important events in our lifetime. Many Woking residents, including current and former Councillors, made the journey to Westminster to pay tribute by “Queuing for the Queen”. Our own events over that week, including the Proclamation of the new King, and the moment of National Reflection, were extremely well attended by Woking residents, and Jubilee Square was full to capacity. Given the strength of feeling Woking residents clearly have for the Royal Family and especially to the memory of Her Majesty the Queen, we are proposing a permanent tribute to Her Majesty. With that in mind it is proposed we rename Henry Plaza, the newest part of the Victoria Place, to Queen Elizabeth II Plaza.

Given that the Plaza opened in March of this year, the same year of her Platinum Jubilee and her untimely passing, it feels right in this year we can commemorate her memory with this tribute. Few residents are aware of the reasoning behind the current name of Henry Plaza. But having it be named Queen Elizabeth II Plaza, along with Jubilee Square and the Victoria Place itself, feels thematically constant. This tribute will reflect the love and admiration for her felt by our Woking community.”

Officer Comment

“The Council recognises the huge contribution made to this country, and this borough, during the long reign of the late Queen Elizabeth II. The Council pays tribute to her late majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Among other events, the Borough marked the National Moment of Reflection on the eve of Queen Elizabeth’s funeral with a public ceremony in Jubilee Square.

Any place name with a Royal connotation must seek advice and obtain approval from the Cabinet office and the consent of the Lord Chamberlain’s office. The plaza is officially addressed as a street record and has properties addressed to it. If changes are proposed, consultation with these business occupiers would be needed, as their addresses would also have to be updated. Costs would need to be incurred by Victoria Square and its business occupiers to make this change.

The internal atrium at Victoria Square has been named Henry Plaza in honour of Henry Cawsey, who was a District and Borough Councillor for West Byfleet and a former Chairman of Woking Urban District Council. In July 2022, the Council responded to a Question from Councillor Josh Brown referring to the immense amount of history, culture and talent from Woking, referring to Henry Plaza, and asking for information to be made available to inform residents and visitors of the historical significance of their name. The Leader has subsequently asked for a plaque to be displayed in the Plaza on Henry Cawsey.

In addition to being a District and Borough Councillor between 1929 and 1983; Henry Cawsey was a County Councillor for 28 years; a Justice of the Peace, serving as chairman of the Juvenile Court; Chairman of Byfleet United Charities; appointed MBE in 1979; named Woking Eminent Citizen in 1983; and the first person to be given Freedom of the Borough of Woking in 1987.

It would be a fitting tribute to name a prominent public space after Queen Elizabeth II but keeping the name of Henry Cawsey associated with the plaza is deference to such a distinguished and

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influential local figure. Officers would welcome views from Members on alternative locations which could be named in honour of Queen Elizabeth II and will consider these ideas prior to determining a way forward.”

Background Papers: None.

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