

A Proposal for the Recognition of Exceptional Service to St Helena by Non-Saints

This paper details proposals for the recognition of outstanding contribution to the public life of Saint Helena by non-Saints and/or non-long term residents. Two opportunities for recognition are described:

1. A parallel award to the Badge of Honour for non-Saints/non-residents
2. An honorary citizen designation with defined limitations

Badge of St Helena

The existing Certificate and Badge of Honour awards are available for the Governor to award to public servants for loyal and valuable service worthy of recognition or, in the case of other persons, for their loyal and meritorious conduct that has provided exceptional benefit to the people of St Helena. The St Helena Honours Committee advises and recommends to the Governor prospective recipients of the Badge.

Nominees for this award should be residents of St Helena, either being born on the Island or have been residing on St Helena for not less than ten years prior to the date of the award. The award is not available for non-Saints and short-term residents. The award originates in UK legislation and dates back to 1957 in St Helena Orders but was not awarded regularly in St Helena until 2010.

There is an obvious need to recognise exceptional contributions to the island by people who do not meet the eligibility requirements of the present Badge of Honour. This could potentially recognise contributions to public life, research, philanthropy, literature and the promotion and support provided to the culture, heritage and development of the island. A "Badge of St Helena" would stand beside the Badge of Honour to recognise the part exceptional non-residents play in assisting the island.

As with the Certificate and Badge of Honour, the Governor would announce the recipient of new award at the same time as the Queen's Birthday and New Year's Honours lists are announced. The SHG UK representative in the London could also give the award to a recipient if they are unable to travel in the near future to the island.

In conclusion, a Badge of St Helena would be a way for the island to express gratitude to non-residents and would be a further mechanism for the island to develop its global networks.

Honorary Citizen

Honorary citizen is symbolic. It is a status bestowed by a country or territory on a native or foreign individual whom it considers to be especially admirable or otherwise

worthy of the distinction. It would only be offered rarely and consequently considered of high value.

For example, in Canada and the USA there have been only eight honorary citizens including Winston Churchill. The title does not confer any rights such as to vote or settle. Conversely, in the Republic of Ireland they have chosen to confer the full rights of an ordinary citizen. Honorary citizen recognition usually ceases on the death of the recipient and is not hereditary. There is no history of the creation of honorary citizen status in the UK. Chiefly, due to its well developed State honours system that provides sufficient opportunity to recognise non UK/non-Commonwealth nationals through an honorary decoration.

In conclusion, an honorary citizen designation could be offered in very exceptional cases, where an individual has made a contribution to the island that merits very special recognition. The individual could possibly also be eligible for the Badge of Honour if a particular circumstance warranted further recognition.