

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Citizen of the Year Scheme, and presents options for future years.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Best Value Review of Civic & Public Relations in 2002 recommended introducing an award to publicly recognise valuable contributions by local citizens to their community. The award was first presented in 2003 and has been very well received both through feedback from those directly involved, and through positive press coverage. It has become necessary to establish further guidelines to ensure its continued success.
- 2.2 Nominations are invited in three categories: Charitable Support, Community Spirit and Children of Courage. The criteria are attached as Appendix A to this report. A winner is chosen in each category and invited to receive their award at the Civic Dinner. On that evening, the overall “Citizen of the Year” is announced. In the first round of awards in 2003 there were a total of 33 nominations and in 2004 interest in the award was maintained and 28 nominations submitted.

3 CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Despite widespread publicity, there were no nominations in the Children of Courage category in the awards judged in February this year. Consequently only 2 awards were presented. Members may wish to recommend changing the criteria for the children’s award to include recognition of more general success and achievements, rather than “courage” alone. An alternative would be to change this one category each year to encourage new nominations. Each new Chairman of the Council may be an appropriate person to choose this at the beginning of their term of office.
- 3.2 The judging panel is currently made up of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and one representative from each political party, plus the Chairman’s Chaplain. Members may want to consider widening the panel to include other representatives from outside the Council to ensure transparency. A possibility would be to include the current Citizen of the Year, or perhaps a local representative from the media.
- 3.3 At present, all information supplied on the nomination form is taken into account by the judges. In the Community Spirit category, this has included service as a District or Parish Councillor. Clarification is sought on whether this service should be discounted from the award scheme.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Reputation Risk

The Council's award scheme should be seen as being as objective as possible. Failing to address the issues around judging may jeopardise this.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There will be a £300 cost implication from reprinting the publicity material to include a change to the categories. Budget provision would need to be allocated for this in the 2004/2005 revised estimates.

6 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Parishes have been very supportive of the scheme. This may be adversely affected by discounting council service.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) To confirm the categories for the Citizen of the Year Awards.
- (2) To redetermine the makeup of the judging panel.
- (3) To state whether District or Parish Council service should be taken into account in the Community Spirit Category.

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

Background Papers:-

Awards application pack

For further information please contact Helen Collins on:-

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Appendix A

"I think they deserve an Award!"

Rochford District Citizen of the Year Award

You can nominate someone in any of the following categories:

Children of Courage (Under 16 Years)

Young people who have triumphed over personal challenges, or who have helped others

Charitable Support (All Age Groups)

Exceptional support for local, national or international charities whether by fundraising or practical assistance

Community Spirit (All Age Groups)

People who make outstanding contributions to their community

The decision of the judging panel is final.

All nominees must reside within the District of Rochford