
City of Leicester Award

Decision to be taken by: Council

Date of meeting: 29 September 2022

Lead director/officer: Miranda Cannon, Director of
Delivery, Communications and Political Governance

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Matthew Reeves
- Author contact details: Matthew.Reeves@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 0.1

1. Summary

To consider the conferment of the City of Leicester award, to Dr Richard Buckley OBE, Professor Turi King, Professor Emeritus Kevin Shürer and Professor Emeritus Ken Pounds CBE.

2. Recommended decision

That the City Council:

- Confirm the conferment of the City of Leicester Award to Dr Richard Buckley OBE, Professor Turi King, Professor Emeritus Kevin Shürer and Professor Emeritus Ken Pounds CBE in recognition of both excellence in their respective fields and the international acclaim which they have brought to the city of Leicester through their endeavours.

3. Report

3.1 City of Leicester award purpose and criteria

The City of Leicester award aims to provide an opportunity for individuals to be honoured for outstanding achievements which have a positive and wide-reaching impact on the City of Leicester. Recipients of the City of Leicester award should have demonstrated outstanding performance in their given field which has been a source of inspiration to the residents of the city.

This award is designed to complement the other civic awards which include the Honoured Citizen Award Scheme which has been in existence for around 20 years, and which is aimed at recognising acts of bravery, helping others and improving the community at a more local level, and Honorary Freedom of the City which is the highest honour that the City Council can bestow. This latter award is only given rarely and is governed by the provisions of Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and has certain local conditions including a requirement that the nominee where this is an individual, has been on the electoral role for 5 years out of the last 20 years.

The City of Leicester award recognises and acknowledges an individual's outstanding performance in their given field which has both inspired the city's residents and has positively impacted on the City of Leicester by delivering clear and demonstrable benefits to the educational, cultural, civic or economic life of the city as a whole and / or who has gained the city wider recognition. Recipients will be considered on the following basis:

- their achievements have resulted in a positive impact on the local community and its residents and / or has delivered a lasting benefit to Leicester;

- their achievements will result in educational, cultural, civic or economic improvement and may be recognised at a wider level throughout the city, county or nationally;
- the nominee does not need to be a resident of the City, but should have a close association to Leicester through their work or significant voluntary contribution;
- the nominee would not be eligible for, or have previously been awarded, Freedom of the City;
- the nominee should not be a serving politician or currently hold a political role within the City; and
- awards can be awarded posthumously, where a recipient's achievements are acknowledged subsequent to their death (up to a period of 5 years).

3.2 Proposed recipients for City of Leicester Awards 2022

The recipients being proposed to Council for the City of Leicester Awards are as follows:

- Dr Richard Buckley OBE
- Professor Turi King
- Professor Emeritus Kevin Shürer
- Professor Emeritus Ken Pounds CBE

It is particularly appropriate in the centenary year of the University of Leicester that Council is invited to consider four of the university's own academics for this award.

It is also appropriate at this ten-year anniversary point that we recognise those persons who were instrumental in the work to uncover King Richard III and the widespread recognition and positive benefits to the city which this brought.

3.3 Dr Richard Buckley OBE

Richard's work with the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit (LAU) included all the large-scale excavations that have preceded the City's urban regeneration over the last 40 years, including the Shires and Highcross shopping centres as well as the Stibbe and Waterside redevelopments, alongside landmark research excavations at Leicester Castle, Leicester Abbey and, of course, Grey Friars, the last resting place (but one) of Richard III.

Following the closure of LAU in 1995, along with Dr Patrick Clay, he formed University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) where he continued to manage archaeological projects across the Midlands, specialising in urban sites and historic buildings, until his retirement in 2020.

His contribution to archaeology has been immense and throughout his career, he has raised the public profile of archaeology in Leicester and transformed our understanding of the city's history, particularly through his involvement with the discovery of King Richard III and the subsequent reinterment at Leicester Cathedral.

Richard was awarded an OBE in the New Year's honours for 2014, for services to archaeology, and in recognition of his huge contribution to Leicester's Archaeology, the University awarded him his doctorate later that year. Following his retirement, he remains an Honorary Research Fellow with the University's School of Archaeology and Ancient History.

3.4 Professor Turi King

Professor Turi King is Professor of Public Engagement and Genetics at the University of Leicester, based in three different areas of the University: the Department of Genetics and Genome Biology, the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, and External Relations.

She started her career in archaeology and went on to study Molecular Genetics at the University of Leicester on a scholarship. Her award-winning PhD examined the relationship between the Y chromosome and British surnames combining forensic DNA techniques with history and genealogy, the first large scale study of its kind.

As Professor of Public Engagement and Genetics, she carries out a great deal of media and television work, as well as public speaking, including the BBC series DNA Family Secrets, and is best known for having led the genetic analysis in the King Richard III case and playing a fundamental role in confirming the discovery.

3.5 Professor Emeritus Kevin Schürer

Professor Schürer is an Honorary Research Fellow and Professor Emeritus of the University of Leicester, he came to Leicester in 2010 as Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise). His primary research interest is historical demography and the history of the family and he was director of the UK Data Archive and a member of the internationally-renowned Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure at the University of Cambridge.

In 2009 he received a major award from the Economic and Social Research Council to create a standardised version of the censuses for Great Britain from 1851 to 1911, helping to build one of the largest historical data resources in the world. He worked on the identification of King Richard III alongside Professor Turi King, in order to identify and verify present day living relatives of the King who could be used to match DNA for identification purposes, and from this a number of royal descendants were identified.

3.6 Professor Emeritus Ken Pounds CBE

Professor Emeritus Ken Pounds CBE, kick-started space research in Leicester more than 60 years ago with his work studying X-ray radiation from the Sun and other sources, which revealed one of the first known black holes.

He joined the University of Leicester as Assistant Lecturer in 1960 and founded the Space Research Group and was one of the pioneers of using rockets and satellites for research in the UK. He became Professor of Space Physics in 1973, was appointed Head of the Department of Physics in 1986, and the following year took the decision to merge with the Astronomy department to create the present Department of Physics and Astronomy.

Together with Professor Alan Wells, he also proposed the initial idea of a space centre as a research facility with public access in Leicester in the 1980's, which later became the National Space Centre. He retired in 2002 but remains active in the University's department as a research fellow where he continues to contribute to astronomy and planetary sciences research and maintains a close interest in the ongoing development and support of the National Space Centre.

3.7 Conferment of City of Leicester Award

The significant contribution of Dr Richard Buckley OBE, Professor Turi King, Professor Emeritus Kevin Schürer and Professor Emeritus Ken Pounds CBE through their educational, historic and scientific endeavour have achieved significant improvements in their fields which have led to major cultural impact and greater understanding which has been recognised both within the city, nationally and internationally. They have been involved in some of the most major historic and scientific discoveries and are widely recognised and acknowledged both locally and nationally for promoting the city and its institutions in a very positive light through their personal commitment to achieving excellence in their fields. They each rightly deserve to be recognised for this through the conferment of the City of Leicester Award.

4. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Martin Judson, Head of Finance, Ext 37 4101

4.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this proposal. This is a non-statutory gesture of recognition that confers no specific rights or obligations and the Council has the general competence to make it.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister, Ext 37 1401

4.3 Equalities implications

There are no direct equalities implications arising from the report, but the City of Leicester Award is a positive gesture of recognition supporting the work of individuals for the work they have potentially done to foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't, as described in the report.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Kalvaran Sandhu, Equalities Manager, Ext 37 6344

4.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

5. Background information and other papers:

None