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# **City of Leicester Award**

Decision to be taken by: Council

Date of meeting: 23 November 2023

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

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## Useful information

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

## 1. Summary

To consider the conferment of the City of Leicester award to the following:

- Emmanu'-EL Apostolic Gospel Academy (EAGA) Choir
- Pamela Campbell-Morris
- Geoff Rowe

## 2. Recommended decision

That the City Council:

- Confirm the conferment of the City of Leicester Award to the Emmanu-EL Apostolic Gospel Academy Choir, Pamela Campbell-Morris and Geoff Rowe in recognition of both excellence in serving the city of Leicester and for the wider recognition brought to the city through their work and 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 the local award has certain 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 2023**

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

- Emmanu-EL Apostolic Gospel Academy (EAGA) Choir
- Pamela Campbell-Morris (a post-humous award)
- Geoff Rowe

### **3.3 Emmanu'-EL Apostolic Gospel Academy (EAGA) Choir**

The Emmanu'-EL Apostolic Gospel Academy (EAGA) Choir, led by Bishop Mark Anderson, started from small beginnings around 20 years ago and during this time they have gone from strength to strength becoming widely recognised across the city, county and in more recent years reaching national audiences culminating this year in winning the BBC Songs of Praise Gospel Choir of the Year 2023 award.

The EAGA Choir have brought exceptional musical experiences to the city and left a lasting impression on local communities from entertaining residents at nursing homes through to collaborating with schools to nurture musical talent in the younger generation. They are committed to mentoring young talent within the choir and through their work instil the importance of discipline, teamwork and a deep appreciation of the arts.

In recent years they have achieved national recognition reaching the finals of BBC2's *The Choir: Gareth's Best of Britain*, as well as being semi-finalists on *Britain's Got Talent* in 2018 as well as most recently winning *BBC Songs of Praise Gospel Choir of the Year 2023*.

They operate from an old working men's club in Leicester and recently produced an album to raise funds to refurbish the building as a place of worship and a community centre. They have faced several setbacks, including two break-ins which resulted in damage and loss of equipment, but remain determined and dedicated to complete their work relying on donations and support from local people, their members and fees from performances.

We are pleased that the choir have been able to support a number of the City's Lord Mayors by performing at civic events within the city, including church services, charity, sporting and community events.

### **3.4 Pamela Campbell-Morris**

Pamela Campbell-Morris was a passionate and committed champion in addressing health inequalities and improving the health and wellbeing of African and African Caribbean communities. For over 40 years she worked extensively to support many community projects and activities.

In recent years, Pamela carried out intensive outreach work in raising awareness of Prostate Cancer locally, nationally, and internationally through her campaign “Play Domino, Talk Prostate”. The campaign focused on the culturally-relevant game of domino in opening up the opportunity to raise awareness of prostate cancer and to encourage black men to get tested for the condition. She worked tirelessly on the campaign which included events, extensive media engagement, publication of an informative comic book and interviews with a number of influential celebrities such as Sir Lenny Henry, Julian Marley and the West Indian Cricket Team in aid of breaking down cultural stigmas, increasing service engagement and promoting safe, open discussion amongst black men. This led, undoubtedly, to an increased awareness within the African Caribbean community, not only regionally and nationally but also internationally, of the need for black men to lose their fear of the stigma around being checked for prostate cancer, and has helped prevent unnecessary deaths from the disease.

Pamela’s tireless work and what she achieved locally, nationally and internationally was recognised at the East Midlands Women’s Awards in 2020 where she won ‘Outstanding BAME Female Leader of 2020’. Sadly, Pamela passed away on 29th June 2021 but we want to further recognise what she achieved through a post-humous City of Leicester award.

### **3.5 Geoff Rowe**

On 28 April 2022, Geoff announced his resignation as Director of the Leicester Comedy Festival. It was Geoff who, with his student year group, set up the annual event in 1994 when studying Arts Management at De Montfort University and over the years, the Comedy Festival has hosted thousands of comedians performing to audiences from across the country. The nineteen-day Festival has grown to become one of the longest-running independent festivals in the UK, making a major impact on the economic and cultural life of Leicester, and Leicestershire as a whole. The festival has become the biggest comedy festival in Europe, regularly attracting a programme of over 900 events, with an audience of over 135,000 people. The thirtieth anniversary of the Leicester Comedy Festival, and the fifth anniversary of the UK Kids' Comedy Festival, took place from 8 to 26 February 2023. The Kids' Festival engages with children and young people across Leicester, Leicestershire and beyond, with a mix of performances, shows, workshops and chances for young people to perform comedy.

Big Difference Company is the company, founded by Geoff, which grew out of the Leicester Comedy Festival, and which now runs the festival. Big Difference Company is committed to life-changing schemes and projects in the same way that the festival is, but with a different slant. The company helps men to take their health seriously; encourages school children to eat sensibly; plants trees in The National Forest; aims to reduce carbon emissions; and improves people's life skills and confidence. As its website puts it, making the connection, 'The work of widening smiles goes on.'

In 2012, Geoff was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by De Montfort University, and the following year a British Empire Medal in The Queen's Birthday Honours List. A City of Leicester award is an opportunity to recognise Geoff’s commitment to the city and the

benefits the festival has brought and continues to bring to Leicester along with the wider national and international recognition.

### **Conferment of City of Leicester Award**

The significant contributions Emmanu-EL Apostolic Gospel Academy Choir, Pamela Campbell-Morris (a post-humous award) and Geoff Rowe have made to the city through their achievements have brought benefits to the city and its communities as well as wider national and international recognition. 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

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities (including the local authority and schools), have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

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.

There are no direct equalities implication arising from the report, but the recipients of the award have all done positive work which is likely to have fostered good relations and advanced equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

*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