

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

15 May 2013

Title: Death of Councillor Nirmal Singh Sher Gill	
Report of: Graham Farrant, Chief Executive	
Open	For Information
Wards Affected: None	Key Decision: No
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Accountable Divisional Director:	Fiona Taylor Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Accountable Director:	The Chief Executive
Summary: <p>The Assembly is asked to note with deep regret that Councillor Nirmal Singh Sher Gill passed away on Monday, 25 February 2013 and was cremated at the City of London Crematorium on Thursday, 7 March 2013.</p> <p>Born in Jagat – Pur a small village in Punjab, India, Councillor Gill came to the UK and settled in Barking in 1968. He attended college whilst working at Telephone Cable Limited and Ford Motor Company in Dagenham and spent a considerable time during his later self-employed work in retail business which demonstrated his dedication to serve in the community.</p> <p>Councillor Gill was Councillor for the Longbridge ward from 1990. At the time of his death he was the serving Chair of the Assembly, the Deputy Chair of Ceremonial Council, as well as a Member of the Pensions Panel, Personnel Board, Development Control Board and Member Development Group. In addition Councillor Gill served on numerous school governing bodies for over 20 years, the Council for Voluntary Services, London Valuation Tribunal and the Singh Sabha London East Gurdwara. He was an active member of the Racial Equality Council for over 25 years and at the time of his death was the Vice Chair. He promoted and practised equality and community cohesion at all times.</p> <p>During his time on the Council he served in a number of capacities including Personnel Board (Chair 2007-09 and Deputy Chair 2010-11), Vice Chair of the Education Committee, as well as a Member of the Standards Committee, Community Housing Partnership, Admissions Forum, Establishment, General Purposes and Finance Committee, Health & Adult Services Select Committee, Local Strategic Partnership Board and the Licensing & Regulatory Board.</p> <p>Councillor Gill's ambition was to become Mayor and "First Citizen of the Borough" which he achieved in 2010-11, whereupon he continued his commitment to promote community</p>	

cohesion. Councillor Gill chose 'Help for Heroes' as his charity for the mayoral year and raised more than £34,000 – the largest amount ever for any LBBD Mayor.

He was a founding member and former secretary of the Singh Sabha Kabaddi Sports Club established in 1978 and was actively involved in arranging the annual sports tournament, which attracts over 7,000 spectators from all sections of the community, promoting good relations between young people of different backgrounds.

Councillor Gill routinely organised for Council officers, Councillors, school children and police officers to visit the Sikh Gurdwara. This increased everyone's knowledge and enhanced mutual understanding.

As Mayor, Councillor Gill brought people together at a range of functions and attended a record 500+ engagements. This included those with Scout and Guide groups, homeless people, young drummers, people with disabilities, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Sikh, Hindu and various business groups, all of which demonstrated his personal commitment to breaking down barriers between communities and promoting understanding.

Councillor Gill also promoted the borough and community cohesion whenever attending International mayoral engagements.

When the Royal Anglian Regiment returned from Afghanistan and paraded in the borough, he took the salute in the presence of the Queen's representative. This was a powerful symbol of community cohesion.

Councillor Gill helped raise and present donations (£20,000 & £7,000) to the Indian and Pakistani High Commissioners respectively for flood relief and to promote positive links with Britain. He had very strong links with his family in India and visited school children in his village in India on a regular basis, where he supported educational initiatives via financial donations. Councillor Gill received a number of prestigious honours from India including the Mother India International, Hind Rattan, Village Man and the Glory of India Awards.

Despite his many community roles and commitments, Councillor Gill always had time to support his colleagues, providing guidance through his extensive knowledge of the Council and the community. He championed and attended councillor learning events, humbly maintaining that he always had more to learn. Councillor Gill was always approachable and did not seek the limelight, yet he was willing to share his views when required.

Councillor Gill's commitment to community cohesion, education, equality and diversity are reflected in his achievements and in the many positions he was elected to on the Council over 19 years. He will be greatly missed by colleagues and officers alike.

Recommendation/Reason

The Assembly is asked to stand for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.