

ASSEMBLY

31 January 2024

Title: Death of Haji Mohammed Siddique, Freeman of the Borough	
Report of the Chief Executive	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: None	Key Decision: No
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Summary	
<p>The Assembly is asked to note with deep regret the recent passing of Haji Mohammed Siddique, Freeman of the Borough, aged 93.</p> <p>In 1955 at the age of 26, Haji arrived in the UK as an economic migrant, leaving behind his loved ones in Pakistan and a career as a teacher of mathematics and physical education. A short while later, he settled in Barking and Dagenham and held jobs at Ford's Dagenham and a local rubber factory before going on to be a supervisor at London Transport and ending his working career in the food industry.</p> <p>Having had instilled in him since a young age a strong Islamic faith based upon the service of others, Haji concentrated from the time of his arrival in the UK towards working to improve the lives of all, through integrating into and appreciating the opportunities provided by his host nation which had become his new home.</p> <p>Haji was instrumental in the development of the Pakistani Muslim Association and was the founding father of the Barking Muslim Association. Upon being elected Chairman of the Association, Haji restructured it into a charitable trust and grasped, at the time, the very visionary idea of promoting and working towards inter-community tolerance, integration and the development of good relations between all.</p> <p>Together with his loyal team of volunteers, Haji secured the support of local communities for the development of the Al Madina community complex in Victoria Road, Barking, which today not only houses the Al Madina mosque, an Ofsted-registered school and a regulated and developed supplementary school, but also offers a diverse range of services for the communities of the Borough ranging from talking therapies, community advisory services, outreach working targeting the homeless, care for the elderly as well as the provision of sports facilities and wedding and conference services. He also led the creation of a bereavement fund which, over the next 40+ years, supported families at their time of most need.</p>	

Haji's vision and commitment to helping others also extended beyond Barking and Dagenham. At the age of 82, he travelled to and led a team of volunteers in an international building programme in the Gambia which became instrumental in the provision of facilities and funding to provide 500 children from the poorest backgrounds with a meal every day - often their only meal.

Haji was bestowed the Freedom of the Borough in May 2016 for his commitment to community cohesion in the Borough, his work on behalf of the Pakistani Muslim community and his global charity work. Other accolades stemming from his work included the Al Madina mosque being awarded the prestigious 5 STAR Beacon Mosque status in 2018 and the organisation being recognised for its community capacity building and empowerment work programme at an international conference in Istanbul, which was adopted by the World Congress of Muslim philanthropists as a flagship project for roll out throughout the world.

A loyal and devoted husband, Haji was a loving father to five children as well as being a grandfather and great-grandfather. He was a highly respected leader amongst many communities and his work and legacy will undoubtedly continue to thrive in the activities and outreach work of the Al Madina Mosque. His funeral service took place on Wednesday 3 January at Al Madina Mosque and the Borough flag at the Town Hall, Barking was flown at half-mast throughout the day.

Recommendation(s)

The Assembly is asked to note the report.