

Halesowen Area Committee – 1st July 2009

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Raising the Standard – a flag for Halesowen?

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a proposal to adopt and have made a flag for Halesowen.

Background

2. In March, Councillor Hill raised the prospect of a flag for Halesowen. He had been talking to a former Halesowen resident, a Mr. Philip Tibbetts, who had created a Halesowen Tartan and has also designed a Halesowen flag. Mr. Tibbetts is keen to have his flag design formally adopted so that it can be registered. The flag could also be used on appropriate occasions to promote the Town and to give it a sense of identity. The flag is included for information in the Appendix and a colour copy will be circulated at the Area Committee.
3. Mr. Tibbetts is a former Earls High pupil who no longer lives in the Borough. He says when designing the flag:-

"I had thought that counties had every right to a flag and following on that course of thinking it seemed only fair that towns and cities should have their own too. The flag takes on elements of Halesowen's two coats of arms. The older arms probably are associated with Halesowen Abbey which was founded by Premonstratensian canons from France in 1215. The French influence can be seen in the blue field with the three golden fleur-de-lys upon which a white chevron is added. These arms can be seen repeatedly inside Halesowen Church and are also the basis for the emblems Halesowen Golf Club, The Earls High School (the old Grammar School) and Old Halesonians Rugby & Hockey clubs."

"The second coat of arms was granted by the Royal College for the parish council in 1937 and can still be seen on benches in the town centre. The centre piece of this design features a distinctive twin tailed lion rampant. The red part of the lion represents the Norman who took overlordship of the town after the Norman invasion of England, Earl Roger of Montgomery and the green half, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester."

"In order to fit the design the lion was taken from the later arms to act as a centre-piece for the flag once it was recoloured gold. The white chevron also gets edged in blue and gold as well as a continued reflection of the emblems of the grammar school and other institutions."

4. Mr. Tibbetts acknowledged that his flag takes elements from three existing Coats of Arms (see Appendix) – namely:-
 - (i) the original Coat of Arms used by Halesowen Abbey in 1215 (highly visible inside Halesowen Church), which has also been adopted by the Halesowen Golf Club;
 - (ii) the heraldic emblem used by Earls High School, Old Halesonians Rugby and Hockey Clubs (created for the former Grammar School);
 - (iii) the Royal College of Arms to Halesowen Parish Council.

Whilst the newly created Halesowen flag is clearly different, the similarities are striking and could, to the untrained eye, potentially be perceived to not be sufficiently distinguishable from the Coats of Arms. To some degree the design also has some similar features to the flag of St. Andrew. Clearly if the proposed design were considered unsuitable, it would not preclude other designs being considered

5. The flag for Dudley Metropolitan Borough, also in a blue and yellow design, is based around the coat of arms and, therefore, links directly to the Dudley insignia (see Appendix). This could be an alternative approach for Halesowen. Equally the Area Committee might decide to do nothing at this stage and review the position in the future.
6. If the Area Committee wishes to support the flag officially, it does not have the power to do so, but can recommend formal adoption to the Council by resolution of this Committee.
7. The Council would have to have the flag manufactured from a specialist flag maker. If this is decided, then such an acquisition could be met from the Area Committee capital allocation.

Finance

8. There will be cost associated with acquiring a Halesowen flag. A specialist flag manufacturer has been approached for a quotation for a suitable sized flag and the cost is likely to be in the region of £200.

Law

9. There is no UK Flag Act. The UK Flag Registry maintains a register of flags to provide a record of all flags in existence. There is no legal requirement to have a flag registered. For the flag to be registered it would have to be selected by public vote or adopted by the Council. However, the advertising regulations (as the flag would be deemed to be an advertisement) would need consent.

Equality Impact

10. There are no specific proposals which would have direct impact on issues of equality.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that:-

- the Area Committee determine if it wishes to recommend the formal adoption of Mr. Tibbetts' flag design for Halesowen to the Council;
- if the proposal is ultimately approved by the Council, that the Area Liaison Officer be authorised to acquire a flag and fund it from the Area Committee's capital allocation.



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Area Liaison Officer

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List of Background Papers

Email from Phillip Tibbetts (dated 28th March 2009)

Email from Phillip Tibbetts (dated 7th April 2009)

http://www.btinternet.com/~allan_raymond/French_Royal_Family.htm

http://www.civicheraldry.co.uk/west_mid.html)

Proposed Flag



Dudley Metropolitan Borough Flag



Halesowen Abbey Coat of Arms, adopted by Halesowen Golf Club



Earls High School, Old Halesonians Rugby & Hockey Clubs (former Grammar School emblem)



Royal College of Arms to Halesowen Parish Council

