

Birmingham City Council
Council Business Management Committee

21 December 2020



Subject: Request for the Use of the Coat of Arms
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Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To consider an application by Mr John Stratton for the use of the Coat of Arms as a picture in a book will be entitled 'A Brummie Life'.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to determine the application.

3 Request for the Use of the Coat of Arms by Mr John Stratton

- 3.1 Mr Stratton wishes to use a photograph of the Coat of Arms in a book entitled 'A Brummie Life' which is a 'requested autobiography' about Mr Stratton's life as a citizen of Birmingham. The book would not be a commercial venture of any kind but would be self-published and donated to friends and charitable organisations including churches. The book contains 92 photographs and illustrations.
- 3.2 The email from Mr Stratton adds "The Autobiography focuses upon the two Cathedrals in Birmingham. St. Martin's in the Bull Ring, The former Accident Hospital, Winson Green Prison. The Birmingham Mail Christmas Tree Fund, Aston Parish Church and St. Paul's in the Jewellery Quarter. The book illustrates how the effects of my early years in the City impacted upon my adult life and the contribution I have been privileged to make through music. It refers to my knowledge of former Bishops of Birmingham, and my association with the Cathedrals of St. Philip's and

St. Chad's. Should my request to include the City of Birmingham Coat of Arms be granted I would naturally acknowledge this in the book. The book makes reference to notable events in the life of the City, including the introduction of electricity in 1899, the first electric tram in 1903, a large extension south, in 1911, the opening of the Birmingham Post and Mail by Princess Margaret in 1965.”

4 Background in Respect of the Use of The Birmingham Coat of Arms

4.1 Section 73 of the West Midlands County Council Act 1980 provides that:

“If any person without the consent of the local authority uses in connection with any trade, business, calling or profession any part of the armorial bearings of that authority, or any emblem or device closely resembling any such part, in a manner calculated to lead to the belief that he displays the part, emblem or device with the approval of that local authority, he may at the suit of the local authority be restrained by an injunction from continuing to use that part, emblem or device.”

4.2 The Coat of Arms is a dignity granted by Royal Charter and, as such, is not a property right. The Council cannot therefore license or authorise its use (by others) as such. All that the Council can do is to indicate whether it has any objection to its use. If the Council has no objection, then it would be safe to assume that it will not seek to restrain the use by way of an injunction.

4.3 The Committee’s normal practice has been to indicate that the Council would object to the use of the Coat of Arms except on materials sponsored or produced by, or closely associated with, the Council or in other special circumstances.