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The conferment ceremony was held in the Council Chamber of Douglas Town Hall on Friday July 10, attended by Barry and Robin Gibb, their mother Barbara and members of the Gibb family during a special meeting of the full Council.

Barry and Robin Gibb were met at the Town Hall by the Chief Executive Kathy Rice and Council Leader David Christian. While in reception the guests were treated to a song – Roll Away by Davy Knowles of Back Door Slam - performed by children from Ballacottier School who had assembled outside the Town Hall, which proved a poignant opening to the proceedings and clearly delighted the distinguished guests.

The Mayor of Douglas Councillor Michael Gelling welcomed Barry and Robin Gibb and their family to the Council Chamber, following which

Council Leader David Christian delivered his proposer's speech. He said the day would be remembered as a 'milestone' in the history of the Council, for the honorary Freedom of the Borough to be conferred on three brothers who not only had made such a major contribution to popular music over the past 50 years but also had never forgotten the land of their birth, the Isle of Man.

He continued: 'The Gibb brothers have always taken every opportunity to speak of their Manx roots and of their deep affection for the Island that was their home in early childhood.'

Speaking of the Gibb brothers' ties with the Island Councillor Christian explained all three were born in Douglas and had lived with their late father Hugh and mother Barbara in and around the capital in their youth. He explained how music had figured in their lives from an early age. Hugh Gibb had been a drummer and bandleader who, like his sons were to do many years later, played to packed houses in Douglas.

Later the family moved to Manchester then emigrated to Australia, 'and the rest,' said Councillor Christian, 'is history'.

Councillor Christian said: 'Barry, Robin and Maurice - with their international profile and legendary status in rock and roll history - could not have been better ambassadors for the Isle of Man. Their recording of Ellan Vannin helped raise thousands of pounds for Manx charities and even now, following the sad passing of Maurice, Barry and Robin continue - at every opportunity - to raise awareness of the Isle of Man to a truly global audience.'

Seconding Councillor Christian's proposal, Councillor Mrs Raina Chatel said: 'That these three brothers created so much wonderful music has earned them a place in history. That these three brothers should have been such wonderful ambassadors for the Isle of Man has earned them a place in our hearts.'

As honorary Freemen of the Borough of Douglas the Bee Gees join an illustrious roll call, one that includes Sir Winston Churchill, Sir Norman Wisdom, His Honour Deemster Jack Corrin CBE, Geoff Duke OBE, three former Mayors of Douglas, George Chatel MBE, Inkerman Faragher and Fred Kennish, and also one of the world's finest road racing cyclists, Manxman Mark Cavendish.

The framed vellum commemorating the conferment of the honorary Freedom of the Borough of Douglas presented by the Mayor was designed and created in calligraphy by local artist Colleen Corlett.

Accepting the vellum, Robin Gibb thanked Douglas Borough Council for conferring the honour, which he said: "was very humbling", adding he was proud to be Manx.

Barry Gibb expressed his thanks for the wonderful honour and spoke of his childhood memories, in particular, "the magnificent smell of the sea surrounding the Island, which is like nowhere else in the world."

Following the ceremony Barry and Robin Gibb and their immediate family met briefly with the Mayor and Members of the Council before leaving to continue filming footage in Douglas that will form part of their 50th anniversary documentary.