



Left: Miriam Parker, MBE for contributions to the farming industry.

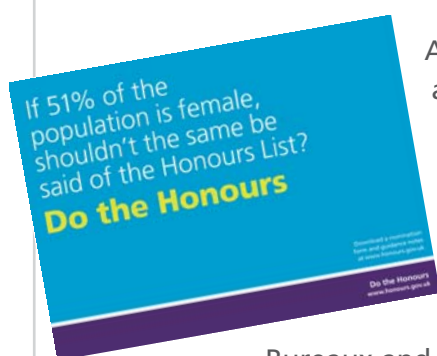
Below: Clare Connor received an OBE for pioneering a path for women in cricket.



DO THE HONOURS

Women make up 51% of the UK population but the same cannot be said of the New Year Honours in 2006 – just 37% went to women. Clearly, this is not because women achieve less than men, but simply that fewer women are nominated.

In January 2006 a campaign was launched by the Cabinet Office's Ceremonial Secretariat to increase nominations for women with the strapline 'Do the Honours'. The campaign aims to encourage the public to nominate women who have made significant and varied contributions to British life.



A series of high-profile advertisements in daily newspapers launched the campaign, while posters and leaflets were distributed to public libraries, Citizens Advice

Bureaux and Post Offices. The result has been a 66% increase in requests for nomination forms in the period since the campaign began, compared to the same period in previous years.

Do the Honours is designed to make the process of identifying and nominating the right sort of people easier. The new honours website www.honours.gov.uk provides a nomination form and guidelines.

A further Cabinet Office-led campaign is planned to encourage more nominations for black and ethnic minority groups.

A representative honours list

Since 1993 the general public has been able to nominate people for an honour in recognition of outstanding individual contributions. The Ceremonial Secretariat processes nominations made by the public, supports the committees that select the names for the honours lists and advises the Cabinet Secretary.

In 2004 the Public Administration Select Committee and Sir Hayden Phillips both reviewed the honours system. They recognised in their reports that more needed to be done to encourage nominations from under-represented groups; this in turn would lead to greater diversity in the honours lists.

The Government agreed in its response, *Reform of the Honours System*, that honours lists should be more representative of the population as a whole. Specialist committees were appointed through open competition and announced through the media. The new committees, which are mainly made up of specialists from outside the Civil Service, have been actively encouraging a wider range of nominations.

These changes have brought a greater awareness of the honours system and the nomination process. As a result, numbers of nominations have increased. However, the Cabinet Office wants to do more to ensure that nominations reflect the vibrancy and diversity of life in Britain, and the Do the Honours campaign is a reflection of its approach.