

Freedom of the Town Policy

Background/Introduction

Giving someone Honorary Freedom and Freedom of Entry is one of the most prestigious appointments that a Council can bestow.

By section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 (amended by section 180 of the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980), a Borough, Royal Borough or City Council may admit “persons of distinction and persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the city, borough or royal borough” as Honorary Freeman.

However, the law on Honorary Freemen and Honorary Freewomen has since changed by virtue of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. The 2009 Act widened the list of councils who can grant Honorary Titles.

“Subject as follows, a relevant authority may admit to be honorary freemen or freewomen of the place of area for which it is the authority –

- a. Persons of distinction, and
- b. Persons who have, in the opinion of the authority, rendered eminent services to that place or area.

6. In this section “relevant authority” means –

- a. a principal council;
- b. a parish or community council;
- c. charter trustees in England constituted ...”

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009; Part 1 – Democracy and Involvement; Chapter 5 – Local Freedoms and Honorary Titles

As this has come to light, a policy has now put in place to grant Honorary Freedom for individuals who have provided exceptional, distinguished service to the Town.

Appointment of Honorary Freedom of the Town

Legal Position

1. By Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 (including amendments by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009), a principal council, parish or community council may admit “persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services” to the town as Honorary Freeman
2. A resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting at a specifically convened meeting is required to admit the Honorary Freeman or Freewoman, but this does not confer any rights upon them.
3. The resolution should recite the grounds upon which the Council have come to their decision, and details of the public services rendered by the recipient should be included.
4. After passing of the resolution, a newly admitted Freeman or Freewoman may, depending on custom, take the appropriate Freeman’s Oath and sign the Freeman’s Roll, with their signature being witnessed by the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer.
5. A sealed certificate of the grant of the Honorary Freedom, incorporating a copy of the formal resolution, contained in a suitable casket should then be presented to the newly appointed Honorary Freeman or Freewoman by the Mayor and an opportunity given for the recipient to reply.

Eligibility

1. Individuals from all walks of life and sections of the community who have made a difference to the town are eligible to be nominated as honorary freemen/freewomen.
2. In keeping with the special nature of the award, it shall be strictly limited to those who have made a very significant contribution to the community and who have demonstrated “service above self”.
3. The honour will be awarded for the individual’s lifetime and not as a hereditary award.
4. Posthumous Awards are not legally able to be granted.
5. It would be expected that the nominee will have given extensive and distinguished service to the community that goes beyond local government e.g. service to other organisations, voluntary and community groups, in a largely voluntary capacity.
6. Nominations will not be accepted for current serving members of the Town Council. If the nomination is that of a former Member of the Town Council, then a nomination for the role of Honorary Aldermen should instead be considered.

Nomination Procedures

1. An application for appointment must be made in writing using the application form provided.
2. This must be submitted by either themselves or by a member of the Council on their behalf.
3. The submission should outline the voluntary service provided by the individual to the community and any other examples of community spirit to justify the honour.
4. Applications should be submitted to the Clerk consulted with the Chair of Full Council. All nominations will be treated in the strictest of confidence.
5. Election of the position of Honorary Freeman or Freewomen shall then be voted upon by resolution of the Council. This should be a specially convened meeting of Full Council with the resolution passed by not less than two thirds of members voting.
6. Following the meeting, the nominee will then be informed of the outcome of the resolution and invited to an individual ceremony to receive their honour.

Role Entitlements

1. Honorary Freeman or Freewomen may attend en masse all civic ceremonial events as invited.
2. Assist, with the Mayor's permission, the hosting of receptions/functions.
3. Support the work of the Mayor's Charity.
4. To act in an ambassadorial role for the Council and the civics when requested to do so.
5. To promote civic pride in the Town and its council.

Privileges of Title

1. Honorary Freeman and Freewomen will be entitled to wear a badge of office as directed by the Clerk and Mayor.
2. Attend, when invited, civic ceremonial functions and receptions,
3. To participate in civic processions, taking precedence amongst distinguished guests.
4. To be added to a 'roll of honorary freedom'.
5. To enjoy such other privileges as the Council may confer upon them from time to time.

NOMINATION FOR FREEDOM OF THE TOWN

NOMINATORS DETAILS	
Name	
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

ABOUT THE NOMINEE	
Name	
Address	
Email (if known)	
Telephone (if known)	
How long have you known the individual?	
Are you related to the individual?	

WHY THE NOMINEE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED	
<p>Please explain in no more than 500 words why you are making your nomination, and what makes them eligible to be awarded Freedom of the Town <i>(this will be considered by the Council and used to decide the resolution of their nomination at a meeting of Full Council.)</i></p>	

I hereby confirm that all information is correct and the nominee is eligible to be considered for the award of Freedom of the Town.	
Signature	
Name (print)	
Date	
NOMINATION SECONDED BY	
Signature	
Name (print)	
Date	