



## **HONORARY FREEMAN SCHEME**

### **BACKGROUND**

In November 2011, the Council adopted its first policy for an Honorary Freeman Scheme. In order to achieve the Council's objective of a full audit of its policies and procedure documents, the Honorary Freeman Scheme, has been brought to this committee for review.

The existing policy was, being the first policy of this type after the introduction of the enabling legislation, a basis for adaptation according to experience gained both in Godalming and elsewhere.

In reviewing the 2011 document, it's limitations are apparent, for example, if a Godhelmian achieved national recognition for an outstanding feat, under the 2011 policy it would be difficult for a nomination to meet the criteria for an award of 'Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of the Town of Godalming'. The revised policy below, seeks to address this point.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

From 12 January 2010, all local councils may exercise powers to confer the title of "honorary freeman" or "honorary freewoman" to persons of distinction and those who, in the Council's opinion, have rendered eminent services to the Council's area (section 249(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1972).

From time to time, members of the community demonstrate outstanding service and/or contribution to the wellbeing of the Town or outstanding feats of endeavour or achievement that bring credit to the community and it is recognised that their commitment should be acknowledged. The Council may choose to do so by awarding to an individual the title of Honorary Freeman/woman of the Town of Godalming'.

### **SERVICE**

The nominee may have given extensive and eminent service to the Civil Parish of Godalming and its local community or may have made a significant contribution to the well-being of its residents, the preservation of its historic character or its natural or built environment. The nominee must have made an outstanding contribution to the Town such that the nominee's contribution can be seen to have been a wholly altruistic and public-spirited desire to contribute to the benefit of the town and its residents. Exceptionally, a nominee may have achieved outstanding feats of endeavour or achievement which brings national or international credit to the community.

### **NOMINATION CRITERIA**

The following will be taken into account when consideration is given to granting the honour of Honorary Freeman/woman of the Town:-

1. Service in a voluntary capacity, but this should not preclude the honour being awarded to a person whose dedication and contribution is significantly above that expected from their occupation.
2. Town Councillors or Officers of the Town Council are not excluded from consideration, however, any nominated Town Councillor or Council Officer must have retired from the post.
3. Nominees need not necessarily be residents of Godalming, but will be judged on their contribution to the Town.
4. The nominee's contribution to the wellbeing of the community must be considered outstanding, exceptional or unique.

### **NOMINATION PROCEDURE**

1. Nominations must be made by Town Councillors in the strictest confidence without the nominee's knowledge.
2. Nominations must be made in writing to the Town Clerk. Any nominations received will be considered by the Mayoralty Committee at its next scheduled meeting
3. If the Mayoralty Committee agrees the nomination, the matter will be put before the Full Council in confidential session with a secret ballot. If Full Council resolves that the nominee should be made an Honorary Freeman/woman of the Town, the nominee will be invited to accept the honour. If agreed, the nomination will then be put before Full Council in open session.
4. No fewer than 14 of the Town Councillors must vote in favour of the nomination.
5. The decisions of the Council on all nominations (whether affirmative or negative) are final.

### **ENTITLEMENTS**

The rights attached to the honorary position are not stipulated in legislation, accordingly, this Council will invite its Honorary Freeman/woman to the Town's civic events.

Any person declared an Honorary Freeman/woman of the Town may designate himself/herself 'Honorary Freeman/woman of the Town of Godalming.

The award shall be made at a small ceremony which may take place at a Council meeting. A scroll will be presented to the recipient.

### **LIMITATION ON HOLDERS OF AWARD**

The Council to bear in mind the special nature of this award and limit its numbers accordingly.