



HONORARY FREEMAN/WOMAN SCHEME

POLICY STATEMENT

Local councils may exercise powers under (section 249(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1972) 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.

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.

PROCEDURE

1. Nominations must be made in the strictest confidence without the nominee’s knowledge.

2. Any nominations received will be considered in confidential session by the Full Council with a secret ballot of Members.
3. No less than 12 members of the Council must vote in favour of the nomination for it to pass.
4. The outcome of the ballot on all nominations is final.
5. The record minutes shall record either “the council resolved to invite a nominee to accept the award of Honorary Freeman/women of the Town” (without naming the nominee) or “the council, having considered nominations, made no award for Honorary Freeman/woman of the Town”.
6. 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.
7. If accepted, appropriate arrangements, as agreed in consultation with the recipient and the Mayor, will be made for the presentation of the award. This may be at the next Full Council Meeting, the Annual Meeting of the Electors, or at some other occasion/event as deemed appropriate.
8. If the presentation is made elsewhere than a meeting of the Full Council, it shall be subject to an immediate press release. However, in order to record the name of the recipient within the record minutes, the name of the recipient, the date and occasion of the presentation shall be reported at agenda item 6 - Receipt of Official Announcements at the next meeting of the Full Council following the presentation.

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.

LIMITATION ON HOLDERS OF AWARD

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