

Clun Town Council

NOTE ON HONORARY FREEMEN

Honorary Freeman

Background

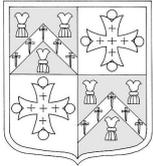
1. The freedom most commonly arising today is that of being made an Honorary Freeman of the Borough, which, under the Honorary Freedom of Boroughs Act, 1885, (now replaced by the Local Government Act of 1972), may be conferred by any borough, even though otherwise it has no freemen.
2. Prior to the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, a freeman was a citizen who was entitled to claim exemption from tolls and a share of the profits of his city or borough. The Act franchised non-freemen in positions of local government and the term is now occasionally conferred as an honorary title by a city or corporation.

Purpose

1. To be granted the title of Honorary Freeman is a mark of distinction upon the person whom the Council wishes to honour. The Freedom itself carries no privilege and is purely an honour,
 - reflecting the eminence of the person on whom it is conferred or
 - as recognition of significant and valuable services rendered to the borough by that person.

Conferment

2. The ceremony for the admitting of an Honorary Freeman should be a very formal occasion. Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 (sub section 5) deals with the admission to the Freedom of the Borough by Borough or City Councils of 'persons of distinction and persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the City, Borough or Royal Borough'.
3. The act provides that a special meeting of the Council must be convened with the specific object of passing the resolution to Honorary Freedom - one of the highest honours that the Council of a City or Borough can bestow.
4. 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

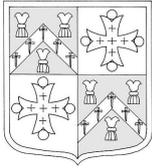


be included. The resolution should be passed by not less than two thirds of the members present.

5. Key criteria could include:

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6. The procedure should be carried out with the utmost formality and the Honorary Freeman Elect is invited to the Council Meeting and placed on the right hand of the Mayor.
7. After the passing of the resolution, the newly admitted Freeman should take the appropriate Freeman's Oath and sign the Freeman's Roll, his/her signature being witnessed by the Mayor and the Chief Executive.
8. A sealed and illuminated certificate of the grant of Honorary Freedom, containing a copy of the formal resolution, should then be presented to the newly appointed Honorary Freeman by the Mayor, with an opportunity being given for the recipient to reply.
9. After the formal proceedings come to an end it is usual to close the meeting and adjourn for a reception. This gives an opportunity for the invited guests to offer their congratulations to the newly appointed Honorary Freeman.



Legislation Text

Honorary
aldermen and
freemen.

249.—(1) A principal council may, by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, confer the title of honorary aldermen on persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent services to the council as past members of that council, but who are not then councillors of the council.

(2) No honorary alderman shall, while serving as a councillor of the council, be entitled to be addressed as alderman or to attend or take part in any civic ceremonies of the council as an alderman.

(3) Services rendered to the council of an existing county, county borough, borough or urban or rural district the area of which becomes wholly or partly included in a new county or district shall be treated for the purposes of subsection (1) above as services rendered to the council of the new county or district, as the case may be.

PART XII

(4) An honorary alderman of a principal council may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the council may from time to time decide, but shall not, as such, have the right—

(a) to attend meetings of the council or a committee of the council (including a joint committee upon which they are represented); or

(b) to receive any such allowances or other payments as are payable under sections 173 to 176 above.

(5) The council of a London borough or a district having the status of a city, borough or royal borough may, by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, admit to be honorary freemen of the city, borough or royal borough persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent services to the city, borough or royal borough, but the admission of a person to be an honorary freeman shall not confer on him any such rights as are referred to in section 248(4) above.

(6) The council of a London borough or a district which has the status of a city, borough or royal borough may spend such reasonable sum as they think fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person upon whom they have conferred the title of honorary alderman or admitted to be an honorary freeman of the city, borough or royal borough.