



**Royston Town Council
Honorary Freeman Policy
Approved by Full Council on 20th January 2020
Minute number 299/20**

POLICY

Royston Town Council wishes to recognise the efforts of individuals who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to the wellbeing of Royston. The Town Council will do this for special individuals who meet the criteria of this policy by awarding to that individual the title of Honorary Freeman of Royston.

BACKGROUND

From 12th January 2010 all local councils may exercise powers to confer the title of Honorary Freeman to persons of distinction and those who, in the Town Council's opinion, have rendered eminent services to the local community (Local Government Act 1972, Section 249 (5) and (6)).

ELIGIBILITY

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

1. Preference will be given to a person who performs 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. The award is open to all, including Town Councillors or Town Council staff, but nominations of such individuals will not receive any preferential consideration.
3. Any nominated Town Councillor should have retired from the post.
4. The contribution to the wellbeing of the community must involve one or more of the following factors:-
 - (a) A significant allocation of the person's time in serving members of the community for the improvement of their wellbeing.
 - (b) The promotion, achievement and/or delivery of community services in which a real personal contribution has been made.
 - (c) Whilst difficult to define, the contribution must be outstanding in that it can be seen to stand above the contributions of most other persons.
 - (d) Someone who has excelled in a specific role or work area that brings respect to the Town and acts as a role model for the young people of Royston.
 - (e) Someone who champions Royston and is a credit to the town.
 - (f) Someone who has served Royston as a local councillor for a period of at least 20 years and made an outstanding contribution, or rendered eminent service, to the local community through their activities on local councils during their term of office.

NOMINATION PROCEDURE

There is no limit to the number of nominations or holders of the title, but the nature of the nomination criteria means it is unlikely that the honour will be frequently awarded and will therefore remain distinctive.

1. Nominations must be made in the strictest confidence without the nominee's knowledge. Any resident or elector of Royston may make a nomination but it must be sponsored by a Town Councillor.
2. Nominations must be made in writing to the Town Clerk. The submission should be evidence-based by outlining the voluntary service provided by the individual to the community and any other examples of 'community spirit' to justify the honour.
3. Members may conduct enquiries to verify the merits of a nomination.

CONSIDERATION OF NOMINATIONS

At an Ordinary Meeting of the Full Town Council, at the given agenda item, the following procedure shall be adopted:

1. The Chair shall open the agenda item and remind Members of this policy document giving guidance on those criteria for suitable nominations.
2. The Chair shall invite the sponsoring Member to present the application for nomination.
3. The Chair shall invite all Members to discuss and debate the merits of the nomination.
4. The Chair shall then invite the Council to pass the resolution, which should recite the particular grounds upon which the Council have come to their decision and details of the public services rendered by the recipient.
5. No fewer than two-thirds of the Town Councillors must agree the nomination and pass a resolution (Local Government Act 1972 s 249 (8)).
6. The resolution shall be recorded in the Council minutes in the usual way.
7. The decisions of the Council on all nominations (whether affirmative or negative) are final.

AWARD

Following a resolution by Full Council that an award is justified, the recipient will receive a letter from the Town Clerk notifying them of the nomination and inviting them to accept the honour in writing.

The title of 'Honorary Freeman of the Town' will be granted by the Town Mayor and the recipient presented with a certificate at the Annual Town Meeting.

ENTITLEMENT

The title is entirely honorary and there are no rights and privileges arising from the award other than the following:

- The right to designate himself/herself Honorary Freeman of Royston for life
- Invited to be present at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council
- Invited to all subsequent civic events and functions hosted by the Town Council
- Be placed in the civic procession with the Town Councillors

WITHDRAWAL

Any person nominated who is deemed by the Council to have brought the office into disrepute may have the designation withdrawn. No less than two thirds of the Town Council, at a formal vote, must agree the withdrawal.

Review date: January 2022, or earlier if legislation dictates.