

HONORARY FREEMAN POLICY



Adopted October 2017

Reviewed April 2025

Next Review April 2029

HONORARY FREEMAN POLICY

Faversham Town Council wishes to recognise the efforts of individuals who demonstrated outstanding commitment to the wellbeing of Faversham. 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 Faversham.

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 Faversham Town Council and the local community (Local Government Act 1972, Section 249 (5) and (6)).

ELIGIBILITY

Nominations, by motion, must be made by a serving Town Councillor, but the honour is open to anyone who meets one of the following eligibility criteria:

- Served Faversham as a Town Councillor for a period of 4 years:
 - Made an outstanding contribution, or rendered eminent service, to the Town Council during their term of office, as Mayor or of equivalent standing
- Made an exceptional and outstanding contribution to the local community in many ways over a substantial number of years, by that we mean at least 10, involving one or more of the following:
 - A significant time in serving members of the community for improvement of their well-being
 - The achievement and/or delivery of community services in which a real personal contribution has been made
 - Outstanding acts to promote the Town

NOMINATION PROCESS

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.

The admission of an Honorary Freeman must be made by resolution at a meeting of the Full Council specially convened for such purpose and passed by no less than two-thirds of the members of the Town Council (section 249 (8) of the Act).

That section also requires "notice of the object of the meeting" to be given. This confirms the need for the agenda with the public notice and summons to members in respect of the Town Council meeting to itemize a motion to confer the title of Honorary Freeman.

Members may conduct enquiries to verify the merits of a nomination.

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 scroll at the Annual Mayor Making.

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 Faversham for life
- Invited to be present at the Annual Mayor Making Event
- Invited to all subsequent civic events and functions hosted by the Town Council
- Be placed in the civic procession ahead of Town Councillors

WITHDRAWAL

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who is deemed by the Council to have brought the office, or the Town Council, into disrepute may have the designation withdrawn.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

Examples of conduct which may bring the Council or the office of Honorary Freeman into disrepute include, but are not limited to:

- Being convicted of a criminal offence, particularly one involving dishonesty, violence, or hate crime;
- Publicly making offensive or discriminatory statements that contravene the Council's values;
- Acting in a way that damages the Council's reputation or undermines public confidence in its work;
- Being subject to legal proceedings for misconduct in public life or fraud;
- Using the title of Honorary Freeman to endorse political, commercial, or personal interests inappropriately;
- Harassing, bullying, or threatening others in connection with their role as Honorary Freeman.

The Council reserves the right to consider both the seriousness and the impact of the incident(s) when making a decision to revoke the title. Due process will be followed, including an opportunity for the individual concerned to respond before any decision is made.