

Revised Criteria and Appointment of Honorary Aldermen and Freedom of the Town 2023

1.0 What is the report about?

1.1 This report sets out recommendations relating to the selection and appointment process for Honorary Aldermen and Freedom of the Town.

2.0 What Decision is required by the Council?

2.1 The Town Council is asked to approve the appointment process and criteria for Honorary Aldermen and Freedom of the Town.

3.0 How does the Decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Priorities?

3.1 The granting of the honour of Honorary Alderman and Honorary Freedom of the Town celebrates the contributions made directly or indirectly to the Council's Priorities.

4.0 Report Details

4.1 Granting the Freedom of the Town is the highest honour that the Town can bestow. Although it carries no privileges those who receive the honour are able to use the title of Freeman, receive invitations to major civic events and have their exceptional and significant contribution to life in the Town to be formally recognised. Granting Freedom of the Town to Military Units provides for Freedom of Entry and the historic privilege "to march through the streets of the District with colours flying, band playing and bayonets fixed".

4.2 There is no statutory guidance that sets out any criteria for the appointment of Aldermen and Freemen. Generally Aldermen are former Councillors who have served on the Council for a considerable length of time and/or who have held a significant position such as Leader or Chair. As Freedom of the Town is awarded in recognition of exceptional service to the Town it would be inappropriate to set out strict judging criteria, instead guidance on the attributes successful candidates would be expected to have is provided.

5.0 Officer's Recommendations

5.1 That the process for selecting and appointing Alderman and giving Freedom of the Town be approved.

6.0 Reasons for the Recommendation

6.1 The proposed procedure, attached as Appendix 1, would provide a clear yet flexible mechanism for selecting and appointing Honorary Aldermen and Freemen.

7.0 What will it cost?

7.1 Section 249 (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows Councils to spend "such reasonable sum as they see fit" on presenting an address to Honorary Aldermen and Freemen. A scroll and commemorative gift would need to be purchased. It is suggested that a maximum of £500 be spent on this. Honorary Aldermen and Freemen are not entitled to any allowance.

8.0 What are the legal aspects?

8.1 Section 248 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Council of a relevant authority, by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members at a meeting of the Council specially convened for that purpose to admit to be Honorary Freemen of the Town to those persons of distinction who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Town.

8.2 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows that a principal council may, by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members at a meeting of the Council specially convened for that purpose, 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 members of that council.

a relevant authority may admit to be honorary freemen or honorary freewomen of the place or area for which it is the authority—

(a) persons of distinction, and

(b) persons who have, in the opinion of the authority, rendered eminent services to that place or area.

(6) In this section “relevant authority” means—

(a) a principal council;

(b) a parish or community council;

(c) charter trustees in England constituted—

(i) under section 246 of the Local Government Act 1972,

(ii) by the Charter Trustees Regulations 1996 (SI 1996/263), or

(iii) under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

(7) The power in subsection (5) above is exercisable by resolution of the relevant authority.

(8) A resolution under subsection (7) above must be passed—

(a) at a meeting of the relevant authority which is specially convened for the purpose and where notice of the object of the meeting has been given; and

(b) by not less than two-thirds of the members of the relevant authority (or, in the case of charter trustees, of the trustees) who vote on it.

(9) A relevant authority may spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person on whom the authority has conferred the title of honorary freeman or honorary freewoman under subsection (5) above.

(10) The admission of a person as honorary freeman or honorary freewoman does not confer on that person any of the rights referred to in section 248(4) above.]

8.3 Sections 32 and 33 of the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transition Arrangements) (No 2) Regulations 2008 confirm that those who have been admitted as Honorary Alderman or Honorary Freemen of a local government area that has been abolished shall be treated as being admitted as an Honorary Alderman or Freeman of the new local government area.

8.4 Part 1 Chapter 5 – of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 amends Sections 248 and 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows women to use the title “Honorary Freewoman”. The title of “Honorary Alderwoman” is also allowed.

PROCEDURE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN AND FREEMEN/WOMEN

1. All Members of Frodsham Town Council are responsible for nominating to the Council the names of past Members of the Council, who in their opinion, have rendered eminent services to the Council and who should be granted the title of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman.
2. All Members of Frodsham Town Council are responsible for nominating to the Council individuals or organisations, who in their opinion, have rendered eminent services to the Town of Frodsham and who should be granted Freedom of the Town, freedom of Entry and the title of Honorary Freeman or Honorary Freewoman.
3. The Member of the Council making a nomination for either Honorary title needs to demonstrate to the Council that the criteria listed in points 7 or 9 below have been met and that the candidate commands substantial support in Frodsham Town Council.
4. The Council will consider any recommendations for either Honorary title and if approved will request the Chair to convene a special meeting of Council to consider the nomination.
5. The roll of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Freemen shall be maintained by the Town Clerk.

An Honorary Alderman of Frodsham Town Council shall be entitled to:

- a) attend Civic Receptions and other civic ceremonies where all Members of the Council are invited and where spouses and partners of members are invited to attend so shall spouses and partners of Aldermen;
- b) be notified of matters of significant civic interest.

A candidate for Honorary Alderman of Frodsham Town Council will need to have a minimum of twelve years service as a Councillor and /or service as Chair / Chair of the Council.

Those granted Freedom of the Town shall be entitled to attend civic receptions and other civic ceremonies where all members of the council are invited and where spouses and partners of members are invited to attend so shall spouses and partners of Freeman. Organisations granted Freedom of Entry shall be entitled to “to march through the streets of the Town with colours flying, band playing and bayonets fixed”;

When considering candidates for Freedom of the Town the following should be considered;

- a) Candidates should have a strong and continuing connection with and commitment to Frodsham or have made a major contribution to national life and in doing so have enhanced the reputation of the Town
- b) Candidates should have made a substantial contribution to the Town in any area of activity, which could include:
 - Artistic and Cultural endeavours
 - Business, Economic growth and prosperity
 - Charitable work
 - Improvement to the built and natural environment
 - Political Activities
 - Religious and spiritual life
 - Sports activities

- c) Candidates should be considered from all walks of life, the honour should not be considered exclusive to a particular endeavour or activity
- d) Candidates should be considered from all parts of the Town.

At the special meeting of Council called to appoint Honorary Alderman or give Freedom of the Town the following procedure shall be adopted;

- The Chair shall open the meeting of Council and welcome all those in attendance
- The Chair shall move the motion to appoint the Honorary Alderman or grant Freedom of the Town
- The Chair shall invite a Member to second the motion
- The Chair of the Council shall pay tribute
- The Chair shall invite other members to pay tribute
- The Chair shall 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
- The Chair shall invite to recipient(s) to come forward to sign the Roll of Honorary Aldermen and Freemen and receive the scroll and civic gift
- The recipient(s) will give a response
- The Chair will conclude proceedings and invite all Members and guests to attend the civic reception