



# Honorary Freeman Scheme for the Town of Wotton-under-Edge

*(Policy approved Sept 2019)*

## **Policy Statement**

From time to time, members of the community demonstrate outstanding commitment and contribution to the wellbeing of the Town and it is recognised that their efforts should be acknowledged. The Council will do this, in special circumstances that meet the criteria of this policy, by awarding to a living individual the title of 'Honorary Freeman (or Honorary Freewoman) of the Town of Wotton-under-Edge. This honour will be awarded only on rare and exceptional occasions, and in accordance with legislation.

## **Service**

The nominee may be a person of distinction or/and have given extensive and eminent service to the Town of Wotton-under-Edge and its local community (e.g. service to other organisations and voluntary and community groups) in a largely voluntary capacity. The nominee must have made an outstanding contribution to the Town such that the nominee's contribution can be seen to stand above the contributions made by most other people.

## **Nomination Criteria**

The following will be taken into account when consideration is given to granting the honour of Honorary Freeman (or Honorary Freewoman) 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 of distinction and those whose dedication and contribution is significantly above that expected from their occupation.
2. All nominees should have carried out their contributing roles for a period of at least 20 years.
3. Nominees need not necessarily be residents of Wotton-under-Edge.
4. The award will not be restricted to Town Councillors or Town Council staff.
5. Any nominated Town Councillor should have retired from the post.
6. 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.

## **Nomination Procedure**

1. Nominations must be made in the strictest confidence without the nominee's knowledge. Any resident or elector of the Town of Wotton-under-Edge 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 outstanding service provided by the individual to the community and any other examples of 'community spirit' to justify the honour. On receipt of a nomination, it will be circulated to all Councillors for confidential consideration in advance of the meeting due to consider the nomination.
3. A special meeting will consider the nomination received. If any Councillor has reservations about the nomination then reasons must be given.
4. Councillors will then vote on the nomination in closed session. No fewer than two-thirds of the voting council must support the nomination for it to proceed.
5. If Councillors are in agreement that the nominee should be made an Honorary Freeman (or Freewoman) of the Town, the nominee will be invited to accept the honour. The decision of the Council on all nominations (whether affirmative or negative) are final.

**Confidentiality**

All nominations of Honorary Freeman are to be treated in the strictest confidence. The nominee should not be informed that they have been nominated, as it is unfair to raise expectations in case they are not met. It is imperative that submissions are not discussed with any other persons (except the one person who may provide a letter in support of the application) or with the individual concerned. Any disclosure will make the application invalid.

**Entitlements**

The title of Honorary Freeman is the highest honour that the Town can bestow although it carries no privileges. Any person declared an Honorary Freeman (or Honorary Freewoman) of the Town may designate himself/herself 'Honorary Freeman (or Freewoman) of the Town of Wotton-under-Edge'.The award shall be made at a small ceremony which may take place at a Council meeting or other suitable event. A framed certificate will be presented to the recipient.

**Limitation on Holders of Award**

The honour will be awarded for the individual's lifetime and not as a hereditary award.

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