



Town Clerk: Ms. Helen Watson FSLCC

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Wednesday 6th January 2021

To all members of the Town Council

Dear Councillor,

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Extraordinary Full Council of Beverley Town Council which will be held on **Monday 11th January 2021 at 8.30pm or at the end of the Full Council Meeting (whichever occurs first)** remotely via Zoom.

NOTE: This meeting is being convened due to technical issues suspending the meeting on 30th November 2020.

Yours sincerely

H. Watson

Helen Watson
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- (a) To record declarations of interest by any member of the council in respect of the agenda items listed below. Members declaring interests should identify the agenda item and type of interest being declared.
- (b) To note dispensations given to any member of the council in respect of the agenda items listed below.

3. To consider the exclusion of the public from the meeting on the grounds that confidential information in relation to the proposal of bestowing the title of Honorary Freeman shall be disclosed (Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960)

Motion: That the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that confidential information in relation to the proposal of bestowing the title of Honorary Freeman shall be disclosed (Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960).

4. Members to consider:

- (a) To receive and resolve proposed nominations for individuals to be bestowed with the title of Honorary Freeman for the Town of Beverley in line with Local Government Act 1972 section 249 to confer the Honorary Freemanships.
- (b) To consider the date, time, venue, certificate, operational arrangements and costs of bestowing any proposed Honorary Freemanships.

BEVERLEY TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN CLERK REPORT - Helen Watson HONORARY FREEMEN/FREEWOMEN

BACKGROUND

The Town Mayor has invited a report from the Town Clerk on the current position regarding the appointment of honorary freemen and honorary freewomen as a result of changes in local government legislation in 2010, linked to the present operation of formally bestowing such awards.

FREEMAN

Before the municipal reforms of 1835 there was a class of persons known as “freemen” in old corporate boroughs, enjoying special rights in the corporate property. The right to be admitted a freeman rested upon the custom of the borough, varied by the terms of its charter and, in certain cases, by local statutory provision. Generally the admission of a freeman, as distinct from the conferment of the honour of an honorary freedom, might be acquired, inter alia, by marriage, birth or employment to an existing freeman. The effect of successive reforms of local government law has been to continue the custom of maintaining a roll of freemen and regulating admission to it. Pursuant to section 248 of the Local Government Act 1972 Act (the 1972 Act) as amended by section 27 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act), the admission of freemen (as opposed to admitting honorary freemen and honorary freewomen) of a pre-1974 municipal borough is approved by the chairman of the district council of the district in which the former borough lies.

After local government reorganisation in 1974 a number of local authorities were given the power to admit honorary aldermen and freemen pursuant to section 249 of the 1972 Act. However, that power was not extended to parish councils in England or community councils in Wales.

Prior to January 2010 only 10 local councils had the standing to confer the title of honorary freeman; seven in England (the councils of the cities of Chichester, Ely, Hereford, Lichfield, Ripon, Truro and Wells) and 3 in Wales (the councils of the Cities of Bangor and St Davids and the Royal Town of Caernarfon).

CURRENT POSITION

On the 12th January 2010 the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 amended the provisions of the 1972 Act to enable all

local councils to confer honorary titles. By virtue of section 249(5) and (6) of the 1972 Act as amended, all local councils may exercise powers to confer the title of “honorary freeman” or “honorary freewoman”, to persons of distinction and those who in the council’s opinion have rendered eminent service to the council’s area.

Section 249(8) of the 1972 Act as amended provides that the admission of an honorary freeman or honorary freewoman must be by resolution made 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 council. Section 249(8) 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 council meeting to itemise a motion to confer the title of honorary freeman or honorary freewoman.

Section 249(9) of the 1972 Act as amended provides that a local council may spend a reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person on whom it has conferred the title of honorary freeman or honorary freewoman.

Prior to the changes in the law, as set out above, some local councils, who want to honour local residents notable service to their town or community or who achieved national fame, conferred the titles “honorary citizen” or “honorary townsman” or “honorary burgess”. Given the express powers given by the 2009 Act to admit “honorary freemen” and “honorary freewomen” it will no longer be necessary or even possible for local councils to confer other titles.

CRITERIA/ ELIGIBILITY

Individuals from all walks of life and all sections of the community who have made a difference to Beverley are eligible to be nominated as honorary freemen.

In keeping with the special nature of the award it shall be strictly limited to those who have made a very significant contribution to the community of Beverley and who have demonstrated “service above self”. The award recognises extraordinary people in the community, which to some extent sits outside of a policy document, but could be addressed by an operational document.

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

The maximum number of freemen or freewomen at any one time is not restricted.

It would be expected that the nominee will have given extensive and distinguished service to the community that goes beyond local government

i.e. service to other organisations, voluntary, community and business groups, in a largely voluntary capacity.

The nominee must have made an outstanding contribution to the town such as the nominee's contribution can be seen to stand above the contributions made by most other people.

NOMINATION CRITERIA

The following should be taken into account when consideration is given to granting the honour of honorary freeman or honorary freewoman of Beverley.

Preference should 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.

The contribution to the welfare of the community must involve a significant contribution of the person's time in serving members of the community for the improvement of their welfare or the promotion, achievement and/or delivery of community services in which a real personal role and contribution is made and the contribution must be so outstanding in that it can be seen to stand above the contributions of most other persons.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

Nominations can be made by any person who has links with Beverley. At present nominations, if any, are made at the Extraordinary Meeting in November. This could be amended so that nominations and written explanation are received by the Town Clerk in a sealed envelope between set dates. This would determine if any Extraordinary meeting is required.

The submission could outline the voluntary 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 could be circulated to all elected members for confidential consideration and included upon a council agenda scheduled between September and December in any calendar year.

If elected members are in agreement that the nominee should be made an honorary freeman or freewoman of the town then the nominee should be invited to accept the honour. If agreed the nominations shall then be put before the council and a formal vote taken, again in confidence. No less than two-thirds of the members of the council must agree the nomination.

All nominations of honorary freeman are treated in the strictest of confidence. The nominee should not be informed that they have been nominated as it is not fair to raise expectations in case they are not met. It is imperative that submissions are not discussed with any other persons. Any disclosure could make the application invalid.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

An acknowledgement will be sent upon receipt of the nomination form. Correspondence will not be entered into on the merits of a particular nomination whilst it is under consideration.

All Councillors will be invited to discuss nominations received for the honorary freeman/freewoman. The Committee may request further information from the proposer if required.

The awards for each year will be presented at an individual ceremony and this will normally be the Annual Meeting of the Council each May, but may be at another town council civic event such as Civic Dinner or Civic Service.

It could be suggested that nominations for each calendar year should reach the Town Clerk, Beverley Town Council, by the 1st October in the preceding year.

ENTITLEMENTS

Any person declared an honorary freeman or freewoman of the town may designate him/herself “honorary freeman/freewoman of the town of Beverley”.

The recipient will be awarded a civic token in the form of a medallion or certificate to commemorate receiving the award.

Any honorary freeman or freewoman of the town shall be:

- Invited to all subsequent civic events and functions;
- Invited to be present at the Annual Mayor Making event , Civic Dinner and Civic Service.

WAY FORWARD

The Policy Committee could be asked to consider this report as a discussion document and agree:

- The operational scheme to appoint honorary freemen/freewomen of Beverley;
- The protocol to be associated with such a scheme.
- The potential funding requirements for budget purposes

Helen Watson
Town Clerk
16th January 2017