

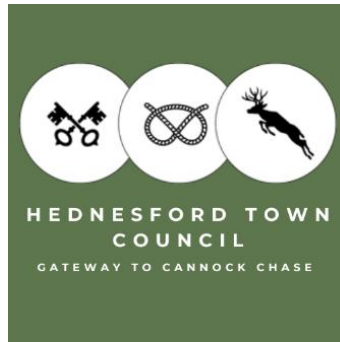
HEDNESFORD TOWN  
COUNCIL

GATEWAY TO CANNOCK CHASE

# HONORARY FREEDOM OF HEDNESFORD TOWN POLICY







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To be reviewed April 2027

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## **1.Introduction**

The Honorary Freedom of the Town is an award made at the discretion of the Town Council. This is the highest honour that the Town Council can bestow and will be awarded only on rare and exceptional occasions and in accordance with legislation.

The title carries no privileges, but those who receive the honour are able to use the title of Freeman or Freewoman. As this is the highest honour that the Council can grant it should be used sparingly and should not be given too often in order to preserve its status and value. No more than 10 titles will be in use at any one time.

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

## **2. Legislation**

Section 249 (5) of Local Government Act 1972, as amended by Section 29 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009, allows a relevant authority (including a town or parish council) to 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 Hednesford Town Council, rendered eminent service to that place or area.

A resolution must be passed:

- c. At a meeting of Hednesford Town Council that has been specially convened for the purpose and where notice of the object of the meeting has been given; and
- d. By not less than two-thirds of the members of the Council (7) who vote on it.

## **3. Nominations**

Any member of the Council may nominate persons or groups who in their opinion have rendered exceptional service to the parish and are worthy of the honorary title.

A group of no less than 10 local electors may also petition a Council member to make a nomination on their behalf.

Nominations for the honorary title must set out in writing the reasons for the nomination and be made on Hednesford Town Councils nomination form available from [clerk@hednesford-tc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hednesford-tc.gov.uk)

Each nomination must be seconded by another Councillor who is not related to the person being nominated

The Councillor making a nomination for the honorary title needs to demonstrate to Hednesford Town Council that the criteria listed in the next section have been met.

Nominations are to be agreed by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk, prior to any resolution being put before Council

Councillors are to be advised of the proposal to bestow honorary freeman/woman onto said person(s) to ensure that 2/3 are in agreement prior to arrangements for the extraordinary meeting of council being made.

The process must be conducted in the strictest confidence until such time as the nominee approved by the Council has confirmed his or her willingness to accept the honorary title and the appropriate public announcement is made by the Council.

#### **4. Criteria**

Candidates should have a strong and continuing connection with and commitment to the Town of Hednesford or have made a major contribution to community life. The honour should not be awarded simply for meeting certain milestones but in recognition of exceptional contributions.

The candidate's contribution should be seen to stand above the contributions made by most other people. To be considered, the nominee should meet two or more of the following criteria and evidence be supplied to support the application:

- a. the candidate has made an outstanding contribution to the local community
- b. the candidate has been a Town Councillor for 25 years or more
- c. the candidate has enhanced the town parish's reputation in the area or activity concerned
- d. the candidate has contributed a service that improves the lives of Hednesford residents
- e. the candidate has demonstrated innovation and entrepreneurship that is delivering results in the town parish.

#### **5. Consideration**

At an Extraordinary meeting of the Council, called in line with Standing Orders, at the given agenda item the following procedure shall be adopted:

- a. The Chairperson shall open the agenda item and remind the members of the policy.
- b. The Chairperson shall invite the sponsor to present the application for nomination.
- c. The Chairperson shall invite all members to debate the merits of the nomination. The Chairperson 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.

- d. If the Council passes the resolution by no less than a two thirds majority then the resolution shall be recorded in the Council Minutes in the usual way.
- e. The Chairperson shall then make arrangements for the formal presentation of the 'Freedom' which will be marked by the giving of a framed certificate or scroll.

A "Freedom" scroll or certificate will be ordered stating the name and purpose for which the honour is being bestowed and signed by the Chairperson and Proper Officer.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS Section 249 (6) of Local Government Act 1972 allows Councils to spend "such reasonable sum as they see fit" on presenting an address to Honorary Freemen or Freewomen.

## **6. Presentation**

The bestowing of the Freedom of the Town actually occurs at the point the Council passes the resolution, but the presentation ceremony or reception marks the occasion in a public way.

The presentation would usually be made by the Chairperson in the presence of other Members at a suitable public event, which could include an annual meeting of the council.

Photographs will be taken to record the event and placed on the Council website and social media channels. A press release and photo will be sent to local press

## **7. Role Entitlements**

- a. Honorary Freemen or Freewomen may attend en masse all civic ceremonial events as invited.
- b. Assist, with the Chairpersons permission, the hosting of receptions/functions.
- c. Support the work of any Chairpersons Charity
- d. To act in an ambassadorial role for the Council and the civics when requested to do so.
- e. To promote civic pride in the Town and its council.