



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

HONORARY FREEDOM POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) as amended by Section 27 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act) confers power on (inter alia) a parish council to admit to be honorary freemen or honorary freewomen of its area persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the parish council, rendered eminent service to that place or area.

For the purposes of this Policy the `parish council` shall mean Gillingham Town Council (the Council).

Section 249(9) of the 1972 Act (as amended) enables the Council to spend such reasonable sums of money 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 freewoman.

The terms `honorary freeman` and `honorary freewoman` are the titles stated in the 1972 Act and given the express powers given by the 2009 Act it is not possible for the Council to confer other titles.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1** For the purpose of this policy the word `Gillingham` means the parish of Gillingham as being the place or area within the meaning of section 249(5) of the 1972 Act (as amended).
- 2.2** Individuals from all walks of life and all sections of the community who have made a contribution to Gillingham are eligible to be nominated as an Honorary Freeman/Freewoman.
- 2.3** In keeping with the special nature of the award, it shall be strictly limited to those who have made a very significant contribution to Gillingham and who have demonstrated "service above self" or a significant national contribution relative to Gillingham.
- 2.4** The honour shall be awarded for the individual's lifetime and cannot be awarded as an hereditary award.
- 2.5** The number of honorary freemen/freewomen at any one time is not restricted.

- 2.6** Any current serving Gillingham Town Councillor of Gillingham Town Council Officer may not be nominated.
- 2.7** If the nomination is that for a former Gillingham Town Councillor, it would be expected that the nominee will have given extensive and distinguished service to the community which transcends local government service i.e. service to other organisations, voluntary and community groups in a largely voluntary capacity and not for long service on the Town Council.
- 2.8** The nominee must have made an outstanding contribution to Gillingham and must involve one or more of the following factors:
- A significant allocation of the person's time in serving members of the community for the improvement of their wellbeing.
 - The promotion, achievement and/or delivery of community services in which a real personal contribution has been made.

Whilst difficult to define, the contribution must be outstanding in that it can be seen to stand above the contributions of most other persons.

3. NOMINATION PROCEDURES

- 3.1** A nomination must be made in the strictest confidence without the nominee's knowledge. Any resident or elector of Gillingham may make a nomination but it must be seconded by a Gillingham Town Councillor.
- 3.2** A nomination must be made in writing to the Town Clerk. The submission should be evidence-based by outlining 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 will be circulated to all Councillors for confidential consideration.
- 3.3** Nomination of an Honorary Freeman/Freewoman is to be treated in the strictest of confidence. The nominee must 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 save with fellow Councillors. Any disclosure will make the application invalid.
- 3.4** All Councillors will be summoned to a meeting which is specially convened for the purpose and where notice of the object of the meeting has been given to discuss a nomination for the admission of an honorary freeman/freewoman. The Council may request further information from the proposer to be presented, if required, at an Extra-Ordinary meeting of Full Council.
- 3.5** No fewer than two-thirds of the Town Councillors voting must agree the nomination.
- 3.6** The decisions of the Council on the nominations (whether affirmative or negative) is final.
- 3.7** If the nominee is unsuccessful, the nominee cannot be renominated within the current council's term of office.

- 3.8** If the Councillors agree that the nominee should be made an honorary freeman/freewoman of the Gillingham, the nominee will be invited in writing by the Town Clerk to accept the honour.
- 3.9** If accepted, the nominee must notify the Town Clerk, in writing, of such acceptance, within (21) days of the date of the posting of the letter of invitation. In the event the nominee fails to give such notification the nomination shall be deemed withdrawn and the decision of the Council null and void.

4. ENTITLEMENTS

- 4.1** Any person declared an honorary freeman/freewoman of Gillingham may designate themselves "Honorary Freeman/Freewoman of the Town of Gillingham".
- 4.2** The recipient will be awarded a certificate and badge to commemorate receiving the award and their name will be added to the Honorary Freeman Board at the Town Hall.
- 4.3** Gillingham Town Council reserves the right to rescind the award of Honorary Freeman of Gillingham Town at its absolute discretion.

5. REVIEW

This policy was reviewed by the Finance and Policy Committee on 17th April 2023, minute no 518a and ratified by Full Council on 24th April 2023.

This policy will be reviewed within the first year of each new council term of office. The next review will take place in 2024.

Signed by
The Mayor of Gillingham: _____

Date: _____



Freedom of Gillingham Nomination Form

Name of Nominee		
Proposers Details		
Name		
Address		
Email		
Telephone number		
Are you related to the nominee	Yes / No	
How long have you known the nominee		
Name of the councillor seconding this proposal		
Nominee's Details		
Address		
Email		
Telephone number		
Explain why you believe the nominee should be awarded the Freedom of the Town (add a continuation sheet if required).		

Signature of Proposer	Date:
Signature of Seconder	Date:

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