

# HEALEYFIELD PARISH COUNCIL



## **Honorary Freeman \ Honorary Freewomen of Healeyfield Procedure**

**Adopted:** 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Review Date:** March 2026

## **1. Introduction**

This document sets out the criteria, procedure and arrangements relating to the selection and appointment process for Honorary Freemen \ Honorary Freewomen of Healeyfield.

## **2. Granting the Freedom of the Parish**

Granting the Freedom of the Parish is the highest honour that the Parish Council can bestow. Although it carries no powers, rights, or privileges, those who receive the honour are able to use the title of 'Freeman or Freewoman of Healeyfield'.

As this is the highest honour that the Parish Council can grant it should be used sparingly in order to preserve its status and value.

## **3. Guidance**

There is no statutory guidance that sets out any criteria for the appointment of Freemen and Freewomen. As the Freedom of the Parish is awarded in recognition of exceptional service to the Parish, it would be inappropriate to set out strict judging criteria. Instead, guidance on the attributes that successful candidates would be expected to have demonstrated is outlined within this policy.

The following will be taken into account when consideration is given to granting the honour of Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of Healeyfield:

- a. Preference will be given to a person who performs in a voluntary capacity, but this should not preclude the honour being awarded where there is evidence that a person has demonstrated dedication and contribution significantly above that expected.
- b. 'The Sponsor' should be able to demonstrate a commitment by length of time they have undertaken their duties by the nominee. It is anticipated that a significant amount of intensive work over 3-5 years, or consistent service over a longer period, such as 20 years, would be appropriate.
- c. Nominees should be a resident of, or have worked/volunteered in, the Healeyfield Parish Council area.

## **4. Cost**

Section 249 (9) of Local Government Act 1972 allows Councils to spend "such reasonable sum as it thinks fit" on presenting an address to a Honorary Freeman.

## **5. Legislation**

5.1. Section 249 (5) of Local Government Act 1972, as amended by Section 29 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009, allows the Council of a relevant authority (including a Parish Council) to admit to be honorary freemen 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 service to that place or area.

5.2. A resolution must be passed:

- a. At a meeting of the Parish Council that has been convened especially for the purpose and where notice of the object of the meeting to pass a motion relating to the granting of the award has been given; and
- b. By not less than two-thirds of the members of the Council who vote on it.

## **6. Procedure for Granting of Freedom of Healeyfield**

6.1. Any Parish Councillor may 'sponsor' the nomination to the Council of individuals who, in their opinion, have rendered eminent services to the Parish and who should be considered for the award of Freedom of the Parish. This nomination should be put in writing to the Parish Clerk in the usual timeframe for inclusion on the agenda.

6.2. A member of the public may petition any Parish Councillor to nominate an individual to the Council individuals for consideration.

6.3. The nomination for the Honorary title will be considered at the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council. The agenda item will be discussed in private, and the public and press will be excluded. The name(s) of the individual(s) must not appear in the agenda or minutes of the meeting. The following procedure shall be adopted:

- a. The Chair shall open the agenda item and remind the Members of this Policy Document giving guidance on those criteria for suitable nominations.
- b. The Chair shall invite the Member, ('the sponsor'), to present the application for nomination. The Member(s) of the Council making a nomination for the Honorary title should take into account the criteria set out in para. 3.
- c. Members shall then discuss and debate the merits of the nomination.
- d. The Chair shall then invite the Council to pass a resolution in support of convening a meeting especially for the purpose of passing a motion relating to the granting of the award.

6.4. The Chair (or another nominated Councillor) shall, prior to the issuing of the meeting calling notice for the purpose of passing a motion relating to the granting of the award, informally enquire with the proposed individual as to:

- a. whether or not they are prepared to accept such an award.
- b. whether they are aware of any reason that their acceptance of the award may, or could be considered by a reasonable third-party, to bring the parish or the Parish Council into disrepute.

6.5. A Special meeting of the council will be convened, by the Chair, especially for the purpose, and where notice of the object of the meeting to pass a motion relating to the granting of the award to a specific individual(s) has been given. The following procedure shall be followed:

- a. The Chair shall open the meeting and remind the Members of this Policy Document which gives guidance on the criteria for suitable nominations.
- b. The Chair shall invite the Member, ('the sponsor'), to present the application for nomination. The Member(s) of the Council making a nomination for the Honorary title should be able to demonstrate to the Council that the criteria listed in section 3 have been met.
- c. The Chair shall invite all Councillors present to discuss and debate the merits of the nomination and then invite the Council to pass a resolution, which should recite the particular grounds and details of the public services rendered by the potential recipient.
- d. If the Council passes the resolution by no less than a 2/3rds majority then the resolution shall be recorded in the Council Minutes in the usual way.

6.6. If the motion is passed, the Chair in consultation with the Parish Clerk shall then make arrangements for the formal presentation of the 'Freedom' which will be marked by the giving of a framed certificate and plaque. Albeit that the bestowing of the Freedom of the Parish actually occurs at the point the Parish Council resolves to grant the Freedom, the presentation ceremony marks the occasion in a public and dignified way.

- a. It is expected that the occasion for the presentation ceremony shall be sufficiently prominent and visible to members of the public, for example at an event organised by the Parish Council or especially arranged for the purpose.
- b. The presentation would usually be made by the Parish Council Chairman with other Councillors present.
- c. Following the presentation, an opportunity should be provided for the recipient to reply. This should be agreed to avoid any unnecessary embarrassment.
- d. After the formal proceedings come to an end it will be usual to adjourn for a reception. This gives an opportunity for the public and invited guests to offer their congratulations to the newly appointed Honorary Freeman/Honorary Freewoman.
- e. Photographs should be taken to record both events and placed on the Parish Council website and within the Council's archive.

## **7. Limitations**

- a. The Honorary title may be removed by way of Council resolution in light of circumstances such as imprisonable criminal conviction or bringing the Council into disrepute.