

## LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

### FREEDOM OF THE TOWN PROTOCOL

#### Policy Statement

The granting of the Freedom of the Town is a symbolic presentation, which represents the highest honour a Town can bestow on an individual. The Freedom of the Town is a significant honour, demonstrating trust, loyalty, and a sense of community between a Town and an individual.

Freedom was originally an honour which could be bestowed by a Town or Parish Council upon a valued member of the community, a visiting celebrity or dignitary or a military group. Although the honour once carried entitlements on how the individual or group could either enter the Town, today it is a symbolic presentation. The original Act was a short one, consisting of only three sections, Section 1 provided that:-

“...the Council of every borough may from time to time, by the authority of not less than two thirds of their number present and voting at a meeting of the Council specially called for the purpose with notice of the object, admit to be honorary freeman of the borough persons of distinction and any persons who have rendered eminent services to the borough.”

With effect from 12 January 2010, all parish councils may now exercise powers to confer the title of “honorary freeman” or “honorary freewoman” upon what the legislation refers to as “persons of distinction” and those who, in the council’s opinion, “have rendered eminent services to the council’s area” (section 249(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 Act).

#### Procedure & Guidance Notes

- The Council may consider applications for “Freedom of the Town” to be bestowed on individuals or groups as described above;
- The Council may on its own initiative consider bestowing “Freedom of the Town” on individuals or groups as described above;
- 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 and reception being made.
- Nominations are to be agreed by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk, prior to any resolution being put before Council;
- Once agreed arrangements will be made for an extraordinary meeting of council to be held, in order to award the Honorary Freedom, followed by a reception to be held in a local venue, subject to agreement of all parties;
- The recipient will be informed of the Council’s wish to bestow the honour of Freeman/woman onto them and they will be invited to attend the extraordinary meeting of council followed by the reception;
- An agenda will be sent to all Members advising them of the date and they will be advised of the venue for the reception and the costs;

A "Freedom" scroll will be ordered stating the name and purpose for which the honour is being bestowed;

- Once the resolution has been passed at the meeting the Honorary at the meeting the Honorary Freeman/woman will be bestowed on the individual and signed by the Mayor and Proper Officer.

### **Criteria for Qualification**

When considering a nomination for the awarding of the Freedom of the Town the following should be considered:

- The candidate has made an outstanding contribution to the local community;
- The candidate has made achievements in their chosen sport resulting in World or Olympic titles or represented their nation at the highest level.
- The candidate has been a Town Councillor for 25-years;
- The candidate has achieved significant artistic/cultural/theatrical/scientific status on a world stage (e.g. Nobel price, Oscar etc.)

### **At the Meeting**

- Honorary freedom can only be awarded if two thirds of Councillors are present and voting at the extraordinary meeting of council;
- The Mayor will open the meeting as is the usual practice and invite councillors to consider the proposition being placed before them in respect of the awarding of the Freedom of the Town to an individual or group (the wording for this will be included on the agenda);
- A motion will be proposed that the Council formally accept the proposal with a further Councillor seconding the motion;
- The Mayor and any other Councillor may wish to say a few words about the recipient at this point;
- Following the proposal and seconding of the proposal the Mayor will request a vote by a show of hands;
- Once the proposal has been voted upon and a resolution made that the Freedom of the Town bestowed upon the individual or group in question and Scroll of Admission will be signed by the Town Mayor and the Town Clerk and officially presented to the recipient;
- Pictures will be taken following the presentation;
- An offer will be made to the recipient of the award for the Council to hold onto the scroll for the purpose or having it professionally framed on behalf of the recipient (if they so wish).

### **After the Meeting**

- The Council's social media site will be updated;
- A press release will be sent to local press (including a photograph)

Date Adopted:

Review Date: