



Holybrook Parish Council

Proudly serving the residents of Holybrook Parish since 2000

The Parish Office
Beansheaf Community Centre
Charrington Road
Calcot
Reading RG31 7AW

Tel/fax 0118 9454339
e-mail: clerk@holybrook-pc.gov.uk
www.holybrook-pc.gov.uk

Policy for the granting of the Honorary Freedom of the Parish

1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the criteria, procedures and arrangements relating to the selection and appointment process of Honorary Freemen/Freewomen and the granting of Honorary Freedom of the Parish to individuals.

2. GRANTING THE HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE PARISH

- 2.1 Granting the Honorary 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/Freewoman.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The Honorary Freedom of the Parish award is separate to the Parish Council's Annual Community Spirit Awards.

3. LEGISLATION

- 3.1 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 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 authority, rendered eminent service to that place or area.
- 3.2 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.

4. CRITERIA

- 4.1 There is no statutory guidance that sets out specific criteria for the appointment of Freeman/Freewomen. As the Freedom of the Parish is awarded in recognition of exceptional service to the Parish, it would be inappropriate to set strict judging criteria. Instead, guidance on the attributes that successful candidates would be expected to have demonstrated is outline in this policy:
 - a. See 3.1 a) and b);
 - b. The person nominated must not be able to be considered, by a reasonable third party, to bring the Parish of the Parish Council into disrepute.
 - c. The award cannot be granted posthumously.
 - d. The award cannot be granted to a serving parish councillor.

5. COST

- 5.1 Section 249 (9) of Local Government Act 1972 allows councils to spend 'such reasonable sum as it thinks fit' on presenting an address to an Honorary Freeman/Freewoman. A commemorative 'scroll' or certificate will, therefore, be provided. The Community and Environment Committee's earmarked reserve 'Events' will be used to fund this. The Committee will be responsible for selecting the appropriate award style.

6. PROCEDURE FOR GRANTING OF FREEDOM OF HOLYBROOK

- 6.1 Any parish councillor may nominate, to the Council, an individual who, in their opinion, has rendered eminent services to the Parish and who should be considered to be granted the Freedom of the Parish.
- 6.2 Each Councillor may make one nomination only.
- 6.3 A member of the public may petition a parish councillor to nominate an individual to the Council for consideration.
- 6.4 The Parish Council will convene a meeting of the Council especially for the purpose, and where notice of the object of the meeting has been given, to pass a motion relating to the granting of the award to a specific individual.

- 6.5 At the meeting, the following procedure shall be adopted:
- a. The Chairman shall open the meeting and remind members of this policy document which gives guidance on the criteria for suitable nominations.
 - b. The Chairman shall invite Members to present their nomination for the honorary title which must be able to demonstrate to the Council that the criteria in 4. has been met.
 - c. The Chairman shall invite members of the public, who wish to make a representation in relation to the nominations, to speak subject to the following criteria:
 - i. Normal Council Standing Orders shall apply bar,
 - ii. Each member of the public may speak for a maximum of 3 minutes and may speak only once during the meeting.
 - iii. Members of the Council may ask questions (with the agreement of the Chairman) to the member of public who is speaking. However, questions to the member of the public who is speaking, from other members of the public is not permitted.
 - d. The public and any press shall then be excluded from the meeting.
 - e. The Chairman shall invite all councillors present to discuss and debate the merits of each nomination. Once concluded,
 - f. The public and any press shall be invited to return for the remainder of the meeting.
 - g. The Chairman shall then invite the Council to pass a resolution granting the award, which should recite the particular grounds and details of the public services rendered by the potential recipient. If there is more than one nomination, each nomination will be taken in turn. The bestowing of the Freedom of the Parish occurs at the point the Parish Council resolves to the granting of it. However, the occasion shall be marked formally as detailed in 6.5 h. iii.
 - h. If the Council passes the resolution (by no less than two thirds majority):
 - i. the resolution shall be recorded in the Council minutes in the usual way.
 - ii. The nominee shall be contacted directly by the Chairman to advise of the award. The nominee is under no obligation to accept the award and must advise the Chairman whether or not they will be attending the award ceremony.
 - iii. the Chairman, on confirmation of 6.5 h. ii., shall, in consultation with the Parish Clerk, make arrangements for the formal presentation of the 'Freedom' following these guidelines:
 - The occasion shall be marked in a public and dignified way.
 - It is expected that the occasion for the presentation ceremony shall be sufficiently prominent and visible to members of the public, for example, the Annual Assembly of Holybrook Parish or other public event.

- The presentation will usually be made by the Parish Council Chairman with the rest of the Council present. If, for any reason the Chairman cannot be present, normal Standing Order delegation applies.
- Following presentation, an opportunity should be provided for the recipient to reply.
- After the formal proceedings, it will be usual to adjourn for a reception. This giving an opportunity for the public and invited guests to offer their congratulations to the newly appointed Honorary Freeman/Freewoman of the Parish.
- Photographs should be taken to record the event and placed on the Parish Council website and within the Council's archive.

6.6 A roll of Honorary Freemen/Freewomen shall be maintained by the Parish Office.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Date Policy Adopted: | |
| Date of Next Review: | |