

THORPE ON THE HILL PARISH COUNCIL

FREEMAN OR FREEWOMAN OF THORPE ON THE HILL PARISH POLICY

FREEMAN OR FREEWOMAN OF THE PARISH POLICY

Approved at the council meeting dates: 08 March 2023

Minute reference: 23.022

Amended:

Reviewed yearly at Annual Meeting

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.** Previously there was no specific legislation or power for a Parish / Town Council to award Honorary Freeman. Advice in regard to honouring of citizens indicated that in the absence of express statutory power, it was considered that local councils could, nevertheless, admit to be honorary citizens of their parishes and communities persons who have served the public well over the years. Any expenditure incurred in connection being funded under the LGA Section 137 power to spend.
- 1.2.** From the 12th of January 2010, the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act) amended the provisions of the LGA 1972 (S.249) to enable all local councils to confer honorary titles.
- 1.3.** By virtue of Section 249(5) and (6) of the 1972 Act as amended, all local councils may now exercise powers to confer the title "Honorary Freeman" or "Honorary Freewoman" to persons of distinction and those who, in the Council's opinion, have rendered eminent services to the council's area.

2. LEGAL PROCESS

- 2.1.** Section 249 (8) of the 1972 Act, as amended, provides that the admission of an Honorary Freeman or Honorary Freewoman must be by resolution made at a meeting of the full Council specifically convened for such purpose and passed by no less than two-thirds of the members of the Council.
- 2.2.** Section 249 (8) also requires "notice of the object of the meeting" to be given. This confirms the need for the agenda with the public notice and summons to members in respect of the Council meeting to itemise a motion to confer the title of Honorary Freeman or Honorary Freewoman. Section 249 (9) of the 1972 Act as amended provides that a local council may spend a reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person or whom it has been conferred the honorary title.

3. COUNCIL PROCESS

- 3.1.** A Town or Parish Council can award a 'Title of Dignity' to a person in recognition of significant contributions being made to the local community. Thorpe on the Hill Parish Council may award the title of 'Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of the Parish of Thorpe on the Hill'.

- 3.2.** In keeping with the special nature of the award it shall be strictly limited to residents from any walk of life who have made a very significant voluntary contribution to Thorpe on the Hill Parish and who have demonstrated “service above self”, or a significant national contribution relative to Thorpe on the Hill Parish. It would be expected that the nominee will have given extensive and distinguished service to the community which transcends local government i.e. service to other organisations, voluntary and community groups, in a largely voluntary capacity and not usually simply for long service on the Parish Council. The nominee must have made an outstanding contribution to the Parish so as the nominee’s contribution can be demonstrably seen to stand head and shoulders above the contributions made by most other people.
- 3.3.** The Parish Council’s decision on the award of the title is final and no discussion or correspondence will be entered into on the matter.
- 3.4.** There is no limit to the number of nominations or holders of the title, but the nature of the nomination criteria means it is unlikely that the honour will be frequently awarded and will therefore remain distinctive. The award will be conferred for the life of the title holder but is not hereditary in nature.
- 3.5.** Nominations must be made by a serving Parish Councillor, though any local resident may approach a Councillor and recommend a nomination. Nominations must then be made by a Councillor in writing to the Parish Clerk.
- 3.6.** All nominations of Honorary Freeman or Freewoman are to be treated in the strictest of confidence. The nominee should 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. Any disclosure will make the application invalid.
- 3.7.** Once a nomination has been received it will be considered by a meeting of the Full Council. This discussion will be held under ‘restricted business’ and will therefore exclude members of the public. The whole Council must resolve by at least a two-thirds majority that the distinction of ‘Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of the Parish of Thorpe on the Hill’ be conferred upon the nominee.
- 3.8.** Following a recommendation by Full Council that an award is justified the title of ‘Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of the Parish of Thorpe on the Hill’ will be granted by the Chair of the Parish Council and the title holder presented with a scroll citing the grounds for the award. The presentation of a scroll would be made by the Chair at a suitable appropriate event. A copy of the scroll will be held on record by the Parish Clerk. The title holder will be able to style themselves ‘Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of the Parish of Thorpe on the Hill’. The title does not convey any legal or financial privileges on the holder.