

Old Stratford Parish Council

Freedom of the Parish Policy

The Parish Council of Old Stratford may admit persons of distinction who have rendered eminent service to Old Stratford to be honorary freemen or freewomen of Old Stratford. This Policy defines recommendations relating to the selection and appointment process for Honorary Freeman/Freewoman and the Granting of the Freedom of the Parish to individuals or organisations.

Statutory basis and Arrangements for Granting Honorary Freedom.

1. Granting the Freedom of the Parish is the highest honour that the Parish can bestow. Although it carried no powers or privileges, those who receive the honour are able to use the title of Freeman or Freewoman. As this is the highest honour that the Parish Council can grant it should be used sparingly and should not be given too often in order to preserve its status and value.
2. There is no statutory guidance that sets out any criteria for the appointment of Freeman or Freewoman. As 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 successful candidates would be expected to have is recommended in this Policy.
3. Section 249(9), of Local Government Act 1972 allows Councils to spend “such reasonable sum as it thinks fit” on presenting an address to Honorary Freeman or Freewoman. A commemorative ‘scroll’ and reception will be provided. The Parish Council may also confer any other gifts as it sees fit. Usually there will be no fixed budget provision for Honorary Freeman or Freewoman but under the Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 the cost of the scroll and frame can be allocated.
4. Section 249(5), Local Government Act 1972 as amended by section 29 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009, allows the Parish Council to admit to be Honorary Freeman or Freewoman 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 Parish Council, rendered eminent service to that place or area.
5. **A resolution must be passed:**
 - a. At a meeting of the Parish Council that has been convened and where notice of the object of the meeting has been given; and
 - b. By not less than two-thirds of the members of the Parish Council who vote on it.
6. Recommended Criteria for Granting Honorary Freedom:
 - A. All members of Old Stratford Parish Council are responsible for nominating to the Parish Council individuals or organisations who in their opinion, have rendered eminent service to the Parish of Old Stratford and who should be granted the Freedom of the Parish.

- B. The member of the Parish Council making the nomination for the honorary title needs to demonstrate to the Parish Council that the criteria listed below have been met and that the candidate commands substantial support from Old Stratford Parish Council:**
- a. Delivered in a way that has brought distinction to village life and enhanced the Parish's reputation in the area or activity concerned.
 - b. Contributed in a way to improve the lives of those less able to help themselves.
 - c. Contribute in a way to improve the lives of those in the Parish by furthering the objectives of the Parish Plan.
 - d. Demonstrate innovative and entrepreneurship which is delivering results in the Parish.
- C. When considering candidates for the Freedom of Old Stratford the following should be considered:**
- a. Candidates should have a strong and continuing connection and with commitment to Old Stratford or have made a major contribution to Parish life and in doing so have enhanced the reputation of the Parish.
 - b. Awards should not be for a job well done or because someone has reached a particular level. They should be awarded because an individual has 'gone the extra mile' in the contribution they have made or stand out 'head and shoulders' above others in what has been achieved.
- D. Candidates should be considered from all walks of life and should have made a substantial contribution to the Parish in any area of activity, which could include but is not limited to:**
- a. Civic and village life.
 - b. A family friendly village for all generations.
 - c. Charitable work.
 - d. Artistic and cultural endeavours.
 - e. Business, economic growth and prosperity.
 - f. Improvement to the built and natural environment.
 - g. Improvement to community facilities.
 - h. Religious and spiritual life.
- E. Candidates may be considered from outside of the Parish who have made a significant contribution to the Parish over a great number of years.**
- F. Procedure for granting Honorary Freedom:**
- a. Any member of the Parish can put forward a nomination must be considered for the status of Freeman or Freewoman. Each nomination must be sponsored by a current member of the current Parish Council.
 - b. The reason for the nomination must be detailed on the Application Form. Particular attention and consideration must be taken to ensure as much detail as possible is included in regard to 'criteria for nomination'.
 - c. On receipt of a nomination that has the substantial support of Parish Councillors, the Chairperson of the Parish Council will call an extra-ordinary meeting of the Parish Council in accordance with Standing Orders to consider the nomination.

Other matters of Parish Council business will not normally scheduled at a meeting convened to consider a nomination for the status of Freeman or Freewoman.

G. At the meeting the Parish Council called in line with Standing Orders, at the given Agenda item the following procedure shall be adopted subject to the discretion of Parish Councillors:

- a. The Chairperson shall open the agenda item and remind Members of the Parish Council of the Policy giving guidance on those for suitable nominations.
 - b. The Chairperson shall invite the Member (the Sponsor) to present the application for nomination.
 - c. The Chairperson shall invite all Members to discuss and debate the merits of the nomination.
 - d. The Chairperson shall invite the Parish Council to pass the resolution, which should recite the particular grounds upon which the Parish Council have come to their decision and details of the public services rendered by the recipient.
 - e. If the Parish Council passes the resolution by no less than 2/3rds majority then the resolution shall be recorded in the Parish Council Minutes in the usual way.
 - f. The Chairperson shall then adjourn or bring the meeting to a close and proceed to the formal presentation of the Freedom, which will be marked by the giving of a framed scroll certificate.
- H. 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 is also important and marks the occasion in a public and dignified way.
- I. The presentation should be made by the Chairperson of the Parish Council with the Parish Councillors present and invite guests of the recipient.
- J. Photographs should be taken to record the granting of the Freedom, and placed on the Parish Council website and offered to the village newsletter.
- K. A roll of Honorary Freemen including name, photograph and grounds for granting the freedom of the parish shall be maintained by the Proper Officer and also published on the Parish Council website.

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| Status | Resolved |
| Date Adopted | 11th April 2023 |
| Minute Reference | Minute 6b |
| Adopting Committee | Full Parish Council |
| Date of next review | April 2024 |