



## **RAMSGATE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **HONORARY FREEMAN AND FREEWOMAN SCHEME**

#### **Policy Statement**

From time to time, members of the community demonstrate outstanding commitment and contribution to the wellbeing of the Town and it is recognised that their efforts should be acknowledged. The Council will do this, in special circumstances that meet the criteria of this policy, by awarding to an individual the title of 'Honorary Freeman' or 'Honorary Freewoman' of the Town of Ramsgate. This honour will be awarded only on rare and exceptional occasions.

#### **Service**

The nominee may have given extensive and eminent service to the Town of Ramsgate and its local community (e.g. service to the Town Council in respect of Councillors or officers and service to the Town of Ramsgate or other organisations and voluntary and community groups) in a largely voluntary capacity. The nominee must have made an outstanding contribution to the Town such that the nominee's contribution can be seen to stand above the contributions made by most other people.

The Local Government Act 1972 as amended by 2009 Section 249 (5) and (6) allows all Local Councils to exercise powers to confer the title of "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. Section 249(8) of the 1972 Act as amended provides that the administration of an honorary freeman or honorary freewoman must be by resolution made at a meeting of the full Council specially convened for such purpose and passed by no fewer than two-thirds of the Members of the Council.

The regulations also state that the Clerk of the Council must make the Notice of the Meeting to show that a decision needs to be taken to "Confer the title of Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of the Town of Ramsgate". 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 on whom it has conferred the title of honorary freeman or freewoman.

## **Nomination Criteria**

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

1. Preference will be given to a person who performs in a voluntary capacity, but this should not preclude the honour being awarded to a person whose dedication and contribution is significantly above that expected from their occupation.
2. Nominees need not necessarily be residents of Ramsgate.
3. The award will not be restricted to Town Councillors or Town Council staff.
4. Any nominated Town Councillor should have retired from the post.
5. The contribution to the wellbeing of the community must involve one or more of the following factors:-
  - (a) A significant allocation of the person's time in serving members of the community for the improvement of their wellbeing.
  - (b) The promotion, achievement and/or delivery of community services in which a real personal contribution has been made.
  - (c) Whilst difficult to define, the contribution must be outstanding in that it can be seen to stand above the contributions of most other persons.
  - (d) Someone who has excelled in a specific role or work area that brings respect to the Town and acts as a role model for the young people/adults of the Town of Ramsgate.
  - (e) Someone who champions Ramsgate and is a credit to the town.

## **Nomination Procedure**

1. Nominations must be made in the strictest confidence without the nominee's knowledge. Any resident or elector of the Town of Ramsgate may make a nomination but it must be sponsored by a Town Councillor.
2. Nominations must be made in writing to the Town Clerk. The submission should be evidence-based by outlining the voluntary service provided by the individual to the community and any other examples of 'community spirit' to justify the honour. On receipt of a nomination, it will be circulated to all Councillors for confidential consideration.
3. Councillors' reasons for any objection to a nomination must be given. If the Councillors are in agreement that the nominee should be made an Honorary Freeman (or Freewoman) of the Town, the nominee will be invited to accept

the honour. If agreed, the nomination will then be put before Council and a formal vote taken, again in confidence.

4. No fewer than two-thirds of the Town Councillors must agree the nomination.
5. The decisions of the Council on all nominations (whether affirmative or negative) are final.

### **Entitlements**

Any person declared an Honorary Freeman (or Honorary Freewoman) of the Town may designate himself/herself 'Honorary Freeman (or Freewoman) of the Town of Ramsgate'.

The award shall be made at a small ceremony which may take place at a Council meeting.

A scroll will be presented to the recipient.

### **Limitation on Holders of Award**

At any one time, a maximum of four persons, unless otherwise decided by the Council, may hold the title 'Honorary Freeman (or Freewoman) of the Town of Ramsgate'.

Freedom's to organisation, which will run infinitum, are in addition to the above limit.