

NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

HONORARY FREEMEN and HONORARY FREEWOMEN

Adopted by Northam Town Council on **4th March 2026**

	Name	Signature
Mayor	Cllr Louis Bach	
Town Clerk	Guy Langton	

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Version	Date	Note	Drafted by
V0.1	24 th February 2026	Original policy replacing the protocol for nominating Honorary Aldermen / Alderwomen, as amended by the Review Committee	Town Clerk

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Northam Town Council has appointed Honorary Alderman since 2012, despite not having the power under the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 (as amended) to make such appointments.

For ease of reading, where the policy refers to Honorary Freeman, it shall be taken to refer to the office of Honorary Freeman and Honorary Freewoman, as defined in the LGA (1972), s.249(5), as amended.

1.2 Section 249(5) of the LGA 1972 (as amended) confers power on a parish or town council to admit Honorary Freeman of its area persons of distinction and persons who have rendered eminent service to the communities of Appledore, Northam or Westward Ho!

1.3 Section 249(9) of the LGA 1972 (as amended) enables councils to spend reasonable sums of money in the exercise of these powers.

1.4 A specially convened meeting of the council must be held (after the appropriate notice has been given) and a resolution to confer the honour must be passed by not less than two-thirds of the members present (LGA (1972) s.249(8)).

1.5 This policy sets out how Northam Town Council will manage the nomination and appointment process of granting the title of Honorary Freeman.

1.6 Northam Town Council will recognise the exceptional level of service by a member of the community by awarding to them the title of Honorary Freeman. This title will only be awarded on rare occasions.

1.7 Holding the title of Honorary Freeman does not preclude a person from being a member of the Council, be that elected or co-opted.

Policy Aims

- Recognise the contribution of members of the combined communities of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! to the life of those communities.
- Extend that recognition beyond elected members of the council. A member of the Council be nominated, they should have served for at least one full term of office (4 years).
- Granting the status of Honorary Freeman is a means of paying tribute to the recipient. It confers no material honours or special privileges, nor does it entitle the person to participate in the proceedings of the council meetings or in any ceremonial events. It is purely and simply for merit.

2. NOMINATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

2.1 Nominations must be made by completing the nomination form (appended) and returning it to the Town Clerk & RFO at Northam Town Council.

2.2 Nominations should be made in the strictest confidence without the nominee's knowledge. Any resident or elector of Appledore, Northam or Westward Ho! may make a nomination, but nominations require a proposer and a seconder who are elected

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Northam Town Councillors. Town Councillors can propose or second more than one application if they wish.

2.3 The completed form should provide detailed evidence as to why an individual is being nominated.

2.4 If evidence is missing, or the criteria is not achieved, the applicant will be contacted and asked to resubmit the form with further evidence.

2.5 The following criteria will be considered by Full Council when a nomination for an Honorary Freeman of Northam is received:

- A significant allocation of the person's time in serving members of the community for the improvement of their well-being,
- The promotion, achievement and/or delivery of community services in which a real personal contribution has been made,
- A contribution which is seen to stand above the contributions of others,
- Bravery,
- Outstanding acts that promote the Town and its communities,
- Outstanding sporting achievement.

2.6 At any one time, a maximum of twelve persons, unless otherwise decided by the Council, may hold the title of Honorary Freeman.

3. PROCESS

3.1 Upon receipt of any nomination for Honorary Freeman, the application will be reviewed and voted on by Full Council at a specially convened meeting, as described in LGA (1972) section 249(8). The power to appoint an Honorary Freeman must be exercised by a resolution of Full Council at a confidential meeting that has been specially convened for this purpose.

3.2 Nominations for Honorary Freeman will be decided every four years, at the end of the first year of office. If any nominations are received a specially convened extraordinary meeting will be called. In extraordinary circumstances the title may be bestowed at any time as the Council sees fit.

3.4 The Council is not required to have awarded the title in each term of office.

3.5 At the specially convened Full Council meeting, to award the title of Honorary Freeman to any nomination, a two-thirds majority of those Councillors present must agree to the nomination(s). The decision of the Council is final.

3.6 The Town Clerk & RFO will inform the successful nominee(s). If they accept the title, arrangements will be made to bestow the title upon them and their name(s) added to the honours board at a convenient time.

3.7 The title of Honorary Freeman will be bestowed at the next Mayor's introduction ceremony. During the ceremony the Honorary Freeman will be presented with a certificate and an Honorary Freeman badge that may be worn to any future civic events the individual is invited to attend.

4. REMOVAL OF THE HONOUR

4.1 In exceptional circumstances, any person nominated who is deemed by the Council to have brought the office into disrepute, may have the title of Honorary Freeman removed.

4.2 The power to remove the honour must therefore be exercised by a resolution of Full Council at a confidential meeting that has been specially convened for this purpose.

Process

- Should the Town Clerk & RFO receives a written motion signed by seven members of the Council to convene a meeting specifically for the purpose of considering the removal of the honorary title from an individual (see Standing Orders).
- The individual may make written representation to the Council, which will inform the members' deliberations.
- To enable written representations to be made, there must be at least 14 calendar days' notice for the specially convened meeting.
- No less than two-thirds of the Council, at a formal vote at the specially convened confidential meeting, must agree the removal.

5. REVIEW

5.1 This policy should be reviewed every three years.

Honorary Freeman / Honorary Freewoman Nomination Form

Date:

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

I nominate the individual above to be granted the title of Honorary Freeman for exceptional services to the town and people of Northam, comprising the communities of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! with details as follows (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

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I certify that the details given are correct, that I have not been influenced or canvassed in any way and that the person nominated has no knowledge of the present application.

I understand that all matters relating to the nomination are confidential and the personal details enclosed within this form will only be held as required by the Council for the proper performance of its duties.

All information will be disposed of securely, in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations.

PROPOSED BY

Councillor: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SECONDED BY

Councillor: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please Complete and return by 31 January at the end of the first year of a term of office, to: the Town Clerk & RFO at the Council Offices, Windmill Lane, Northam. EX39 1BY

Any personal data on this form will be processed for the purposes of considering the nomination only and retained in line with the Council's Data Retention Policy.

