PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

FREEDOM OF THE TOWN POLICY

Policy Number	Version	Owner	Date Adopted	Review Date
024	Adopted	Council	15-11-2023	November 2026
				November 2029

Legal & Eligibility

1. Portland Town Council has the legal power (S 248-249 of the Local Government Act 1972) to recognise the efforts of members of the community and organisations, who demonstrate outstanding commitment and render eminent service to the town over a significant period of time.
2. The Council will do this, only in very special circumstances and in keeping with the special nature of the award it shall be strictly limited to those who have made a very significant contribution to the community of Portland and who have demonstrated “service above self”.
3. The title may be conferred on individuals, or organisations but may not be conferred on serving Councillors of this Council.
4. The award may be made at any time as the council see fit, with a maximum of two awards being made per municipal year.

Nomination procedure

5. Any Portland Town Councillor may make a nomination.
6. Nominations should be made by the Councillor in the strictest confidence without the nominee’s knowledge.
7. Nominations should be sent to the Town Clerk in confidence and must clearly state the name of person or organisation, and full details of the eminent service provided to the town of Portland.
8. On receipt of the required information, the Town Clerk will circulate the nomination to all councillors for confidential informal consideration.
9. All nominations of honorary freeman are 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.

Formal agreement of the honour

10. If Councillors are in agreement, by an indication of at least two-thirds of the members highlighting their support for the nominee, the Town Clerk will set up a special Full Council meeting, specifically for the purpose of conferring the title of Honorary Freeman/Freewoman/Freeperson/Freedom of the Town. Failing to reach this voting threshold would mean the nomination would not go forward.
11. At this special meeting, and for an award to be agreed, at least two-thirds of those voting must vote in favour of the award. The vote will take place in confidential session.
12. If and when the Town Council has agreed the honour, the Town Clerk will notify the nominee in confidence and seek his/her/their agreement of acceptance.
13. The decision of the Council on all nominations is final.

Bestowing the honour

14. If the nomination is made and accepted, the Town Clerk will invite the nominee to the next Full Council meeting to formally receive their certificate from the Mayor.
15. In the case of an organisation being awarded the honour, the organisation will be invited to send an appropriate number of representatives to receive the award.

Entitlement

16. Any person awarded the title may designate himself/herself Honorary Freeman/ Freewoman/ Freeperson of the town of Portland for life.
17. Where an organisation is awarded the Freedom of the Town, the honour relates to the organisation as a whole and not individual members. Individual members are not permitted to designate themselves Honorary Freeman/Freewoman/Freeperson.

Council Protocol

18. The honour brings with it no rights, benefits, or requirements.
19. Individual Freemen/Freewomen/Freepersons or representatives of organisations will be invited to attend all Civic Functions and any other such functions as deemed appropriate (i.e., Remembrance Service, Civic Service etc).
20. Freemen will be acknowledged at ceremonies i.e., during the welcoming speech.
21. Appropriate courtesy will be shown to Freemen/Freewomen/Freepersons i.e., seating arrangements.
22. Copies of certificates will be displayed on the wall of the Council Offices.

Withdrawal

23. The Honorary title may be removed by way of Council resolution in light of circumstances such as imprisonable criminal conviction, or bringing the council into disrepute
24. No fewer than two-thirds of those voting, at a formal vote, must agree the withdrawal.