

CHIPPENHAM TOWN COUNCIL



Agenda Item 5

Meeting	Civic Matters Sub-Committee
Date	Wednesday 31 January 2018
Report Title	Honorary Alderman, Freeman / Freewoman
Author	Mary Laing, Democratic & Civic Officer

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update this committee on the proposed reinstatement of the role of Honorary Alderman.
- 1.2 In 1972, the Local Government Act gave Principal Authorities the power to grant the title of Alderman. As the Act for Alderman only applies to principal authorities, Chippenham Town Council cannot bestow this honour on anyone.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In 1972, the Local Government Act gave Parish Councils power to make 'persons of distinction and persons who have rendered eminent services' Honorary Freemen.
- 2.2 Information received from the County Secretary, Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC).
Under section 249(5) the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, a Parish Council may admit the following to be honorary Freemen or honorary Freewomen of the place or area for which it is the authority, the criteria is:
 - 2.3 “(a) persons of distinction, and
“(b) persons who have, in the opinion of the Town Council, rendered eminent services to that place or area.
”(c) Honorary Freedom is purely an honour. It does not convey the rights of the Freedom and is non hereditary.
- 2.4 This must be done, in accordance with an earlier part (paragraph 1) of the same section of the Act, at a meeting specially convened for the purpose by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon.
- 2.5 In accordance with paragraph 6 of the same section of the Act, the Council may spend a reasonable sum for the purpose of presenting the honorary Freeman or Freewoman with an address, or a casket containing an address.
- 2.6 Councillors to consider whether to reinstate the position of Honorary Freeman of Chippenham, and if so, to apply to Wiltshire Council and The Honorary Guild of Freemen to have the authority for the Mayor of Chippenham to appoint Honorary Freeman / Freewoman of Chippenham.

3.0 CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES

- i Corporate Priority 4 - To Promote Chippenham as a destination market town based on our rich heritage, history and culture.

4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no staffing implications.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Local Government Act 1972 did not affect any persons status as, or his right to be admitted to the status of, a Freeman of a previously existing borough. The Freemans role is kept by the District Council. The Local Government Act 1972 also expressly preserved the special rights of freemen, their appropriate relatives or associates, the relatives by marriage of their widows and children and of existing future inhabitants in any property or otherwise.

A local Council and Charter trustee may admit as honorary freemen or honorary freewomen, persons of distinction and those who have rendered eminent service to the place or area. This must be done at a meeting specially convened for the purpose and requires a two thirds majority of those voting. Such honorary freedom carries none of the special rights preserved by the act.

- i) *LGA 1972, s 249 (5) as amended by the local democracy, economic development and construction act 2009*
- ii) *LGA 1972, S 248 (8)*

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Councillors to consider the following:
 - a) To consider whether to reinstate the position of Honorary Freeman / Freewoman of Chippenham. If Yes,
 - b) To consider a criteria for persons of distinction and persons who have rendered eminent services' to be an Honorary Freeman or Freewoman.
A draft criteria is attached as Appendix 1.
 - c) To apply to Wiltshire Council and The Honorary Guild of Freemen to have the authority for the Mayor of Chippenham to appoint Honorary Freemen / Freewomen of Chippenham.

Appendix A

Suggested Criteria for Honorary Freeman / Freewoman of Chippenham

- Individuals can be nominated at any time by submission of an application form, on request, from Chippenham Town Council.
- To apply to Wiltshire Council and The Honorary Guild of Freemen to have the authority for the Mayor of Chippenham to appoint Honorary Freemen / Freewomen of Chippenham.
- A specially convened meeting of the Civic Matters Sub-Committee will be arranged to consider any application for position of Honorary Freeman / Freewoman of Chippenham.
- The resolution must be passed by not less than two-thirds of the committee Councillors.
- In accordance with Paragraph 6 of the same section of the Act, the Council may spend a reasonable sum for the purpose of presenting the honorary Freeman or Freewoman with an address, or a casket containing one.
- A Freeman / Freewoman may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may decide. He/she has no right to attend and speak at meetings or to be paid allowances.
- Honorary Freedom is purely an honour. It does not convey the rights of the Freedom and is non hereditary.
- Presentations will be made at the annual Civic Sunday service.
- The annual membership fee is paid to the Guild of Honorary Freeman of England and Wales for each Honorary Freeman / Freewoman.