

# Awarding the Freedom of Saltash

RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE: POLICY & FINANCE

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*This is a policy/procedure document of Saltash Town Council to be followed by both Council Members and Employees.*

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## **Awarding the Freedom of Saltash**

The Freedom of the Town is an exceptional award made at the discretion of the Town Council.

This honour will be awarded only on rare and exceptional occasions, and in accordance with legislation.

### **Background**

The Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Democracy, economic Development and Construction Act 2009) Section 249 (5) - (10) enables all local councils to confer honorary titles, namely “honorary freeman” or “honorary freewoman” to:

- a. Persons of distinction, and
- b. Persons who have, in the opinion of the authority, rendered eminent services to that place or area.<sup>1</sup>

Section 249 (7) (as amended) states that the power in subsection (5) is exercisable by resolution of the relevant authority.

Section 249 (8) (as amended) states that the resolution under subsection (7) must be passed:

- a. At a meeting which is specially convened for the purpose 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 relevant authority who vote on it.

Section 249 (9) (as amended) states that:

“A relevant authority may spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purposed of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person on whom the authority has conferred the titled of honorary freeman or honorary freewoman under subsection (5).”

### **Eligibility**

1. Individuals from all walks of life and all sections of the community who have made a difference to the town of Saltash are eligible to be nominated as honorary freemen/freewomen.
2. 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 Saltash or a significant national contribution relative to the Town and who have demonstrated ‘service above self’.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) s.249 (5)

dedication and contribution is significantly above that expected from their occupation.

3. The honour will be awarded for the individual's lifetime and not as a hereditary award.
4. The maximum number of honorary freemen or freewomen at any one time is not restricted.
5. Any nominated Town Councillor should have retired from the post. It would be expected that the nominee will have given extensive and distinguished service to the community which transcends local government i.e. service to other organisations, voluntary and community groups, in a largely voluntary capacity and not usually for long service on the Town Council.
6. The nominee must have made an outstanding contribution to the Town and should normally involve one or more of the following factors:
  - A significant allocation of the person's time in serving members of the community for the improvement of their wellbeing.
  - The promotion, achievement and/or delivery of community services in which a real personal contribution has been made.
  - Whilst difficult to define, the contribution must be outstanding in that it can be seen to stand above the contributions of most other persons.

### **Nomination Procedures**

1. Nominations must be made in the strictest confidence without the nominee's knowledge. Any resident or elector of the Town of Saltash 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 at the earliest opportunity.
3. All nominations are to be 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.
4. Nominations will be acknowledged in writing but no correspondence will be entered into.
5. Members may request that the Town Clerk contact the proposer for further information in support of the nomination.

6. Members may conduct discreet inquiries to verify the merits of the nomination.
7. A confidential survey poll will be held to establish whether two thirds of Members consider that the nominee fulfils the criteria for the award and support the nomination.
8. Where the survey poll finds that two thirds of Members support the nomination the nominee will be contacted in writing by the Town Clerk asking if they will accept the award.
9. Following a response from the nominee indicating that they will accept the award the Town Clerk will advise the Mayor who will call an Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council to formally consider the nomination.

### **Consideration by the Town Council**

1. An Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council will be called to consider the nomination. The notice of the meeting must make clear the object of the meeting.<sup>2</sup>
2. The motion must be approved by no less than two thirds of Members present and voting.
3. Following a resolution by Full Council that an award is justified the title of Honorary Freeman/Freewoman of the Town will be granted.
4. The decision of the Town Council on all nominations are final.
5. A press release will be issued confirming the award of the honour.

### **Privileges**

The award confers no special privileges or automatic entitlement to participate in the proceedings of council meetings or civic events.

Name on roll of honour board in Council Chamber.

Engraved medallion.

Illuminated scroll

The Honorary Freeman/Freewoman may be invited to participate in Civic Events and Civic Parades at the invitation of the current Mayor.

### **Presentation of the award**

1. Budget : The Policy and Finance Committee will be asked to approve expenditure from the Civic Occasions budget for the following:
  - a. An illuminated scroll to be presented to the Honorary Freeman/Freewoman and suitable frame;

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<sup>2</sup> Local Government Act 1972 as amended Part XII s.249 (8) (a)

- b. The inscription of a medallion;
  - c. The addition of the name of the recipient to the Honours Board in the Council Chamber;
  - d. A Civic Reception for the presentation of the award.
2. The Civic Reception will be held in the Guildhall, hosted by the Mayor on a date mutually agreed with the nominee.

The following will be invited to attend with numbers kept within the appropriate regulations:

- The nominee, their family and guests
- Members of the Town Council
- The Town Clerk
- All current Honorary Freemen/Freewomen of the Town
- The proposer

## **Appendix 1**

Press release

### **PRESS RELEASE FROM SALTASH TOWN COUNCIL**

At an Extraordinary Meeting of Saltash Town Council held on <insert date> it was resolved to award the status of Honorary <Freeman/Freewoman> of the Town to <insert name> in recognition of <insert reason>.

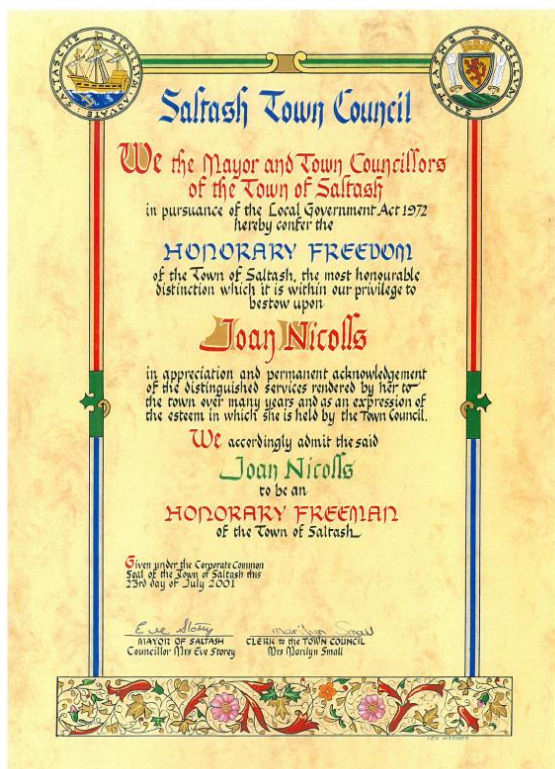
Formal presentation of the award will take place at a later date.

**THIS PRESS RELEASE IS EMBARGOED UNTIL <INSERT DATE AND TIME AFTER MEETING>.**

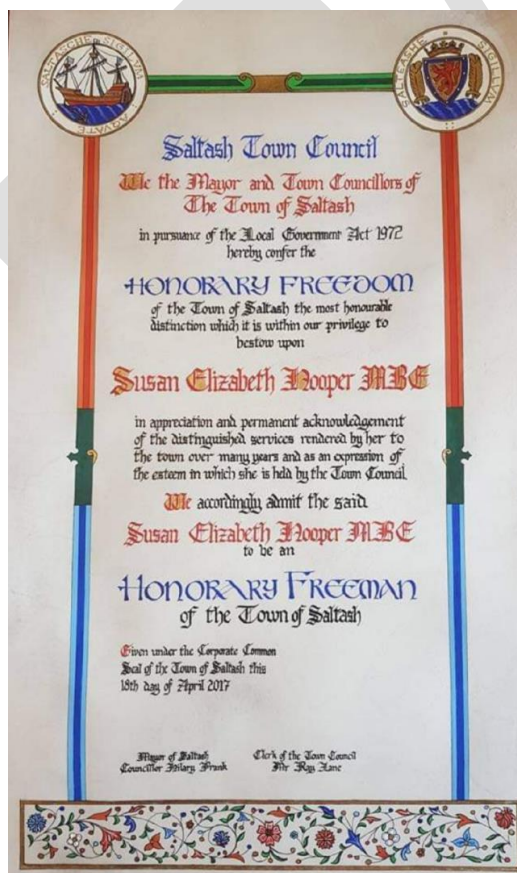
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## Appendix 2

### The Illuminated Scroll



Example scroll hand drawn on vellum 2001.



Example scroll 2017



The Scroll should include:

- The date of the extraordinary meeting
- The name of the recipient
- Reference to Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972
- Space for the seal to be applied
- Signatures of the Mayor & Town Clerk

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