

HONORARY FREEMAN/FREEWOMAN OF ABERGAVENNY (Draft Policy)

Policy Statement

The Town Council wishes to recognise the efforts of members of the community (including organisations and groups) who demonstrate outstanding commitment to the well-being of Abergavenny. 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 Freewoman of Abergavenny. This honour will be awarded only on rare and exceptional occasions. At any one time, a maximum of four persons, unless otherwise decided by the Council, may be awarded the title Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of Abergavenny in any one year. This figure must not be seen as a quota and there will be some years in which no award is made.

Nomination Criteria

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

1. Preference will be given to a person/organisation/group who performs in a voluntary capacity, but this should not preclude the honour being awarded where there is evidence that a person/organisation/group has demonstrated dedication and contribution significantly above that expected for their occupation.
2. All nominees should be able to demonstrate a commitment by length of time they have undertaken their duties. It is anticipated that a significant amount of intensive work over 3-5 years, or consistent service over a longer period, such as 20 years, would be appropriate.
3. Nominees should be a resident of, or have worked in, the Abergavenny Town Council area.
4. Any nominated Town Councillor should have retired from the post.
5. The contribution to the community of Abergavenny should involve one or more of the following:
 - a. A significant allocation of the person's time in serving members of the community for the improvement of their well-being.
 - b. The promotion, achievement and/or delivery of community services in which a real personal contribution has been made.
 - c. A contribution which is seen to stand above the contributions of most others.

Legal Position

Power to appoint Honorary Freemen is contained within Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972. The section provides that the following may be admitted to be Honorary Freemen "persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Town".

Nomination Procedure

1. Nominations should be made in the strictest confidence without the nominee's knowledge. Any resident or elector of Abergavenny may make a nomination but it must be sponsored by a Town Councillor.
2. Nominations must be made in writing to the Town Clerk using the attached form and supported by evidence of the voluntary service provided by the individual to the community and any other examples of service which justifies the honour. On receipt of a nomination it will be circulated to all Councillors for confidential consideration.
3. If Councillors are in agreement that the nominee should be made an Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of Abergavenny the nomination will then be put before the Council and a formal vote taken, in confidence. The nominee will then be invited to accept the honour.
4. No fewer than two-thirds of the Town Councillors must agree the nomination.
5. The decisions of the Council on all nominations are final. Any person nominated may designate himself/herself Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of Abergavenny. The title of Honorary Freeman is purely honorary and does not confer upon recipients the rights which Hereditary Freeman enjoy. Nevertheless, it represents the highest honour the Council can bestow. The award will normally be made at a special meeting of the Town Council. A certificate will be presented to the recipient. Abergavenny Town Council will include a section on the website where details of recipients will be recorded (subject to recipient's agreement and GDPR regulations).