

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL – GUIDANCE ON CONFERRING THE TITLE OF HONORARY ALDERMAN

Background

The Local Government Act 1972 gives principal councils the power to confer the title of Honorary Alderman (or Honorary Alderwoman) on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Council as past members, but who are no longer members of the Council. The act does not specify how 'eminent' services are defined, this is for local determination.

Role of Honorary Aldermen

An Honorary Alderman may attend and take part in certain civic events organised by the Council. The Council will decide which civic functions and events it is appropriate to invite Honorary Aldermen to.

The title of Honorary Alderman does not confer any special privileges or rights upon the appointee, nor does it carry any right to attend meetings of the Council or its Committees or to claim any allowances payable under the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Criteria for appointment

The local criteria for appointment is as follows:-

- The title can only be conferred to an ex-member of the Council.
- The title cannot be conferred on ex-Chairmen of the Council, as the title does not confer any additional special privileges or rights in addition to those of ex-Chairmen.
- Honorary Aldermen must have rendered eminent services during their time on the Council. The Council will consider eminent services to be those councillors that have, in the opinion of the Council, made a significant contribution to Council business during their years of service.
- Honorary Aldermen must have served at least 12 years on the Council. This service need not be continuous.

Process for appointment

Nominations for the appointment of an ex-member to become an Honorary Alderman can be made by any two Members, in accordance with the criteria for appointment. If still a serving Member, nominations can be made once it has been confirmed that the proposed Honorary Alderman will not be standing for election again.

Although nominations for an appointment may be made by any two Members, it is customary to seek the views of all political groups to ensure nominations are widely supported before being put to the Council for approval.

To comply with the legislation, a special meeting of the Council must be convened specifically for the purposes of conferring this honour, at which the resolution must be passed by not less than two-thirds of voting members. The proposed motion will be set out on the Council summons. If the meeting is to take place whilst the proposed Honorary

Alderman is still a serving Member, the date effective of the motion shall be the day after the expiration of the term of office of the retiring Member.

Once passed at the special Council meeting, it is normal practice to allow the recipient to respond to the Council in order to accept the honour.

After appointment

On conferring the honour, the Council will then make arrangements for an entry to be made on the official Roll of Honorary Aldermen which appears in the Council Chamber.