

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

PROTOCOL FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN/ ALDERWOMEN

Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that a Council “*may by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members voting thereon at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose with notice of the object, confer the title of Honorary Aldermen (or Honorary Alderwomen), on persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council but are not then members of that Council*”.

1. Appointment

- 1.1 Appointments of Honorary Aldermen must take place at a County Council meeting specially convened for the purpose. The meeting can occur on the same date as another full council meeting. The nomination will be proposed and seconded. Two thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in favour of a resolution for the nominee (s) to be appointed as an Honorary Alderman/ Alderwoman.
- 1.2 They will be presented with a certificate confirming the title by the Business Chair or Leader at the next Council meeting and will be given an opportunity to speak. The name of the Honorary Alderman will be placed on an honours board in County Hall.

2. Role

- 2.1 Those appointed to the role of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman are entitled to use the title: ‘Honorary Alderman the County of Northumberland’ or ‘Honorary Alderwoman of the County of Northumberland’.
- 2.2 Honorary Aldermen or Alderwomen have the right to attend meetings of the County Council as members of the public. The title does not confer any special privileges or rights upon the appointee to speak or vote at Council meetings, beyond the rights and privileges already afforded to the public. The only rights that are conferred to an Honorary Alderman by virtue of their appointment is to be invited to Civic functions and events by invitation of the Council such as the annual Civic Dinner. They have no formal role on the Council.
- 2.3 The role of Honorary Aldermen or Alderwomen does not carry any right to claim any allowances payable under the Members Allowances Scheme.
- 2.4 Honorary Aldermen or Alderwomen cannot be appointed posthumously.
- 2.5 The role of Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman is an honorary one, but to the public they are perceived to be a representative of the Council. In taking up this role all Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen must be aware of this, and:

(a) that the person becoming Alderman or Alderwoman does so in the full knowledge that they are perceived to be representative of the civic element of the Council and must act to the highest standards.

(b) In taking this role, the Alderman or Alderwoman becomes apolitical in public; knowing that any views expressed may be interpreted as views of the Council. Aldermen or Alderwomen are not to speak on behalf of the Council in any way whatever.

3. Criteria for the appointment of an Honorary Aldermen or Alderwomen

3.1 The statutory requirement is that the Council must be satisfied, in conferring the title that the person nominated has 'in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past members of the Council but who are no longer members of the Council.

3.2 There is no statutory definition of 'eminent service' but the Council will take account of the following matters in determining whether a person has provided eminent service to the Council in the past:

- (a) Each nomination will be assessed on its merit.
- (b) The length of service as a councillor whether continuous or broken and including former District Council service should be a minimum of 20 years.
- (c) Whether the person has held a position such as Leader, Deputy Leader, Chair or Vice-Chair of the Council or Committee or another senior position of the Council.
- (d) The extent that a person has contributed to Outside Bodies on behalf of the Council and the commitment given to that role.
- (e) The extent to which a person has actively participated in Ward issues on behalf of the Council beyond that normally expected of a councillor. This could include delivering projects with officers or simply acting as an effective liaison between residents and the Council on a number of issues.
- (f) Anything else that the former member has done that can be considered as 'eminent service'.
- (g) Nominations shall be made in writing setting out the reasons why the person should be nominated and addressed to the Chief Executive who will consult with the Leader of the Council and other political Group Leaders and if there is a sufficient degree of support for conferment of the title, then the Chief Executive will call a special Council meeting for that purpose.
- (h) Nominations may be made by serving Councillors

4. Removal of Title of Honorary Alderman

Approved by Council 1 September 2021

There may be occasions where, due to the past or future behaviour of individuals who have been appointed as Honorary Aldermen or Alderwoman, the Council may wish to remove the title of Honorary Alderman from an individual in order to protect the reputation of the Council. Removal of the title of Honorary Alderman will follow the same process as appointment (proposed and seconded, and then a resolution of two thirds of those present must be passed). However, it may take place at any meeting of Full Council rather than a specially convened meeting.

Version dated 01 September 2021

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