Berwick-upon-Tweed
Town Council

FREEDOM OF THE TOWN OF BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

General

The right to admission to the Freedom of the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed was preserved by Section 248 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Chapter 5 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. It is the Mayor's prerogative to examine Claims for admission as a Freeman and to establish who shall be admitted and enrolled by Town Clerk on the Roll of Freemen of the town. The examination of Claims takes place on certain specified dates throughout the year and there is provision for special or urgent Claims to be examined on days other than those specified, at the discretion of the Mayor. Notice of the Claim, signed by the Town Clerk, must be published outside the Town Hall for a period of not less than forty-eight hours.

A Claim to be admitted a Freeman must be examined in accordance with the qualifications in the Municipal Corporations Act, 1835. In the case of Berwick this restricts admission to birth or servitude. By ancient usage the Guild may alter details of the rules of admission as long as such changes are within the law. Any alteration must be endorsed by the Mayor. The Mayor may therefore only examine Claims made in respect of birth or servitude, as detailed below.

A Claim to be admitted a Freeman must be examined in accordance with the rules and qualifications formulated and applied before the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act 1835, i.e. those formulated by the Freemen's Guild prior to 1835: birth or servitude. The Mayor may only therefore examine Claims made in respect of birth or servitude, as detailed below:

RULES GOVERNING ADMISSION.

1. That all sons or daughters of Freemen, born in lawful wedlock are entitled, on attaining the age of twenty-one years, to be admitted and enrolled on the Freemen's Roll of the Borough, on proof of identity and age (to be made by declaration, accompanied by a certified copy of entry of birth), and on payment of a fee of £100.
(Guild Meeting 18th. January, 2010)

2. That the son or daughter of a Freeman, who has been, or shall be, legitimated under or by virtue of the provisions of the Legitimacy Acts, 1926 and 1976, be entitled to be admitted to the freedom on attaining the age of twenty-one years, or after the date of legitimation, whichever last happens. (Guild Meeting, 19th. November, 1927).

3. Persons not being the son or daughter of Freemen, may be bound as Apprentices to a Resident Freeman carrying on a trade or business according to the rules of apprenticeship of the Guild from time to time. Such persons may take up their freedom on completion of their apprenticeship and attaining the age of twenty -one years.
(Guild Meeting 13th. November, 2008)

By Birth: all sons and daughters of Freemen, born in lawful wedlock either before or after their mothers or fathers have been admitted to the Freedom, on attaining 21 years, subject to proof of identity and age (to be made by declaration), accompanied by a certified copy of the entry of birth, the parents' marriage certificate and on payment of certain fees.

By Servitude (apprenticeship):
As Amended 2007

1. A prospective apprentice must receive temporary approval by the Committee before commencing their apprenticeship and this approval must be confirmed at the next meeting of the full Guild.

2. The apprentice must be between the ages of 16 and 25 at the beginning of their apprenticeship.

3. The trade of business within which he/she is to be apprenticed must have a work place, office or a registered office within the Bounds of Berwick.

4. The nominal apprenticeship must be to a Freemen of Berwick. This may be an employer or other employee within the firm. The said Freeman will be responsible for ensuring that the employment during the apprenticeship complies with the requirement for apprenticeship within that trade, profession or business.

5. The length of apprenticeship shall be the normal custom within that employment.

6. On completion of the apprenticeship the freeman, who was responsible for overseeing the apprenticeship, shall report to the Guild that the apprenticeship has been completed satisfactorily.

7. The Guild Secretary will inform the Mayor that an apprenticeship has been completed and the person is thus eligible to take up the Freedom.

8. The person may then apply to the Mayor to take up their freedom provided they have attained the age of 21.

Notes:

(i) Marriage to the daughter or widow of a Freeman is not a qualification;

(ii) The qualifications for admission shown above are not altered by the provisions of the Legitimacy Act 1926 and the Family Law reform Act 1969.

Forms of Claim for admission to the Freedom and further information can be obtained upon application to the Town Clerk, Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council, Unit 1, 82 - 88 Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland. TD15 1BN. Telephone (01289) 302391. Forms can also be downloaded from www.berwick-tc.gov.uk

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