

ADMISSION TO THE FREEDOM

NOTES FOR CLAIMANTS AND DECLARANTS

ABOUT THE CEREMONY

The Ceremony takes place in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed in the presence of the Mayor, the Sheriff and Officers of the Town Council. The Mayor, acting in a judicial role examines the Claim to determine its validity. The Chairman and representatives of the Guild of Freemen also usually attend the Ceremony.

The examination of a single Claim normally takes about 15 to 20 minutes; where there is more than one Claim the Ceremony is commensurately longer, although it is usual that the proceedings are concluded well before 1.00 pm.

The Ceremony is open to the public and children may attend. The Mayor and Sheriff are robed for the occasion and, for Claimants and their parties, although dress is informal a tie for gentlemen is considered appropriate.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

The Ceremonies start at 11.30 am. As there is a short briefing for Claimants and Declarants prior to the Ceremony, your party should arrive at the Town Hall at least half an hour before your Ceremony is scheduled to start. Entry is via the side door of the Town Hall, which is located on the pedestrianised side of the building.

[Notes: (i) There is disabled access provision at the Town Hall, but you are encouraged to discuss any special requirements in advance; and (ii) As both Claimants and Declarants will be required to sign documents during the Ceremony, please ensure that each remembers to bring a pen.]

Claimants and their parties meet in the Ante Room to the Council Chamber, adjacent to the Council Chamber at first-floor level. The Chairman of the Guild of Freemen (Captain J Evans) and other freemen will also meet in the Ante Room, together with photographers from the local press and Officers of the Council. The Mayor and Sheriff meet in the Mayor's parlour, where they are robed prior to the Ceremony.

BRIEFING FOR CLAIMANTS AND DECLARANTS

Prior to the Ceremony the Claimants and Declarants will be invited to join Officers in the Council Chamber, where a briefing will be conducted. This includes a brief 'dry-run' of the Ceremony, during which the Claimants and Declarants will be advised of the cues which they may take from the Senior Officer during the actual Ceremony.

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

As you enter the Council Chamber, the dais is straight ahead at the far end of the room; during the Ceremony the Mayor will sit at the centre of the dais, with the Sheriff on his/her left and the Senior Council Officer on his/her right. Claimants should take a seat on the front row on the left-hand side of the Chamber. Declarants should be seated on the row immediately behind the Claimants, so that – whilst they stand to read their Declaration – they are in a position to place a hand on the shoulder of the Claimant, seated in front of them.

Please note, the seats on the right-hand front row are reserved for Representatives of the Guild of Freemen.

Members of the party accompanying the Claimants should seat themselves in the remainder of the Chamber; it is customary to leave the rear-most row of seats free for the press.

THE CEREMONY

The Ceremony itself takes place in the Council Chamber and is led by the Mayor and Senior Council Officer, with responses from the Claimants and Declarants. Please note, *Claims are examined in the chronological order in which they were received.*

Prior to the Ceremony, all those attending will move into the Council Chamber; with the seating arrangements as above.

The Mayor, preceded by the Sergeant at Mace, will enter the Chamber; followed by the Sheriff and Senior Council Officer. As soon as the Sergeant at Mace announces the Mayor, the assembly will rise and remain standing until the Mayor is seated.

The Ceremony will then continue as follows:

[Note: Actions and responses required by and from the Claimants and Declarants are highlighted.]

1. *Senior Officer* Mr Mayor, Claims have been received from the following gentlemen/ladies:

1. **XXXX XXXX;**
2. **XXXXX XXXXX; and**
3. **XXXXXX XXXXXX.**

To be admitted as a Freeman of the Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed and you have appointed that their Claims shall be examined today.

Are the Claimants present?

Claimants	The Claimants will signify their presence by standing, briefly.
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2. *Mayor* Ladies/Gentlemen, will you now formally present your Claims.

Claimants	Each Claimant, in order as above, will stand and read out their Claim:
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[Note: During the Briefing, the Committees Officer will provide you with a copy of your Claim, indicating which section you should read out.]

“I,.....of.....who was born on theday of 19.., hereby Claim in accordance with the provisions of Section 248 of the Local Government Act 1972 to be admitted a Freeman of the Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, in respect of birth as being the.. (eldest/second)....son/daughter of.....of.....(Town).....who was admitted a Freeman of Berwick-upon-Tweed on theday of19...”

[After each of the Claimants has read out their Claims, the Committees Officer will come forward to receive them and convey them to the Mayor.]

3. *Senior Officer* Mr Mayor, the Claims have been verified and evidence of birth has been produced in accordance with custom. Proof of the Claimant’s identity must be made by Statutory Declaration.

Are the Declarants present?

Declarants *The Declarants will signify their presence by standing, briefly.*

**XXXX XXXX;
XXXXX XXXXX; and
XXXXXX XXXXXX.**

4. *Mayor* Will you now read your declarations, sign them and return them to me.

Declarants *Declarants for each of the Claimants [1,2 & 3 in order as above] will stand and read out their Declaration:*

[Note: During the Briefing, the Committees Officer will provide you with a copy of your Declaration, indicating which section you should read out.]

[As you will have to sign the document please remember to bring a pen.]

“I,.....do solemnly and sincerely declare that ..[name the Claimant seated in front of you, as on the Declaration, and place a hand on his shoulder whilst making the Declaration].the person now present is.[state relationship, ie eldest/second son/ cousin etc]..., that he/she is twenty-one years of age and upwards and that he/she was born in lawful wedlock. And I make this solemn declaration, conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.”

[After reading out their Declaration, the Declarants will then sign the Declaration and the Committees Officer will come forward to receive them and convey them to the Mayor.]

5. *Mayor* Ladies/Gentlemen, your Claims to be admitted as Freemen of the Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed have been examined by me and established to my satisfaction.

[The Senior Officer will now administer the Oath.]

Claimants **At this point the Claimants all stand to receive the Oath.**

6. *Senior Officer* (Read Oath)
Ladies/Gentlemen, do you so swear?

Claimants
[Separately, as asked by the Senior Officer]

“I do so swear”

7. *Mayor* Ladies/Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to order that you be admitted as Freemen of the Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed and that your names be entered on the Roll of Freemen.
Please come forward and sign the book and receive your certificate of admission.

Claimants [As you will have to sign the Roll please remember to bring a pen.]	1,2 & 3 in order, as above, come forward and sign the Freeman's Roll [the large book on the lectern in front of the dais], then shake hands with the Mayor, receive the appropriate documents from him/her and return to your seat.
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Speeches

[There then follow speeches by the Mayor, the Sheriff, a Representative of the Guild (usually the Chairman, Captain James Evans), and finally by **one** of the Claimants.]

Claimants [Robing of]	In concluding his speech the Representative of the Guild will robe the new Freeman, who will stand for this, resuming their seats after robing. [Please note, the robes are lent by the Guild for the occasion only.]
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Claimant Speak [This will be covered at the Briefing.]	to <u>One</u> of the Claimants [nominated at the Briefing] will make a short speech, thanking the Mayor for conducting the Ceremony.
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8. *Senior Officer* Mr Mayor, that concludes the formal business of the morning.

9. *Mayor* [At this point the Mayor will invite those attending to take sherry in the Ante Room. He/she will then rise to leave, at which point all those present also rise. Preceded by the Sergeant at Mace, the Mayor, Sheriff and Senior Officer will then process out of the Council Chamber.]

When in the Ante Room, there will be an opportunity for the newly-made (and newly-robed) Freeman to have pictures taken by both the local press and family; usually returning initially to the Council Chamber and then later in the Guild Hall.