

Durham City Freemen



The Freeman's Guide
October 2021

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Foreword and Purpose

Over the centuries that the Guilds have been in existence there will have been rules and procedures in place to manage the organisation.

These will have changed many times to address the changing circumstances. At this time, the modus operandi appears to be of custom and practice delivered through a verbal arrangement.

In the absence of a written constitution being available, the following Guide has been developed, based partly on custom and practice and by addressing the current needs of the organisation.

The focus for this Guide is twofold.

1. To clearly define the roles of responsibility of the posts that are charged with managing the organisation, to provide clear information for members placing themselves forward into a management role.
2. To assist in the smooth transition of responsibilities at the end of tenure of posts or from unexpected resignations.

This Guide has been developed to address the current situation and it may be necessary from time to time to make changes as the organisation continues to develop.

Durham City Freeman Structure

CHAIRMAN

- The figurehead of the Freeman.
- Chairs meetings.
- Presides at Guild Days and Annual Dinner.
- Prepares an Annual Development Plan and Budget.
- Liaises with the Mayor's Office and outside bodies.
- Liaises with the Chairman of the Trustees.
- Assists with the Yearbook.
- Works closely with the Press Officer.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The Chair and Deputy Chair work closely together to identify and agree areas of working.

WARDENS

- Annual Dinner
- Yearbook
- Events
- Guild Day Duties

DEPUTY WARDENS

Wardens and Deputy Wardens to ensure the identified tasks are undertaken.

SECRETARY

Conducts Elections. Manages the Members databases. Corresponds with Members and general enquiries.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Liaises with new applicants, prepares information and organises the Guild Days.

MINUTE SECRETARY

Records minutes at all Members, Wardens & Deputies and Wardens meetings.

WEBSITE MANAGER

Responsible for hosting the site and updating information. Works closely with the official Photographer and Publicity Officer.

PHOTOGRAPHER

The official Photographer for the Freeman who works closely with the Website Manager and Press Officer.

PRESS OFFICER

Works closely with the Website Manager and Photographer.

GRASSMAN

Oversees the land known as The Sands.

Code of Conduct and Procedures

The Wardens will ensure that the Freeman's Code of Conduct and Procedures are adhered to. The Code of Conduct and Procedures applies to all posts.

These will include:

- General enquiries
- Procedural enquiries
- Complaints
- Post Appraisals

Complaints Procedures

All complaints are to be put in writing and sent to the Chairman or Secretary in confidence. The Chairman or Secretary will arrange a Judicial Panel to hear the complaint.

Judicial Panel

The Deputy Chairman together with 2 Wardens or 1 Warden and 1 Deputy Warden will hear the complaint and decide on the outcome. If the outcome is not acceptable to the complainant, they can request the Chairman or Secretary to go to an Appeal Hearing. This request must be in writing giving reasons for the request.

Appeal Hearing

The Chairman together with 2 Wardens or 1 Warden and 1 Deputy Warden (who did **not** sit on the Judicial Panel) will hear the appeal. The Appeal Hearing decision is final.

Complaints Received Appertaining to the Chairman or Deputy Chairman

The complaint is to be put in writing and sent to the Secretary who arranges a Panel of all Wardens excluding the individual named. The Wardens' decision is final.

Post Appraisals

All Management Posts can be appraised, upon request, after twelve months in office.

- A written request should be sent to the Chairman or the Secretary in confidence to request an Appraisal.
- An Appraisal Panel will be convened with the Wardens in private, excluding the individual named.
- If it is deemed that the individual is not fulfilling their role and responsibilities of their post, they can be asked to step aside.
- This must be a majority decision by the Wardens.

THE CHAIRMAN

The Chair and Deputy Chair should work closely together to identify and agree individual and shared areas of duties and responsibilities in conjunction with the 'Annual Timeline of Events'.

The role of the Chairman is to provide **leadership** and champion **change** and **development** within the organisation, while at the same time protecting the **integrity, interests** and **traditions** of the Freemen.

To project a **positive image** of the organisation locally, regionally, and nationally.

Maintain a link with the **Freeman of England and Wales (FEW)**.

Maintain a good working relationship with **Durham County Council** who are responsible for:

- **Legal input at Guild Days**
- **Management of Town Hall services**
- **Mayor's Office**

Roles and duties may include:

1. Creating an Annual Diary of meetings and events.
2. Attending and chairing Guild Days.
3. Attending and chairing Members Meetings, Wardens Meetings, Wardens and Deputy Wardens Meetings.
4. Attending and reporting Freemen activities at the Wardens and Trustees meetings.
5. Ensuring a Yearbook is published.
6. Supporting the manager of the website and its development.
7. Promoting a positive image of the Freemen by attending functions.
8. Act as a focal point for assembling information for development and change within the organisation.
9. Provide a steer for change and development as required.
10. Supporting newly appointed Wardens.
11. Act as a conduit for information dissemination, particularly to Wardens and Trustees.
12. Being a focal point for public relations.
13. Ensuring the Freemen's code of conduct and procedures are adhered to.
14. Communicating with Company Members and their families in times of illness and bereavement.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

**The role is to support the Chairman and deputise when the Chair is unavailable.
The Chair and Deputy Chair should work closely together to identify and agree individual and shared areas of duties and responsibilities in conjunction with the 'Annual Timeline of Events'.**

Roles and duties may include:

1. Assisting the Chair in creating an Annual Diary of meetings and events.
2. Attending Guild Days and deputising when necessary.
3. Attending Members Meetings, Wardens Meetings, Wardens and Deputy Wardens Meetings and deputising when necessary.
4. Deputising for the Chair when necessary at Trustees and Wardens Meetings.
5. Monitoring the progress of the Yearbook.
6. Assisting the Chair in supporting the manager of the website and its development.
7. Promoting a positive image of the Freeman at functions by deputising for the Chair when necessary.
8. Act as a focal point for assembling information for development and change within the organisation.
9. Provide a steer for change and development as required.
10. Supporting newly appointed Wardens.
11. Act as a conduit for information dissemination, particularly to Wardens and Trustees.
12. Being a focal point for public relations.
13. Ensuring the Freeman's code of conduct and procedures are adhered to.

**All post holders are expected to support the
Chair, Deputy Chair, Wardens and Deputy Wardens.**

WARDENS

Role:

Maintain contact with their Company / Guild members.

Attend Meetings.

Attend Guild Days.

Responsible for the Distribution to Guild Members.

DEPUTY WARDENS

Role:

Deputise for **Wardens** when required.

Maintain contact with their Company / Guild members.

Attend Meetings.

Attend Guild Days.

SECRETARY

Role:

Conducts elections.

Manages and maintains the Membership Databases.

Day-to-day communication with the Membership.

General enquiries.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Role:

To liaise with prospective applicants.

Liaise with the Legal Department of Durham County Council.

Prepare information and co-ordinate Guild Days.

MINUTE SECRETARY

Role:

Record minutes at meetings for Wardens, Wardens and Deputy Wardens, and Members.

WEBSITE MANAGER

Role:

Responsible for hosting the Freeman Website, keeping the day-to-day information updated and recording all Freeman events. Works closely with the Official Photographer and Press Officer.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Role:

Attends and records Freeman's official and social events. Works closely with the Website Manager and the Press Officer and provides official photographs for Members, the website and media outlets.

PRESS OFFICER

Role:

Attends and records the Freeman's official and social events. Works closely with the Website Manager, Photographer and other media outlets.

GRASSMAN

Role:

Oversees the land known as The Sands and reports incidents and concerns direct to the Freeman Clerk & Receiver.

Position	Applicants	Tenure	Elected / Voluntary
Chairman	Wardens	3 years	Elected by Wardens
Deputy Chairman	Wardens & Deputies	3 years	Elected by Wardens
Warden	Members	3 years	Elected by Members
Deputy Warden	Members	3 years	Elected by Members
Secretary	Wardens	3 years	Elected by Wardens
Membership Secretary	Wardens & Deputies	3 years	Elected by Wardens
Minute Secretary	Wardens & Deputies *	Open-ended	Agreed by Wardens
Website Manager	Open to all **	Open-ended	Agreed by Wardens
Photographer	Open to all **	Open-ended	Agreed by Wardens
Press Officer	Open to all **	Open-ended	Agreed by Wardens
Grassman	Open to all **	Open-ended	Agreed by Wardens

- All post holders have the option to continue at the end of their tenure.
- *If the Minute Secretary is a Deputy Warden then a substitute should be used for Wardens meetings.
- **These posts cover specialist areas and should remain in post until they decide otherwise.

Elections:

- **The Chairman's Role:** is open to serving Wardens.
If no Warden comes forward, then Deputy Wardens are able to apply for the post.
- **The Deputy Chairman's Role:** is open to serving Wardens and Deputy Wardens.
The Deputy Chairman does not automatically move to the Chairman's Role.

Voting at Meetings:

- **Members Meetings:** Deputy Wardens have the right to vote.
- **Wardens and Deputy Wardens Meetings:** Wardens and Deputy Wardens have the right to vote.
- **Wardens Meetings:** Wardens have the right to vote.
Deputy Wardens do not have the right to vote unless specifically invited to do so, or are deputising for a Warden, in which case they have the same voting rights as the Warden for whom they are deputising.
- The **Chairman** cannot use the '**Casting Vote**' if the vote is relevant or refers to the Chair as an Individual or the Post itself.



Durham City Freemen

Membership Criteria

Guild Servitude, Durham Servitude and Hereditary Freedom. Admission by Application

Applicants should contact the Membership Secretary in the first instance.

Any man or woman who has attained the age of 18 years and has any of the qualifications set out below is eligible for consideration for admission to the Freemen of the City of Durham. The qualifications for eligibility for Freedom of the City of Durham are:

1. Guild Servitude

Completed service in an apprenticeship of at least three years duration in a recognised trade, or equivalent trained employment status deemed satisfactory to the Wardens of the Durham City Freemen with an employer who is a Freeman of the City of Durham.

2. Durham Servitude

Completed service in an apprenticeship of at least three years duration in a recognised trade, or equivalent trained employment status deemed satisfactory to the Wardens of the Durham City Freemen, in one or more trades within the Durham City boundary.

3. Hereditary Freedom

He or she is the son or daughter of a Freeman of the City of Durham.

Procedure for the Admission of Individuals

On receipt of applications, the Membership Secretary will prepare a list to be placed before the Wardens and Trustees for information.

The Wardens will provide notification of applications at the Members Meetings.

Progress of applications will be provided at Members Meetings, Wardens and Deputies Meetings and Trustees Meetings.

Guild Servitude, Durham Servitude and Hereditary Freedom.

Successful Guild Servitude, Durham Servitude and Hereditary Freedom candidates are admitted via three calls on Guild Day a legal requirement by Durham County Council.

Stage 1

The Membership Secretary receives an application from an individual to be admitted and begins the process of admission via Guild Servitude, Durham Servitude or Hereditary Freedom.

Stage 2

The completed application is forwarded to the legal department of Durham County Council, who will determine whether the application meets the legal criteria for admission. If the application meets the criteria the application is processed and prepared for admission. **If it falls outside the legal framework the Freemen are informed and may wish to pursue the application via Customary Freedom.**

4. Customary Freedom

Admission by Invitation only

This entry process is at the discretion of the Wardens, if the invitee is accepted this obviates the need for the first two calls as the Wardens represent their members.

Men and women who have attained the age of 18 years who are not otherwise qualified in accordance with 1.2.3. above, may be admitted as Freemen in accordance with ancient local custom or practice subject to the approval of the Wardens.

All claims to Freedom of the City should be supported by sufficient documentary evidence of entitlement to be submitted for consideration by the Wardens of the Guilds meeting collectively. Following due consideration, the decision of the Wardens in respect of any claim to Freedom of the City shall be final.

Honorary Freedom, a civic honour conferred by the former Durham City Council or by Durham County Council linked with the Chartered Trustees, is distinct and separate from the Freedom granted through the eligibility outlined above and the approval of the Wardens.

The rights, duties and powers of the Durham City Freemen shall continue in accordance with the provisions of the Durham City Council Act 1985 and associated customary practice.

These discretionary awards, generally fall into the following three categories (a) (b) (c).

Category (a).

Personal applications by individuals who do not qualify to be admitted under 1,2, and 3 above, **but who can provide evidence of craft servitude or a link with the Freemen through hereditary**, sometimes called patrimony, via grandfather etc, where a direct route via a parent is not possible.

Procedure for Category (a)

Stage 1

The Membership Secretary prepares a briefing paper relating to an application from an individual who failed to meet the legal criteria for admission as a Freeman via, Guild Servitude, Durham Servitude or Hereditary Freedom.

Stage 2

The application and a briefing paper for this deferred individual, will be prepared by the Membership Secretary and placed on the agenda of a Wardens Meeting for decision to proceed/reject for admission via Customary Freedom.

Category (b).

Individuals identified by the Wardens who can make a significant contribution by undertaking a specific role/need within the management structure and having personal qualities of integrity, tolerance, and judgment and who are able to demonstrate experience or support relevant to the Freemen's activities, together with one or more of the following:

- A desire and capacity to devote time to the activities of the Freemen.
- Existing or previous involvement in public or charitable service.
- Success in their chosen profession or career.

Procedure for Category (b)

Stage 1

- Wardens recognise an area of the management of the Freemen that requires support that is not forthcoming from the membership.
- Wardens discuss the issue and the names of individuals who have demonstrated experience or support relevant to the Freemen's activities and criteria.
- Subject to the approval of the Wardens, the proposing Warden is given permission to approach the person to ascertain whether they wish to be considered for admission as a Freeman.

Stage 2

- The proposing Warden, together with a colleague, conducts an informal interview with the candidate and drafts a proposal to be placed before the Wardens, for a decision whether to admit the candidate via Customary Freedom.
- Notification of the decision taken by the Wardens will be provided at Members Meetings, Wardens and Deputies Meetings and Trustees Meetings.

Stage 3

Confirmation of approval for admission by the Wardens, is forwarded to Durham County Council's administrative officer, together with the relevant personal details of the candidate and a copy of the proposal for inclusion at the next Guild Day.

Category (c).

Gentleman and Lady Freemen is an award conferred on individuals; in recognition of a significant contribution made in supporting the work of the Freemen.

Procedure for Category (c)

Stage 1

The Wardens receive a recommendation usually from a Warden, but could be from a member to consider an individual for admission.

Stage 2

- A proposal is prepared and placed before the Wardens, for a decision whether to admit the individual.
- Subject to the approval of the Wardens, the Warden of the Company proposing the individual, is given permission to approach the person to ascertain whether they wish to be considered for admission as a Gentleman or Lady Freeman.

Customary Freedom category invitees are admitted via one call on a Guild Day.

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