



The Heritage Crafts Association

Proposing a heritage craftsperson for a National Honour through the Heritage Crafts Association

The Heritage Crafts Association is one of the recognised organisations asked twice a year by the Honours Team at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to nominate suitable candidates for National Honours such as MBE, OBE and CBE..

Our aim is to send in at least four nominations each year (two twice a year) and we should like to encourage individuals and craft societies, guilds and membership organisations to propose heritage craftspeople, prepare the nomination, and send it through the Heritage Crafts Association to ensure nominations for National Honours for heritage craftspeople reach their intended target.

Nominating someone for a National Honour does involve quite a bit of work by the proposer, but the aim of the HCA is to increase the number of makers and get the national recognition for craftspeople that so many often deserve. The work, therefore, is so very much worthwhile.

The person being nominated should not know about the proposal.

Who should be nominated?

These are the HCA criteria that should be considered; all of them are desirable, but not all are essential:

1. The craftsperson needs to be of the very highest standard in their craft.
2. It is an asset if the person has done a significant amount in passing on craft skills, but this is not essential.
3. They need to have been doing their craft for some time, say at least 8 years

or more, unless they have done something really outstanding.

4. It is not sufficient simply to be doing a day job well, or being a good maker.
5. As well as their craft, it really helps if the individual has been involved in some form of voluntary work, but this does not need to be only within the craft; it can include being a school governor, a local council or parish councillor, youth group leader, mentor to students, etc. Again this is not essential for outstanding cases.
6. The words that should apply to the potential candidate for nomination are exemplary, excellent standard, makes a significant contribution, unique, conscientious, inspirational, peerless, enthusiastic, admired, dedicated, diligent, selfless, changed the status quo, determined, committed, commands respect, has drive, craft ambassador, role model, goes the extra mile, head and shoulders above the rest etc.
7. We have been advised that two people who practise similar crafts will not be passed on through the various selection committees, and so it is a waste if we send in two basketmakers or two people making wooden furniture, for example, in the same batch of nominations as only one will go through. It is better to delay one of the nominations to the next round of proposals.
8. The proposed craftsperson must be a British citizen.

What the proposer needs to do

This is what the Heritage Crafts Association needs from the proposer:

1. Letters of endorsement

- a. You will need to send in between 4 and 8 letters of endorsement. The minimum is 2 but it has been suggested that this is the absolute minimum, and to give our nominations the best chance, we would prefer to have more than that.
- b. Identify the people who are most appropriate to write letters of recommendation. Those selected should obviously know the candidate well, and be able to write about various aspects of the craftsperson. They do not need to be titled people or an MP, but perhaps those with some standing, such as the chair of a craft organisation, or someone who is recognised also as being the top in the craft. *In their letter they do need to include how long they have known the person being nominated.*

- c. Ensure that you have a good spread of recommendations and that they give examples of different experiences. Ten letters all saying that this person is really good does not count nearly so much as four letters with one saying that they are an excellent craftsman, another giving details of their teaching courses and passing on skills, a third explaining about how they have turned a craft guild around, and the last saying what a good school governor they have been, for example.

** If absolutely stuck, a suggested format for a letter of endorsement is at the end, but this should be used only as a last resort.

2. Dates

We do need beginning and ending dates for the craftsman's work and activities. We did ask whether this was really significant and were told that it was. If actual dates are not known, then the lengths of time and a rough estimate of the year(s) are acceptable. If it is not obvious, please also indicate whether what they did was paid or voluntary for each point.

If getting this information proves to be difficult, the HCA experience has proved that writing an article for the guild newsletter or the HCA blog is a really good way of getting these details from the craftsman.

3. Details of service

What actually has the person nominated done? Please give details of both craft and voluntary activity. What has been the impact, how many people have they taught/ passed skills on to (roughly), and what have been their achievements?

4. What makes the difference?

If others are doing similar things, what makes the nominated person different?
How do they stand out from the rest?

Have they contributed in a distinctive way to improving those still learning?

Have they devoted themselves to sustained and selfless voluntary service?

Have they shown innovation or creativity in delivering lasting results?

How were things before and how are they now?

Show how they have earned the respect of their peers and become a role model in their field.

Show how they have produced, perhaps against the odds, sustained achievement which has required moral courage, vision, the ability to make tough choices or determined application and hard work.

5. Other forms or recognition

Has the nominated person been recognised in any other way? Have they received any craft awards? Do they hold/ have they been awarded Fellowship or

similar recognition in other ways? Have they been recognised by a Livery Company? Please enclose photographs, newspaper/magazine articles, and/or letters of endorsement or similar examples that could verify this if possible.

6. Personal Details of craftsperson nominated

We need:

Full name (if not obvious, please underline the surname)

Title

Address including postcode

Date of birth (or approximate age)

Telephone no

Ethnicity of the person being nominated

What to do now

Please take copies of all the letters of endorsement, any additional letters, photographs, newspaper clippings etc as in (5) above before sending them in the post.

Send to:

Patricia Lovett, The HCA, Hernewood, Gracious Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1TJ

Please send information on 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 to me by e-mail:

patricia@hernewood.net

I may need to come back to you if necessary. We won't forward any nominations that we feel are weak and may need more information or sections to be re-written. Also we don't want to swamp the Honours Team with nominations so we may delay sending in your particular nomination because of this, or if we have more than one nomination for a particular craft skill.

Thank you so much for this. Together we shall make a difference and get more makers into the Honours List, but please note that the time scale is rather lengthy.

Patricia

If people really are stuck then this pro forma letter may be helpful, but obviously it would be much better not to have to use it:

*Name
Address
Phone no
e-mail
website*

To Whom it may concern:

I am nominating XXX for a National Honour. I represent the (Craft Guild etc) and have been (position of responsibility) for xxx years. I am a Fellow/Mastercraftsperson etc of the XXX Guild.

I have known XXX for xxx years and during that time s/he has xxx (what - what have they done?)

XXX was nominated a Fellow/recognised by the craft guild in (year) and s/he has been instrumental in xxx (what? suggest ways in which they have made a difference).

Before XXX came on board the situation was (what?) and now it is (what?).

XXX has voluntarily passed on craft skills in (craft) for the last xxx years and in that time xxxx people have learned how to (do the craft). S/he teaches at (what?) levels, and many of her/his students have gone on to (what?).

This is what some of her/his students have gone on to do:

XXX has received awards from xxx (and when?), and has also been recognised as (what?).

XXX has also volunteered and worked as a school governor/local councillor/mentor to (who?) etc.

Plus anything else you think might add to this endorsement.

Then sign the letter.