

CIVIC CEREMONIAL

Protocols and Procedures – A Basic Guide for the Mayoralty

This Briefing Guide has been prepared to provide general guidance for incoming Town Mayors and Deputy Mayors on their roles and procedures whilst undertaking approved Town Council, civic functions and attending meetings of Full Council.

The information in this document is not exhaustive and only covers key points. Advice can be sought from the Town Clerk, or the Support Services Executive as appropriate at any time.

STATUS AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

Both the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor must be elected Councillors of the Council and both remain in office until the election of their successors unless they resign, cease to be qualified or become disqualified from holding office with the Town Council. The Town Mayor is the proper person to represent the Town Council on all ceremonial functions within the Town Council's boundaries or elsewhere. The Town Mayor, unless through resignation, disqualification or death, continues in office throughout the municipal year and continues in post until the next Annual Council meeting when the successor is chosen and the appropriate Declarations of Acceptance of Office have been signed.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE OFFICE – DUTIES AND ROLES

Town Mayor:

There are four important roles for the Town Mayor:-

- **A symbol of the Authority** – the Mayor is clearly seen as a figurehead of the Council and its area, with the insignia of the civic mace, robes and chains of office etc.
- **A symbol of open society** – a modern role for the Mayor is that the office symbolises an open society with the appointment being made from any qualifying Councillor as the Town's first citizen.
- **An expression of social cohesion** – the many and varied social engagements that are undertaken by the Mayor are an expression of giving cohesion to life within the Town, linking various bodies and organisations as the Mayor visits. In this way the Council's aims and objectives can be conveyed to those bodies achieving the Council's social, community, educational and economic aims.
- **Chairman to the Council** – The Chairman/Mayor is elected by the Members of the Council at the Annual Council meeting and serves for twelve months (Section 15 (1) of the Local Government act 1972).
- The Mayor's main role as Chairman of the Council is to run full council meetings. The Chairman is responsible for ensuring that effective and lawful decisions are taken at meetings of the Council and, assisted by the Clerk, guides activities by managing the meetings of the Council.

The Chairman is responsible for involving all councillors in discussion and ensuring that councillors keep to the point. The Chairman summarises the debate and facilitates the making of clear resolutions and is responsible for keeping discussions moving so that the meeting is not too long. The Chairman has a casting vote. His/her first vote is a personal vote as a Member of the Council. If there is a tied vote, the Chairman can have a second, casting vote.

The Mayor will often be the public face of the Council and will represent the Council at official events and may be asked to speak on behalf of the Council. In such circumstances they should only express the agreed views of the Council and not their personal views.

- The Chairman cannot legally make a decision on behalf of the Council.

Deputy Mayor:

The Deputy only has a civic legal and royal status in the absence of the Mayor, therefore:

- Invitations to functions should not be sent to (or solicited by) a Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor should not attend functions in his/her own right, but only when deputising for the Mayor.
- All invitations should be sent for consideration by the Mayor and if the Mayor cannot attend, it may be appropriate to “pass down” an invitation. This, however, should not be automatic or necessarily desirable and is the decision of the Mayor in liaison with the Support Services Executive. With over 300 civic functions each year, it is inevitable that the Mayor will need to decline a proportion of functions to undertake this substantial workload.

THE DEMANDS OF BECOMING A TOWN MAYOR/DEPUTY MAYOR

Being a Town Mayor is different to being a Councillor. Consequently, before taking on this demanding role, Councillors should consider the following which will be affected during their year in office:-

- The effect of becoming Mayor on family and friends
- The effect on a career or job
- The effect on a political career
- The effect on personal and religious beliefs
- The pomp, circumstance and protocols that are involved
- The effect on non-Council interests
- The effect on the Mayoral partner
- The effect on a Mayor's relationships with other Councillors
- The effect on the Mayor's relationships with his/her constituents

THE CIVIC YEAR

During the civic year, the Mayor supports a wide variety of events throughout the area. The Mayor receives invitations to all kinds of events, functions and engagements and each invitation is considered equally. Invitations to functions should not be sent directly to (or solicited by) the Mayor. If the Mayor cannot attend a function, the Deputy Mayor may be asked to attend on his/her behalf.

Duties which the Mayor may carry out include:

- Acting as host on behalf of the Council at functions organised by the Council.
- Attending functions and engagements in Godalming and on occasion outside the town, as a ceremonial representative of the Council.
- Undertaking official openings or presentations on behalf of the Council.
- Organising events to raise funds for the Mayor's chosen charities.

- Representing the Council during Royal, Celebrity or VIP visits to the town.

The Mayor may choose their own escort who can be either a spouse/partner, fellow Councillor, family member or friend. The escort will be referred to as the Mayoress or Consort, as appropriate. The escort is entitled to equivalent respect and dignity whenever accompanying the Mayor on Civic Engagements, but cannot attend as Mayoress/Consort at a function if the Mayor is not present.

SUPPORT FOR THE MAYOR

Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by the Support Services Executive under the general direction of the Town Clerk. The Support Services Executive is an employee of Godalming Town Council who, as well as carrying out other duties for the Council, assists the Mayor during his/her term of office.

The Support Services Executive will arrange an induction meeting with the new Mayor, once elected at the Annual Council Meeting of the Town Council, to review the civic year, discuss lines of communication, diary management, and specific support required. Each Mayor may have different needs or preferences in the way they wish to be supported.

The Support Services Executive receives invitations for the Mayor at the Council offices and as soon as is practically possible, the Mayor will be notified of the invitations (usually at the weekly callover meeting, or earlier if necessary). A programme of confirmed events will be distributed weekly. On occasion, the Mayor may be personally approached to attend an event, these requests should be directed to the Support Services Executive in order to avoid any confusion or double bookings – please see the Protocol on the Acceptance of Invitations attached.

The Mayor will be asked to respond as to whether or not they wish to attend, and advise whether their escort will be accompanying them. If the Mayor cannot attend the Deputy Mayor may be requested to attend on the Mayor's behalf.

Once it has been confirmed who, if anyone, is attending, an appropriate response will be sent to the host by the Support Services Executive, who will also check on any details regarding the event, e.g. if a speech or any specific duty is required, dress code, insignia preferred, transport, parking arrangements etc.

All correspondence for the Mayoralty is kept in the Council offices and it is courteous of the Mayor to send a letter of thanks to his/her host after the event.

Royal & Significant Events/Visits (Min No. 301/06 refers)

For significant events (such as Royal visits) when both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are unable to attend then the Town Council should be represented by the most recent past Mayor who is available and willing to attend providing that such past Mayor is still a serving Godalming Town Councillor.

The Sergeant-at-Mace will liaise with the Support Services Executive regarding the arrangements for Civic Events, carrying out his/her duties as the Council Mace Bearer.

THE MAYOR'S CHARITY

The Mayor may, if they so wish, raise funds for local charities in Godalming. It is advisable to choose one main or two charities or good causes and the Mayor should advise the Support Services Executive at the induction meeting. The chosen charities will be formally notified by the Support Services Executive and all funds raised at events will be held according to the protocol for Mayoral Charities & Handling of Funds (attached) and presented at the end of the year in office.

During the Mayor's term of office, it is recommended that a main fundraising event is held for the nominated charities. Events must be cost neutral to the Council, although the Council will grant two

uses of its community buildings in support of mayoral fund raising events. The Support Services Executive will be able to advise on suitable events.

Funds raised for the Mayor's charities cannot be used for any other purpose than as a donation to the aforementioned charities, save to cover all reasonable costs associated with raising the funds.

Cheque Presentation

The Mayor will announce the total amount raised for his/her charities at the end of the term of office and may wish to present cheques to the nominated charities at the Annual Town Meeting.

CIVIC ALLOWANCES AND WHAT EXPENSES CAN BE MET

The incumbent Mayor will be informed of the Mayoral expenses agreed by the Council. These allowances may be used to meet related expenses for the costs of being in office including:

- clothing
- collections
- sending flowers
- partner's clothing
- donations to charities
- purchase of raffle tickets
- purchase of tickets for mayoralty events (limited to one guest)
- personal hospitality (inc. drinks, lunches and dinners)
- one off civic events to meet travel costs or fund raising events tickets
- the annual civic dinner
- mayor-making reception and supper (except that guests are expected to pay for their own supper)
- refreshments and other expenses for civic service
- Mayor's Christmas card
- gifts (including twinning)
- travel and accommodation (including twinning)

By convention the Allowance is managed by the Responsible Finance Officer and all payments are made via the Godalming Town Council account and therefore the expenditure has to be made in accordance with the Town Council's Financial Regulations and is subject to audit. It is possible to pay the Allowance straight to the Mayor and have the Mayor meet all necessary expenses directly, however, this is inadvisable because if the Allowance is paid directly to the Mayor it is deemed to be a taxable benefit. At the end of the year if the Mayoral Allowance has been overspent then the Mayor is asked to pay the balance to the Town Council. If the Allowance is underspent then the balance is returned to Council funds.

The Town Council requires all Councillors including the Mayor to make declarations of any gifts or hospitality received, whether accepted or declined. The record book for declarations is kept by the Town Clerk. The declaration should be made before the end of 28 days beginning with the day of receipt/acceptance.

CIVIC INSIGNIA, ROBES, CHAIN AND MACE

It is customary for the Mayor to wear the ceremonial robes of office and regalia for all Full Council including the Statutory Annual Meeting (Mayor Making). The other civic occasions upon which the Mayor will wear the robes are:

- Civic Service of the Godalming Town Council
- Civic Receptions (but the robe will be removed prior to being seated for a meal)
- Remembrance Sunday

- Town Day

The Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor each have separate, chains and badges. The Deputy Mayor may not wear the Mayor's robes or chain, when undertaking civic events.

The Town Mayor or Deputy Mayor should not wear any civic insignia in another Town, District or Parish areas without the express permission of that Council, this is requested by the Support Services Executive.

When wearing official robes and hats the Mayor/Deputy Mayor (male) should remove their hats and females should bow:-

- acknowledging salutes
- during the playing of the National Anthem
- in the presence of a member of the Royal family
- as each section passes the salute
- when the colours pass

It is traditional for outgoing Mayors to be given a past Mayor's badge of office.

PROTOCOL ON THE ACCEPTANCE OF INVITATIONS

The diary of the Mayor's engagements is maintained by the Support Services Executive. All invitations to the Mayor should be received through the office and while inevitably some organisations and individuals will approach the Mayor directly, the Mayor must ask that organisation/individual to liaise direct with the office. If the Mayor accepts an invitation that has not been directed through the office then that is a personal engagement and not a Mayoral one¹. Note: it is considered bad form for the Mayor to solicit invitations.

All new invitations are presented to the Mayor at the weekly callover meeting with the Support Services Executive (unless the timescale is short in which case the Support Services Executive will contact the Mayor by phone or E-Mail). If the Mayor is unable to accept an invitation then the Deputy Mayor will normally be asked to attend as the Mayor's representative (though the Mayor may decide this is unnecessary).

For events when both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are unable to attend and the Mayor deems that a Town Council representative is required then the Town Council should be represented by the most recent past Mayor who is available and willing to attend providing that such past Mayor is still a serving Godalming Town Councillor.

Once the Mayor has indicated at a callover meeting that they wish to accept an invitation then the Support Services Executive sends a formal acceptance and asks for an Attendance Form to be completed supplying all the necessary information for the Mayor to complete the engagement. Once the acceptance letter has been despatched the engagement should be considered a firm arrangement.

The Mayor then receives a weekly programme of appointments – with all Attendance Forms, tickets and other documentation. It is expected that the Mayor will take relevant tickets or invitations to an event.

¹ *Note: While this seems bureaucratic, experience shows that it is only possible to keep a record of the order of invitations and the date they are received when all are handled in the office; in the past appointments have been missed because the engagement was not handled through the office causing embarrassment to the Mayor and disappointment to the organisation that expected the Mayor's attendance. There are also issues of insurance to be considered – the Mayor and civic regalia are insured when on Mayoral business but this can only be demonstrated if the office has handled the appointment. Also, if the Mayor's diary were not kept as a public record and open to inspection under the terms of the Members' Code of Conduct the Mayor would have to declare personally all hospitality (over £25) received.*

PROTOCOL: MAYORAL CHARITIES & HANDLING OF FUNDS (Agreed by Full Council 04/01/07 Min No 301/2006 refers)

NOMINATION OF CHARITY OR CHARITIES

At the beginning of their mayoral year the Mayor should be asked to nominate one or more registered charities as the Mayoral Charity(ies) for that Civic Year. One or more charities should be identified even when the Mayor has indicated that it is not their intention to do any charitable fundraising during the year, because there are often occasions during the year when it is appropriate for an unanticipated donation to be received by the Mayor's Charity.

Should the Mayor wish to nominate a cause that is not a registered charity then that should be subject to agreement by Full Council.

ACCOUNTING FOR FUNDS RAISED

Separate bank accounts should not be opened for this purpose. All funds raised for the Mayoral Charity(ies) should be paid either to Godalming Town Council or direct to the charity concerned (it may be more effective for individuals wishing to "gift aid" their donations to make payment direct to the charity and sign the appropriate declarations).

All sums paid to Godalming Town Council will be accounted for separately from the Town Council accounts and the Town Mayor should indicate whether or not funds raised should be paid to the charity(ies) as they are raised or paid in one lump sum towards the end of the Mayoral year. Monies raised will be paid over to the charity before the end of the Mayoral year.

PUBLICITY

Where funds are passed to a charity during a Mayoral Year, and it is the wish of the Mayor, then the Town Clerk will issue a press release and endeavour to arrange a suitable "photo opportunity" of the Mayor handing over a cheque. It would not be appropriate to seek publicity for such charitable donations made by a Mayor after the end of their mayoral year.

HANDLING CASH & CHEQUES

All cheques received as donations to the Mayor's Charity(ies) should be made payable to either Godalming Town Council or the charity concerned. Cheques made payable to the Godalming Mayor's Charity (or any such variant) cannot be banked. On rare occasions the Mayor may receive a cheque payable to the Mayor personally; if it is inappropriate to go back to the individual donor and invite them to change the name of the payee then the Mayor should inform the Town Clerk and bank the cheque replacing it with one issued on their own account.

Where any collection is made in cash then normal, sensible procedures should be followed; if the cash collection is made in a public place then a street collection license should be obtained first from Waverley Borough Council and Waverley's regulations concerning street collections should be followed. In any event all collections should be taken in clearly marked and sealed containers. All containers should be returned sealed to the Town Clerk or Responsible Finance Officer who will arrange for the counting and banking of the money.