

WINSFORD TOWN COUNCIL



CIVIC PROTOCOL

INTRODUCTION

This Civic Protocol booklet has been produced to assist the Town Mayor and Deputy to understand their roles and responsibilities and provide some useful information, which may be of assistance when undertaking the civic role.

The Civic Protocol is also included, which assists Mayors and Council staff to apply a consistent approach when dealing with issues connected to the civic function.

The object of the information is to try and ensure that your civic year runs as smoothly as possible.

Not all eventualities will be covered by this booklet but remember that assistance is always available at the Council Offices.

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1.0 BACKGROUND

Town Mayor

Section 245 (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 gave Parish Councils the power by resolution to give themselves the title of Town Council and the Chairman of a Town Council is entitled to the style of 'Town Mayor'.

A Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as a local Council Chairman.

The Councillor becoming Mayor

Being the Mayor is different from being a Councillor. A Mayor, by virtue of the Office, can use his/her decision to stimulate community pride, encourage business, promote the voluntary sector, mould social cohesion etc. A Mayor may also have many meetings with dignitaries, endless engagements, late nights, early mornings and is in the public eye for virtually the whole year.

For those chosen, or who are thinking of putting themselves forward for selection, one thing is clear – being Mayor is most different from being a Councillor, as it has different roles, different working hours, different restraints etc. However, it is also most probably a hugely enjoyable and rewarding job if entered into in the right spirit.

The Mayor is elected by the full Council at the Annual General meeting in May. A new Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting. The new Mayor makes the following declaration when accepting the Term of Office at the Annual General Meeting:

“I.....having been elected to the Office of Mayor for the Town of Winsford, hereby declare that I take the said Office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties thereof according to the best of my knowledge and ability. “

The Mayor's term in office is for one year and during this time the Mayor continues to be a Member of the Council and presides over the meetings of the Council.

2.0 ROLE OF THE MAYOR

During the Civic year, the Mayor supports a wide variety of events throughout the area. The Mayor receives invitations to all kinds of events and every invitation is considered equally. 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:

- Organising events to raise funds for the Mayor's chosen charities
- Acting as host on behalf of the Council at functions organised by the Council
- Attending functions within Winsford, or on occasions outside the town as a ceremonial representative of the Council
- Undertaking official openings or presentations within Winsford on behalf of the Town Council
- Representing the Council during royal visits to the town

The Mayor will choose his/her own consort who can be either a partner or fellow Councillor, or a family member or friend. If the consort is female, she is often referred to as the Mayoress.

When representing the Town Council, the Mayor and consort will normally wear the official Chains of Office. The Chains of Office will normally be worn at all official functions within the Town. They are also usually worn at functions outside of the town when invited in an official capacity, although there are some exceptions to this which are usually specified in the official invitation.

The Mayor also has a number of statutory functions as set out below:

- If present at the Town Council meeting, the Mayor must chair the meeting
- The Mayor has a casting vote in the event of a tie
- The Mayor should ensure, together with the Town Clerk, that the Council makes legal decisions
- The Mayor has a duty to ensure the agenda is followed correctly

3.0 SUPPORT FOR THE MAYOR

Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by the Administrative Assistant, under the general direction of the Town Clerk. The Administrative Assistant is an employee of the Town Council who, as well as carrying out other duties for the Council, assists the Mayor with organising their term in office. This position involves arranging a meeting with the new Mayor once elected at the Annual Meeting to arrange the Civic Year, ie dates and venues of functions. Once the Civic Year is arranged, the Chairmen/Mayors of other local authorities are notified of the dates to ensure, as far as possible, that no other events take place on the same dates.

The Administrative Assistant receives invitations for the Mayor and liaises with the Mayor before accepting/declining invitations. A diary is kept in the Town Council Office of all events the Mayor is attending and the Mayor will always receive a copy of the invitation for information.

The Administrative Assistant is responsible where necessary for arranging transport to the events. The Mayor (or the Deputy Mayor if deputising for the Mayor) will normally use their own transport to attend Civic functions within Winsford. Depending on the circumstances, alternative means of transport may be considered for engagements out of the town.

If the Mayor is unsure of anything or requires some guidance, then this should first be raised with the Administrative Assistant, who will provide the necessary information, occasionally this may also require the assistance of the Town Clerk.

4.0 MAYOR'S CHARITY

The Mayor's Charity traditionally raises funds for local charities. It is advisable to choose the charity or charities to be supported at an early stage. The Mayor may decide on either one main charity to support or two or three local charities or good causes.

It is common to announce the chosen charity at the Annual General Meeting when the Mayor is elected.

Support will be given by the Town Clerk and Administrative Assistant. However, it is essential that a separate support mechanism is set up amongst colleagues, both inside and outside the Council. This may be a separate formal charity committee or informal group of helpers.

The chosen charity will then be notified and all funds raised at the events to be held by the Mayor will be donated to the chosen charity, usually at a presentation to be held at the end of the Mayor's year in Office.

Funds raised for the Mayor's charities cannot be used for any other purpose other than as a donation to the charity identified when the funds were raised, save for to cover all reasonable costs to raise the funds.

Charity events vary with individual Mayors but may consist of:

- Charity stall on market day
- Supermarket bag packs
- Raffle/tombola at the Charity Dinner Dance

Other events may be organised by local organisations, clubs or institutions, with proceeds given to the Mayor's Charity. If the Mayor wishes to hold his/her own charity night, then he/she must discuss the proposal with the Town Clerk to be clear as to the full implications of so doing.

Donations

To enable the Mayor to raise funds for local charities, the Council relies on local businesses donating prizes to be used on raffles and tombolas. Although many businesses do support the Mayor's Charity, there are still those who will not donate prizes. The Mayor often feels it necessary to visit local shops, pubs and businesses around the town to ask for prizes as sometimes the local shop owners/businesses prefer a more personal approach and have in the past been more likely to support the charity.

Cheque Presentation

The Mayor will announce the total amount raised for his/her charity at the Annual General Meeting and presents the cheques to the charities nominated to receive the funds raised throughout the year. Local press are invited to attend but, if absent, photographs are taken and press releases sent to local newspapers for their use.

5.0 MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE

The Mayor may be paid an allowance to meet the expenses of his office (LGA 1972, ss 15(5) and 34(5)). The Local Government Act does not stipulate the type or category of expenditure for which the Mayor may use the Civic Allowance. However, it is commonly described as recompense for the expenses of maintaining the dignity of the office. Furthermore, general items include:

- Clothing
- Partners clothing
- Donations to charities
- Collections
- Personal hospitality (including lunches and dinners)
- One-off events held by the Mayor

It should be noted that the purchase of the above items would not necessarily qualify towards the allowance for tax-deductible purposes; it merely suggests that the items relate to maintaining the dignity of the office.

The 'Town Promotions' budget contains provision for certain civic events including Remembrance Sunday, Civic Sunday and receiving Civic visitors. Reasonable costs for the Mayor's inauguration and Charity Dinner dance are also met from this budget

It is important for the Mayor to plan the use of the allowance over the year.

Once the budget level has been reached, no payments can be made or further orders placed by Council staff.

6.0 SUPPORT BY DEPUTY MAYOR

The Member elected as Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year by representing the Council when the Mayor is unable to.

If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting, the Deputy Mayor must preside.

Some confusion has arisen in the past over the status of the Deputy Mayor. In effect, the Deputy Mayor has no standing as Deputy Mayor when the Mayor is present but assumes the precedence and standing of the Mayor when he/she is deputising for the Mayor rather than acting as Deputy.

The Deputy Mayor should not wear the Deputy's Chain of Office in the presence of the Town Mayor of Winsford. (see civic protocol - Appendix 'A').

Invitations to the Deputy Mayor should be dealt with as follows:

- Invitations to functions should not be sent to (or solicited by) a Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor should not normally attend functions in his/her own right, except when deputising for the Mayor.
- All invitations should be sent for consideration by the Mayor as First Citizen and, if the Mayor cannot attend, it may be appropriate to 'pass down' an invitation. However, this should be by no means automatic or desirable
- On the rare occasion when the Deputy Mayor is invited to a function in his/her own right, there should be a clear procedure whereby the invitation is shown formally by the Mayor's Secretary to the Mayor, in order that there is no misunderstanding

7.0 MINI MAYOR

Although having no formal civic status, the annual 'Mini Mayor' competition has been highly successful with the Mini Mayor proving to be an excellent junior ambassador for the Town.

All Primary Schools in Winsford are invited to take part in the competition, the idea of which is for youngsters of primary school age to write to the Town Mayor saying why they would like to be Mini-Mayor and what they would like to achieve for the benefit of the Town.

The winner is chosen by the Town Mayor and is invested with the mini robes and chain of office at the Town Councils Annual Meeting in May. He or she is also invited to other major Civic Events during the year.

8.0 CIVIC INSIGNIA

The Mayor's robes, chain and badge of office are the outward signs of the civic office held, ie its insignia.

The Mayor wears the robe of office at ceremonial occasions, such as the Civic Service, Remembrance Sunday and Royal Visits.

The robes of office consist of a red robe, trimmed with fur, a black cocked hat and a lace stock worn around the neck.

The chain and badge are worn with the robes but are often also worn without.

The Council has no formal protocol regarding the wearing of robes. It is important to maintain the dignity of the office and that any use of the robe is not overdone.

The Mayor should not wear the civic insignia in another area without express permission from the Council for that area.

Civic chains should never be worn with a military uniform. However, a Mayor who is a member of the clergy may wear full canonicals with the chain over the gown. Similarly, the chain may be worn over academic dress.

9.0 PRECEDENCE AND PROTOCOL

Town Mayor

A formal distinction has to be made between the style of address of a Mayor and that of a Town Mayor. It is suggested that, at least in the presence of the Borough Mayor, Town Mayor's should be addressed as 'Mr/Madam Town Mayor'.

NB - a female Mayor is not a Mayoress.

Precedence and protocol for visits and events is often set by custom and practice, with the exception of Royal visits.

The Town Clerk or Administrative Assistant will be able to offer further advice and assistance on these matters.

10. RECEIPT OF GIFTS

In the course of the duty of being Mayor, often gifts will be offered to the Mayor. It is suggested that all Members should treat with extreme caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally.

The Code of Conduct requires Members, including Mayors, to register any gifts or hospitality worth £25 or over that are received in connection with their official duties as a Member, and the source of the gift or hospitality.

You must register the gift or hospitality and its source within 28 days of receiving it.

Be aware that this will now be a personal interest. If a matter under consideration is likely to affect a person who gave you a gift or hospitality that is registered.

If in doubt, consult the Town Clerk.

11. THE CIVIC YEAR - EVENTS

Below is a list of typical events which are organised during the Mayor's Year in Office. These dates are discussed and arranged during a meeting with the Mayor, Mayor's Chaplain, Town Clerk and Administrative Assistant at the beginning of each new year to suit the Mayor's diary.

Civic Service

The Civic Service is held in one of the town churches. Consultation for the date of the Service is carried out by a meeting with the Vicar / Father of the church.

The Civic Service can be held at any time during the Mayoral year but care should be taken to avoid clashing with similar events organised by neighbouring authorities.

Civic Dignitaries from our designated list together with colleagues, friends and family are invited and partake of refreshments at the conclusion of the service.

The Civic Robes are worn on this occasion.

Annual Parish Meeting

This is **not** the Annual Meeting of the Town Council. It is a legal requirement that all Parishes in England hold an 'Annual Parish Meeting' to which all local electors are entitled to attend. In Winsford, the meeting is organised and chaired by the Town Mayor. It must be held between 1st March and 1st June each year.

Remembrance Sunday

Remembrance Sunday is held on the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of Armistice Day which is on November 11th at 11am. A parade leaves the Town Council Offices at Wyvern House and marches to the Cenotaph which is located in Fountain Court, Winsford Shopping Centre. The Service of Remembrance is led by the Town Mayors Chaplain, following which the Town Mayor will lay a wreath in memory of those Winsford men and women who gave their lives for their country.

The Civic robes are worn.

Mayor/Mayoress “At Home”

This event will be held at the discretion of the relevant Town Mayor.

Charity Dinner Dance

The Charity Dinner Dance is a highlight of the Mayor’s year and is usually held at the Town’s Civic Hall. Invitees will include Civic Dignitaries from the Borough and neighbouring Town Council’s, Town Councillors and representatives of local organisations. Other invitees will be at the discretion of the Town Mayor.

The date of the Ball will be at the discretion of the Town Mayor but every effort will be made to avoid any clash with a similar event organised by a neighbouring authority.

Charity Events

Other events which may be organised in the Mayor’s year may include the following, but the events programme will be at the discretion of the Mayor:

Charity Evenings
Market Stall
Supermarket ‘bag-packs’

Miscellaneous Events within the Town

Various miscellaneous events are attended by the Mayor, examples of which are listed below:

- 50th / 60th Wedding Anniversaries Presentation of Flowers
- Town Twinning events – Winsford is twinned with the French town of Deuil la Barre and has a friendship link with the German town of Neider Eschbach
- Opening of Fayres / Garden Parties / Coffee Mornings
- Presenting Awards and Prizes to individuals and organisations
- Entertaining guests and visitors at the Town Council Offices
- Art Exhibitions and presentations at local schools
- Firework Display and Poster Competition awards
- Attending and meeting Royal Visitors to the Town

Miscellaneous Events outside of the Town

The Mayor is invited to a number of events organised by Civic Dignitaries from the surrounding areas (see Appendix ‘D’), which may include:

Civic Services
Civic Carol Services
Civic Dinners
Charity Evenings

12. MAYOR'S END OF YEAR

The outgoing Mayor needs to consider a number of matters:

- Thanks to support staff is always appreciated
- Thanks to the Mayor's personal supporters - partner, family, friends, etc
- Thanks to the Deputy Mayor for support and assistance
- Thanks to the Mayor's Chaplain
- Thanks to the 'Mini-Mayor'
- Thanks to the Mayor's Charity supporters, those Councillors who have helped - and anyone else
- Talking to the successor, when announced, giving advice and information

During the Mayoral Year, arrangements will be made for an official photograph. At the end of the year, the Mayor will also be given an album containing a selection of photographs/press cuttings that have recorded his/her activities over the preceding year.

APPENDIX 'A'

PROTOCOL

MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

1. General

(a) All invitations should be sent to the Mayor at the Town Council Offices.

(b) If the Mayor cannot attend then he/she will decide whether the Deputy Mayor should be asked to deputise.

(c) For events out of the town, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should not attend different functions on behalf of the Council. If the Mayor has accepted an invitation to a particular event on a particular day, then all other invitations out of the town on that day should be declined.

(d) For events in the town, it is envisaged that there may be occasions when the Mayor is attending one function and the Deputy Mayor could attend another. The Mayor will be consulted on all such matters and will decide whether the Deputy Mayor should attend a function in the town in such circumstances.

(e) If an invitation to any function, in or out of the town is sent directly to the Deputy Mayor then he/she should inform the Administrative Assistant who will inform the Mayor and seek his/her views.

2. Specific Events

As a general rule, the Deputy Mayor will not attend as Deputy at functions at which the Mayor is present, save for those occasions when the Deputy Mayor has a civic role to play. The proposals are set out specifically below:

(a) Council Meetings

For all meetings of Town Council, save for the Annual General Meeting, the Deputy Mayor shall not wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.

In the event that the Deputy Mayor deputises for the Mayor in chairing a meeting of the Council, the Deputy Mayor shall wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Council, the Deputy Mayor shall wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.

(b) Remembrance Sunday

The Deputy Mayor will attend as an ordinary Councillor.

(c) Charity Dinner Dance

Depending on the wishes of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor may have a role in hosting guests at the Annual Charity Dinner dance.

In such circumstances, the Deputy Mayor will attend formally as the Deputy Mayor

(d) Civic Service

The Deputy Mayor will attend as an ordinary Councillor

(e) Ad Hoc Events

The Deputy Mayor would not attend as the Deputy Mayor. Whether the Deputy Mayor is invited as an ordinary Councillor would depend on the circumstances.

f) Royal Visits

The invitations will only go to the Mayor. If the Mayor is unable to attend then the Town Clerk will check with the Lord Lieutenant's office whether the Deputy Mayor can deputise. If the Deputy Mayor is able to deputise, then he/she will wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.

(g) Mayor / Mayoress At Home

The Deputy Mayor will not attend as the Deputy Mayor. The invitation of civic guests will be at the discretion of the Mayor.

(h) Charity Nights

If the Mayor wishes to hold his/her own charity night then he/she should discuss the proposal with the Town Clerk or Administrative Assistant to be clear as to the full implications of so doing.

APPENDIX B

CIVIC PRIDE

Mayors of Winsford can look back with pride to over 700 years of civic organisation. In the 13th Century, both Henry III and Edward I held court at Darnhall to the south west of the town.

Winsford Town Council is the direct successor of the Old Manor Court of the Mayors of Over, dating back to around 1280. Although the title of title of Town mayor has only been in existence since the local government reforms of 1974, the Mayor is still able to be rightly called Mayor of 'Over'. In front of the Mayor On civic occasions are two wardens, each carrying a silver mace. The oldest dates from around 1660 and is made of silver around a wooden core. The second mace was given in 1910 by Sir John Brunner, the local MP.

The original mace was taken to Kenya by Lord Delamere who was responsible in the nineteenth century for opening Kenya to white settlers. It was his property and he approved each Mayor by presenting the mace. In 1946, his son, who had settled in Kenya, returned the old mace to Winsford when he sold the remaining family land.

The Mayor wears the red robe and hat made by the London robe makers to Queen Victoria and the gold chain of office that was presented in 1894 to the former urban district of Winsford. For many years, an additional link was added to record the names of each Chairman and then Mayor. However, it eventually became so heavy that it was difficult to wear and the silver links were detached and put on display in the Town Council Chamber which is furnished with heavy committee tables given by Sir John Brunner MP.

Wyvern House is the Town Council's third home. The original Town Hall near the river was burnt down in 1946 and the Council met for many years in a former manufacturers mansion at Over Hall. This was deemed impractical for modern Council business and the Council now has a suite in the impressive Wyvern House, the purpose built HQ for Vale Royal Borough Council.

The Town's Coat of Arms is divided into quarters, consisting of three salt baskets dripping brine in honour of its salt heritage; the lion on a castle from the arms of the Verdin family who were great benefactors to the area 100 years ago; the three wheatsheafs of Cheshire and the three lions of England with a crozier, the emblem of Vale Royal Abbey.



The Latin motto under the third shield may be translated as 'Virtue is the safest defence'.

APPENDIX 'C'

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Address

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Mayoral Support staff

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