



WINSFORD TOWN COUNCIL

CIVIC PROTOCOL

JUNE 2018

INTRODUCTION

This Civic Protocol has been produced to assist the Winsford Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor to better 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 employees 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 Protocol, but further assistance is available from the Town Council's employees.

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1. 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.

A Councillor becoming Town Mayor

Being the Mayor is different from simply being a councillor. A Mayor, by virtue of his/her office, can use his/her decision to stimulate community pride, encourage business, and promote the voluntary sector and so on.

A Mayor may also have meetings with dignitaries, engagements and is usually in the public eye for virtually the whole of their year in office.

For the person elected as Mayor or for those thinking of putting themselves forward, one thing is clear – being Mayor is very different from being only a Councillor as it has different roles, different working hours etc. It is, however, also a hugely enjoyable and rewarding job if entered in the right spirit.

The Mayor is elected by the Council at the Annual Meeting each 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 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 he/she continues to be a Member of the Council and presides over the meetings of the Council.

2. ROLE OF THE MAYOR

During the civic year, the Mayor usually supports a wide variety of events throughout the area. The Mayor receives invitations to all kinds of events and every invitation is considered fully. 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 could 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; or
- Representing the Council during royal visits to the town

The Mayor will choose his/her own consort who can be a partner/spouse; a fellow councillor; or a family member/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 any official invitation.

The Mayor also has several statutory functions to fulfil:

- If present at Town Council meetings, 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; and
- The Mayor has a duty to ensure the meeting agenda is followed correctly

3. SUPPORT FOR THE MAYOR

Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by the Administrative Assistant and 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 after the Annual Meeting to arrange the Civic Year (i.e., 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 any invitation for information.

The Administrative Assistant is responsible, where necessary, for arranging transport to 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 with the assistance of the Town Clerk (if required).

4. THE 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 as early as possible. The Mayor may decide on either one main charity to support or more than one local charities/good causes.

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

Support for the Mayor in raising funds for his/her charity/charities will be provided by the Town Clerk and Administrative Assistant, but it is usually advisable that a separate support mechanism is set up by the Mayor amongst colleagues/friends, both inside and outside the Council. This may take the form of a separate formal charity committee or informal group of helpers.

The chosen charity/charities will be notified, and all funds raised at the events held by the Mayor during the Civic Year will be donated to their chosen charity/charities, usually at a presentation to be held towards the end of the Mayor's year in office or even at the Annual Meeting.

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

Charity events vary with individual Mayors but may consist of:

- Charity stalls on market days.
- Supermarket bag packs; and/or
- Raffle/tombola at the annual Mayor's Charity Dinner Dance/Ball

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 s/he must discuss the proposal with the Town Clerk to be clear as to the full implications of such a decision.

Donations

To enable the Mayor to raise funds for local charities, the Council relies on local businesses donating prizes to be used for raffles and tombolas. 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 in question.

Cheque Presentation

The Mayor will announce the total amount raised for his/her charity at the Annual Meeting of the Council and will present cheques to the charities nominated. Local press is invited to attend, and photographs are taken, and press releases sent to local newspapers for their use.

5. MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE

The Mayor may be paid an allowance to meet the expenses of his office (Local Government Act 1972, Sections 15(5) and 34(5)).

The 1972 Local Government Act does not stipulate the type or category of expenditure for which the Mayor may use 'the Civic Allowance' but it is commonly described as 'recompense for the expenses of maintaining the dignity of the office'.

Other general items covered by the allowance can include:

- Clothing.
- Consort/Partner's clothing.
- Donations to charities.
- Collections.
- Personal hospitality (including lunches and dinners); and
- 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-deductive purposes; it merely suggests that the items relate to 'maintaining the dignity of the office'.

The Council's '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. SUPPORT FROM THE DEPUTY MAYOR

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

If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting, the Deputy Mayor will preside over that meeting.

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 s/he 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 (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) the 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' of Winsford and, if the Mayor cannot attend, it may be appropriate to 'pass down' an invitation. However, this should be by no means automatic or necessarily desirable.
- On the rare occasions 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 Administrative Assistant to the Mayor, in order that there is no misunderstanding

7. JUNIOR MAYOR

Although having no *formal* civic status, the annual 'Junior Mayor' competition has been highly successful with the Junior Mayor proving to be an excellent 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 Junior 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 Junior Mayor's robes and chain of office preferably at the Town Council's Annual Meeting in May or at a special ceremony held at his/her school.

The Junior Mayor is also invited to other major civic events during the civic year.

8. CIVIC INSIGNIA

The Town Mayor's robes, chain and badge of office are the outward signs of the civic office held, i.e., the 'insignia'.

The Town Mayor wears the robe of office at ceremonial occasions, such as the Civic Service, Remembrance Sunday and during 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 Town 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 Town 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 but 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. PRECEDENCE AND PROTOCOL

Town Mayor

A formal distinction must 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, a Town Mayor should be addressed as 'Mr/Madam Town Mayor'.

It should be noted that a female Mayor is not a Mayoress.

Precedence and protocol for visits and events is often set by custom and practice, except for 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 being Mayor, often gifts will be offered. 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 Town Council's Code of Conduct requires elected Members, including Town Mayors, to register any gift or hospitality worth £25 or over that is received in connection with their official duties as a Member, as well as registering the source of the gift or hospitality.

The gift or hospitality and its source must be registered within 28 days of receiving it.

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

If in doubt, consult the Town Clerk.

11. THE CIVIC YEAR - EVENTS

Listed below are typical events which are organised during the Town Mayor's year in office. These dates are discussed and arranged during meetings with the Town Mayor, the Mayor's Chaplain, the Town Clerk, and the Administrative Assistant at the beginning of each civic year to suit the Mayor's diary.

Civic Service

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

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

Civic dignitaries from the Town Council's designated list together with colleagues, friends and family are invited and may partake of refreshments at the conclusion of the Service.

The Civic Robes need to be 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 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 (November 11th) at 11am. A parade leaves the Town Council's offices at Wyvern House and marches to the Cenotaph located in Fountain Court, Winsford Shopping Centre. The Service of Remembrance is led by the Mayor's 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 Town Mayor.

Charity Dinner Dance

The Charity Dinner Dance/Town Mayor's Ball is a highlight of the civic year and is held at different venues. Invitees include civic dignitaries from Cheshire West and neighbouring Town/Parish Councils, as well as Town Councillors and representatives of local organisations. Other invitees are at the discretion of the Town Mayor.

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

Charity Events

Other events are organised in the civic year at the discretion of the Town Mayor.

Miscellaneous Events within the Town

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

- 50th/60th Wedding Anniversaries - presentation of flowers and gifts.
- 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/parties/coffee mornings.
- Presenting awards and prizes to individuals and/or organisations.
- Entertaining guests and visitors at the Town Council's offices.
- Opening art exhibitions and undertaking presentations at local schools.
- Attending firework displays and poster competition award ceremonies; and
- Attending and meeting Royal visitors to the town

Miscellaneous Events outside of the Town

The Town Mayor is often invited to events organised by civic dignitaries from surrounding areas (see Appendix D) which may include:

- Civic Services.
- Civic Carol Services.
- Civic Dinners/Balls; and
- Charity Evenings

12. MAYOR'S END OF YEAR

The outgoing Town Mayor should consider several matters at the conclusion of their year in office. These matters can include:

- Thanks to support staff.
- Thanks to personal supporters including partners/spouses, family, friends and so on.
- Thanks to the Deputy Mayor for support and assistance.
- Thanks to the Chaplain.
- Thanks to the Junior Mayor.
- Thanks to charity supporters.
- Thanks to other Councillors; and
- Anyone else who may have helped during the year

The Town Mayor may also wish to address comments to his/her successor, when announced, giving advice and information.

During the civic year, arrangements will be made for an official photograph and the outgoing Town 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

CIVIC PROTOCOL

MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

1. General

- (a) All invitations should be sent to the Mayor via the Town Council Offices.
- (b) If the Mayor cannot attend, then s/he will decide whether the Deputy Mayor will be asked to deputise.
- (c) For events out of the town, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor may 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 when 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 under such circumstances.
- (e) If an invitation to any function, in or out of the town, is sent directly to the Deputy Mayor then s/he should inform the Administrative Assistant who will inform the Mayor and seek his/her views.

2. Specific Events

As a 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 below.

(a) *Council Meetings*

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

If 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 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/Ball*

Depending on the wishes of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor may have a role in hosting guests at the Town Mayor's Charity Dinner Dance/Ball.

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

(g) *Mayor at Home*

The Deputy Mayor will not attend as the Deputy Mayor, but as a councillor. 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 s/he should discuss the proposal with the Town Clerk/Administrative Assistant to be clear as to the full implications of so doing.

APPENDIX B

CIVIC PRIDE

Mayors of Winsford can look back 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 'Town Mayor' has only been in existence since the local government reforms of 1974 (and the 1972 Local Government Act), the Town Mayor is still able to be rightly called Mayor of 'Over'.

In front of the Town Mayor on civic occasions are two wardens, each carrying a silver mace. The oldest mace 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 then-local MP.

The original mace was taken to Kenya by Lord Delamere. 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, but it eventually became so heavy that it was difficult to wear, and the silver links were detached and put on display outside the Town Council Chamber which is furnished with committee tables originally given by Sir John Brunner.

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 manufacturer's mansion at Over Hall. This was deemed impractical for modern Council business and the Council now has a suite in Wyvern House located in the centre of Winsford. Wyvern House is also the home to Cheshire West and Chester 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 wheat sheaves 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'. A copy of the Coat of Arms can be found on the front page of this Protocol.

APPENDIX C

USEFUL CONTACTS

Postal Address

Winsford Town Council
Wyvern House
The Drummer
Winsford
Cheshire CW7 1AH

Tel: 01606 593582

E-mail: mail@winsford.gov.uk

Website: www.winsford.gov.uk

Mayoral Support Staff

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