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Wallingford Town Council

# Wallingford Town Council

## Civic Protocol

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### INTRODUCTION

This Civic Protocol is designed to assist the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor to understand their roles and responsibilities and provide some useful information, which may be of assistance when undertaking civic duties.

The protocol at Appendix A is also designed to ensure a consistent approach when dealing with issues connected to the civic function. The object of the information is to try and ensure that the Mayor's civic year runs as smoothly as possible.

Not all eventualities will be covered by this protocol and assistance is always available from the Council Offices.

## **BACKGROUND TOWN MAYOR**

Section 245 (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 gives Parish Councils the power by resolution to allow 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 Parish Council Chairman. The office and leadership role of Town Mayor, must be respected by all members of the Council, at all times.

## **THE COUNCILLOR BECOMING MAYOR**

The Mayor, by virtue of the Office, can and should seek to use his/her influence and standing in the role to stimulate community pride, encourage business, and promote the voluntary sector. The Mayor is also likely to have many meetings with various other dignitaries, other engagements, and will be in the public eye for virtually the whole year.

The Mayor is formally elected by the Council at the Annual Council Meeting held in May. A Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting. The new Mayor is required to make 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 Knutsford, 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 civic year and during this time the Mayor continues to be a member of the Council and presides over the meetings of the Full Council. In the event of more than one nomination being put forward, the meeting shall select the successful candidate in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

## **ROLE OF THE MAYOR**

### **Duties which the Mayor may carry out include:**

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

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

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

- a) The Mayor, when present, must preside over meetings of the Full Council and the Annual Town Meeting

- b) The Mayor has a casting vote in the event of an equality of votes
- c) The Mayor should ensure, together with the Town Clerk, that the Council makes legal decisions
- d) The Mayor has a duty to ensure the agenda is followed correctly and that Standing Orders are properly applied.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE MAYOR**

Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by the Mayor's Secretary, under the general direction of the Town Clerk.

The Mayor's Secretary 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.

The Mayor's Secretary will arrange a meeting with the new Mayor once elected to plan his/her Civic Year. This will involve making plans for Civic Sunday, the Mayor's Ball and any other fundraising events the Mayor wishes to hold. Once planned, the dates will be communicated to minimise potential clashes with other events.

The Mayor's Secretary receives invitations for the Mayor and liaises with the Mayor before accepting/declining invitations.

The Mayor's Secretary 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 Wallingford. 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 Mayor's Secretary who will provide the necessary information, occasionally this may also require the assistance of the Town Clerk.

## **MAYOR'S CHARITIES**

The Mayor's Charity traditionally raises funds for one or more local charities or good causes. It is advisable to choose the organisations to be supported at an early stage. The Mayor may decide to support as many organisations as they wish. It is preferable to announce the chosen charity as part of the incoming Mayor's speech.

Support will be given by the Town Council staff. However, it is helpful if a separate support mechanism is set up amongst colleagues.

The chosen organisation(s) will be notified and all funds raised at the events to be held by the Mayor will be donated to the chosen organisation(s) at the end of the Civic year.

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. Any events the Mayor wishes to organise should be organised with support from the Town Council Office.

## **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. It is considered good practise to disclose publicly the donations received.

## **CHEQUE PRESENTATION**

The Mayor's PA will coordinate a cheque presentation and associated publicity. The Mayor will announce the total amount raised for their charity at the Annual Meeting.

## **MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE**

The Mayor may be paid an allowance to meet the expenses of the 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:

- a) Clothing
- b) Consort's clothing
- c) Donations to charities
- d) Collections
- e) Personal hospitality (including lunches and dinners)
- f) 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 Town Council's Civic budget contains provision for certain civic events including Remembrance Sunday, Civic Sunday and receiving Civic visitors. 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 officers.

## **SUPPORT BY DEPUTY MAYOR**

The Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year by representing the Council when the Mayor is unavailable or has another engagement. If the Mayor is not present at a Full Council meeting, the Deputy Mayor shall preside. 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 they are deputising for the Mayor rather than acting as Deputy. Notwithstanding the presence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor is permitted to wear insignia at Council Meetings and Civic Events within the Town.

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

- a) Invitations to functions should not be sent to (or solicited by) the Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor should not normally attend functions in their own right, except when deputising for the Mayor.
- b) 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 firstly to the Deputy Mayor, then previous Mayor and then another Councillor chosen by the Mayor.

- c) On the rare occasion when the Deputy Mayor is invited to a function in their 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.

## **INVITATIONS TO COUNCILLORS**

Invitations to Councillors other than the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to represent the Town or the Town Council should be dealt with in the same way as invitations to the Deputy Mayor.

## **CIVIC INSIGNIA**

The Mayor's chain is the outward signs of the civic office held, and shall be worn with the horse side showing i.e. its insignia. The Mayor should wear the chain at ceremonial occasions, such as Civic Sunday, Remembrance Sunday, Royal visits etc. and when chairing Town Council meetings.

The Mayor may also wear the chain, when officially invited as Town Mayor, to external functions.

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.

It should be noted that the wearing of official robes and hats of office is a privilege afforded to councillors when they take up office. When attending nominated Civic Ceremonies, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors and the Proper Officer are required to wear the appropriate chains, robes, hats and other civic regalia issued to them, out of respect for the Mace, to maintain the dignity of their Office, and acknowledge the formality of the occasion. When wearing official robes and hats, the Mayor (both male and female) should remove the hat when

- Acknowledging salutes;
- During the playing of the National Anthem; • In the presence of a member of the Royal Family.
- During march pasts, the Mayor should remove and replace the hat: - • As each section passes the salute

## **PRECEDENCE AND PROTOCOL**

The Town Mayor's should be addressed as 'Mr/Madam Town Mayor.'

A female Mayor should still be termed as Mayor, not a Mayoress. Precedence and protocol for visits and events is often set by custom and practice, with the exception of Royal visits.

## **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.

As is the case with Town Councillors in general, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor remain

subject to the Code of Conduct for Members which is in force at the time. The Code of Conduct requires Members, including Mayors, to register any gifts or hospitality worth £100 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 be a non-pecuniary interest and if a matter under consideration is likely to affect a person who gave you a gift or hospitality that must be declared.

## **THE CIVIC YEAR**

Below is a list of typical events which are organised during the Mayor's Year in Office. These dates should be discussed and arranged during a meeting with the Mayor, Town Clerk and Mayor's PA at the beginning of each New Year to suit the Mayor's diary.

## **CIVIC SERVICE**

The Civic Service is normally held in one of the Town's places of worship on a rota basis. Consultation for the date of the Service is carried out by a meeting with the minister or leader of the place of worship. The Civic Service can be held in the early part of the Mayoral year but care should be taken to avoid clashes with similar events organised by neighbouring authorities.

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

## **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. It must be held between 1st March and 1st June each year, and must start no earlier than 6pm. The Town Council usually holds this in April so the outgoing Mayor can report on their year of Office. It is noted that Councillors are expected to also attend the Annual Town Meeting. This is not a meeting where the Mayors insignia is worn. If the Mayor is in attendance it is he/she who chairs the meeting.

## **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**

Remembrance Sunday is held on the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of Armistice Day which is on November 11th. The Town Mayor lays a wreath at the War Memorial. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor chains of office shall be worn. The Mace Bearer will also attend, poles will be held by designated Council Members.

**MAYOR'S RECEPTION** Invitees will include Civic Dignitaries from the County and District Councils and neighbouring Town and Parish Councils, Town Councillors and representatives of local organisations. Other invitees will be at the discretion of the Town Mayor. The date of the Reception 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 may be organised in the Mayor's year.

## **MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS WITHIN THE TOWN**

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

- a) Presenting Awards and Prizes to individuals and organisations
- b) Entertaining guests and visitors at the Town Council Offices
- c) Presentations at local schools
- d) Christmas Lights Switch-on
- e) Attending and meeting Royal Visitors to the Town

## **EVENT PROCEDURE**

All invitations are to include partners and to encourage an alternative representative of the body to attend as necessary. The Mayor is entitled to extend invitations to a reasonable number of personal friends and family to Town Council Civic Events. The Mayor shall advise officers each year which Parish Councils and Community Groups should be invited to Civic events in their year in Office. The Town Council office should thoroughly update the Civic Invitee database every June.

## **CIVIC DIGNITARIES (invitation List**

High Sherriif  
High Steward  
His Majesty Lord or Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire  
Wallingford Former Mayors  
Wallingford County Councillors  
Wallingford District Councillors  
Royal British Legion – Chairman  
Chairman of neighbouring Town and Parish Councils  
Community Groups and Organisations – list held by the office  
Wallingford Church Leaders – All denominations  
All uniformed Youth leaders  
Wallingford Scouts  
Wallingford Safe and Neighbourhood Team  
Wallingford Fire Service and community relations  
Wallingford Museum – Chairman  
District Commissioner  
All Heads of Wallingford Schools  
Twinning Representative

## **MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS OUTSIDE OF THE TOWN**

The Mayor is invited to a number of events organised by Civic Dignitaries from the surrounding areas which may include:

- a) Civic Services
- b) Civic Carol Services
- c) Civic Dinners
- d) Charity Evening
- e) Events at local military bases

## **MAYOR'S END OF YEAR**

The outgoing Mayor needs to consider a number of matters:

- a) Thanks to support employees is always appreciated

- b) Thanks to the Mayor's personal supporters - partner, family, friends, etc.
- c) Thanks to the Deputy Mayor for support and assistance
- d) Thanks to the Mayor's Charity supporters, those Councillors who have helped - and anyone else
- e) Talking to the successor, when announced, giving advice and information

The agenda of the Annual Meeting will be formatted to allow the outgoing Mayor to offer thanks.

## **ANNEX A – PROTOCOL MAYOR AND DEPUTIES**

### **GENERAL**

- a) All invitations should be sent to the Mayor at the Town Council Offices.
- b) If the Mayor cannot attend then, with the agreement of the inviting body, the Deputy Mayor should be asked to deputise and then in their absence the previous Town Mayor. If the previous Town Mayor is unable to attend the current Town Mayor may choose a councillor as a representative.
- c) For events out of the town, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor may attend different functions on behalf of the Council.
- 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 or other representative could attend another.
- 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 Mayor's Secretary will inform the Mayor and seek his/her views.

### **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 set out specifically below:

- a) Council Meetings: The Deputy Mayor should wear the Chain of Office and must deputise in the absence of the Mayor.
- b) Wallingford Civic Events: The Deputy Mayor should wear the Chain of Office.
- c) 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 can deputise, then he/she will wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.
- d) 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 Mayor's PA to be clear as to the full implications of so doing.
- e) Mayor Making the chain of office should be worn. All Members will wear robes, the mace bearer will be in attendance.
- f) Mayor Sunday, the chain of office should be worn. All Members will wear robes, poles will be held by designated Council Members.



## **EXTRA CIVIC EVENTS**

From time-to-time additional civic occasions may occur these include.

- a) A Royal Death and proclamation
- b) A Royal visit
- c) Freedom Marches

At these occasions, full insignia will be required as well as the wearing of robes, the Mace Bearer being in attendance and poles being held.

## **ANNEX B – WALLINGFORD TOWN CRIER**

The Wallingford Town Crier, as appointed by the Town Council, shall have responsibility for any cries required in the Parish of Wallingford.

The Town Council and the Town Crier shall have regard for and uphold the Rules of Membership in respect of The Proper Dignity of The Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers.

The Town Crier shall not be permitted to make any cries in the parish of Wallingford without the prior knowledge and permission of the Mayor, Chairman or Proper Officer of Wallingford Town Council.

At the invitation of the Council the Town Crier promotes events and gets involved in civic activities such as the annual Civic Reception.

The role is honorary but the Town Council will consider contributions towards expenses for the Town Crier to fulfil their role within the parish. All payments need prior approval from the Town Council and will be taken from the Civic Budget.

## **ANNEX C- ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Wallingford Town Council will recognise the following achievements if made known to the Council in writing:

1. Resident of the town celebrating 100 years of age
2. Residents celebrating 50 or 60 years of marriage

The Mayor will visit residents and card and gift will be given to the value of up to £25.00, which expenditure taken from the civic budget.

Certificates of Achievement from Wallingford Town Council to be given out at the Mayor's discretion for worthy acts or if noticeable recognition is deemed appropriate.

- 1) His Majesty Lord or Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire
- 2) The High Steward
- 3) Mace Bearer – Protector of the Mayor
- 4) The Mayor of Wallingford
- 5) The Town Clerk – Upholder of law
- 6) Past Mayors
- 7) The Mayors Cadets
- 8) The Mayors Chaplain
- 9) Freeman
- 10) Station Commander
- 11) Lord Bradshaw
- 12) Bridgemen
- 13) Wallingford Town Council in pairs
- 14) Royal British Legion Commander
- 15) Chairman of Oxfordshire County Council
- 16) The Chairman of South Oxfordshire District Council or a Senior representative
- 17) Justices of the Peace
- 18) A representative of the Fire Services
- 19) A representative of Thames Valley Police

**ORDER FOR COUNCILLORS TO PROCESS WHEN ATTENDING CIVIC CEREMONIES**

**Bridgemen to Lead**

Cllrs Lester and Hughes  
All other Members to follow

