

GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Mayors Handbook and Civic Protocol

This policy was formally adopted by the Town Council at the Town Council meeting held on 17 January 2019

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Cllr Sarah Conboy

TOWN MAYOR

Mayors Handbook

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been produced to assist the Town Mayor and their Deputy to understand their roles and responsibilities and provide useful information with which to undertake the Civic role.

The Civic Protocol also assists Mayors and Council Officers to apply a consistent approach when dealing with issues connected with the Civic function and for the civic year to run as smoothly as possible.

Not all eventualities are covered by this handbook but assistance is always available from the officers of the Council.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Town Mayor

The Mayoralty is one of the most ancient offices in British history but has changed its role, importance and public perception over the centuries

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 Chair of the Council to become the 'Town Mayor' together with the precedence accorded to the post.

The Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as local council chairman.

Traditionally, the role is neutral and not party political. The public still see the role as "above politics". It's both a facilitation and leadership role as well as ambassadorial role requiring the highest levels of diplomacy.

3.0 ON BECOMING MAYOR

Being the Mayor is different to being a Councillor. A Mayor, by virtue of the Office, can stimulate community pride, promote the Town, encourage business, support the voluntary sector, mould social cohesion etc.

A Mayor should anticipate meeting with other dignitaries, attending many engagements, entailing late nights and potentially early mornings.

The Mayor is in the public eye for virtually the whole year. With this in mind the Mayor needs to exhibit a keen and genuine interest in those he/she meets, show enthusiasm and commitment to the role, ensure he/she is non-party political, speak up for the town's interests and always be mindful of the dignity of the Office.

For those chosen, it should not be entered into lightly as the reputation of the Council rests heavily on the Mayors shoulders and should never be used to promote the incumbent or their personal business. Being Mayor entails a different role, different working hours and different restraints. But, it should also be very rewarding and hopefully enjoyable.

The Mayor is elected by the full Council at the Annual Town Council Meeting in May, through a transparent process of selection. A Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting.

The new Mayor declares his/her acceptance of office and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office is signed by the new Mayor and the Town Clerk (as the Chief Executive Officer of the Council). The new Deputy Mayor also makes a similar declaration.

The Mayor's Term of 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. In an election year, if the outgoing Mayor does not get re-elected to the Town Council, he/she will remain Mayor until a new Mayor is appointed. The outgoing Mayor will be entitled to chair the beginning of the Annual Town Council Meeting where the first item of business will be to elect a new Mayor.

Prospective Town Mayors should consider planning their year in office in terms of themes, priorities and targets and how they will work with the Council and the community to achieve these aims. Former Town Mayors are an excellent resource to learn about the varied aspects of the role.

4.0 ROLE OF THE MAYOR

The role of the Mayor is to undertake Godmanchester Town Councils civic and ceremonial duties in a dignified manner so as to uphold and enhance the status of the town and engender civic pride.

Standing Orders set out the duties when presiding at Council meetings or in conducting the Council's business.

The Mayor's role is to achieve three key aims:

As a symbol of authority – connecting history with present day and providing a symbol of continuity; a spokesperson for the Council particularly in time of emergency or national celebration.

A symbol of Open Society – the modern office of Mayor symbolises an open society. A Mayor can come from any class, gender or ethnic background. The role also symbolises the transparency of the organisation it represents.

An expression of Social Cohesion – the attendances of the Mayor to both civic and other engagements gives an expression of cohesion to the life of the town. The Mayor can create links between various bodies, organisations, businesses and even political mediation. In speaking at engagements the Mayor can articulate the Council's aims and objectives throughout the community.

These key aims are of significant importance and should be borne in mind when the Mayor carries out their duties throughout the year and in deciding what initiatives they choose to undertake.

The Town Mayor acts as chairman and must preside if present at full meetings of the Town Council. Robes and full civic regalia are worn at these meetings and the presence of the Mace indicates that the Town Mayor is present in his/her official capacity. In the absence of the Town Mayor the Deputy Town Mayor may preside over meetings.

As chairman, the Town Mayor has control of full council meeting procedures ensuring compliance with the law and good order. The Town Mayor should adopt an impartial role in discharging the duties of the office and be scrupulously fair in conducting business at formal meetings of the council. It is generally accepted that Town Mayors should not vote at Council Meetings although s/he may choose to do so. As Chairman of the Council the Town Mayor may exercise a casting vote when required to reach a decision. This vote is in addition to the right to vote held by all Members of the Council.

5.0 THE MACE AND MACEBEARER

The Mace should precede the Town Mayor when entering and leaving the Council Chamber and should be seated close to the Mayor when the Council is sitting. When the Town Mayor is seated the Mace rests horizontally before him/her with the crown to his right hand. Should the Town Mayor occupy a stall in the choir of a church, the crown of the Mace should be towards the Altar. The Mace should always be reversed in the presence of the Sovereign.

The role of the Macebearer is to attend the Town Mayor at all full Council Meetings, local Civic Events and on Town Mayoral engagements when required outside the town.

The Macebearer carries the Mace at these public Civic events and is responsible for the safety and security of the civic insignia whilst it is on display on these occasions and returned to the Town Hall afterwards. The Macebearer is well placed to regularly inspect insignia and robes of office and is responsible for bringing to the attention of the Town Clerk the need for any cleaning and necessary repairs.

6.0 THE MAYORS CHAPLAIN

The chaplain to the Mayor is a personal appointment made by The Mayor who selects who they wish to act as Chaplain, and contacts them personally (ie not through the Town Office). The role is honorary and has no payment or voting rights. The Mayor elect would approach the chaplain of his/her choice and would make the appointment at the Annual Town Council meeting after being formally elected to the position of Mayor. In a year where an election takes place and we may not know until the day of Mayor Making who the incoming Mayor will be, the chaplain to the outgoing Mayor would be invited to lead the Council in prayer.

7.0 INVITATIONS TO EVENTS

During the Civic year, the Mayor will support a wide variety of events throughout the town.

All invitations must be sent for consideration of the Mayor (as First Citizen) and, if he/she as Mayor cannot attend it may be appropriate to 'pass down' an invitation. The Mayoress/Consort/Escort does not take precedence over the Deputy Mayor and cannot represent the Town in their own right.

The Deputy should not attend functions in his/her own right, unless they have received a specific invitation, but only when deputising for the Mayor.

8.0 MAYORS CHARITIES

The Mayor traditionally raises funds for local charities in the Godmanchester area but is not obliged to do so. Ideally, the Mayor will announce his or her chosen charity/ies at the Annual General Meeting or otherwise, at the next full Council meeting. The Mayor can choose any charity, but again, traditionally, tries to support local charitable organisations. Following public announcement, the chosen charities should be advised of their adoption. A Lloyds bank account has been set up and is managed by the town office. The mayor and town clerk are signatories. The cost of running events can be legitimately paid from the proceeds of the event but cannot fund an event in advance. On appointment of a new mayor the town clerk arranges for a changeover of signatory from old to new mayor.

The Mayor should be supported by Cllrs and the town office staff in fundraising activities as requested.

Apart from defraying legitimate expenses, funds raised for the Mayor's charities cannot be used for any other purpose other than as a donation to the charity identified with the funds were raised.

The proceeds from each event should be announced at the next available full Council meeting and following the end of the Mayor's term of Office a Receipts and Payments account should be produced within six months of the term ending. The accounts should be available for public inspection on request.

All monies raised must be presented to the chosen charities within three months of the ending of the Mayor's term of office. The bank account can be passed for use by the incoming Mayor in the following year, subject to arranging for a change of signature from outgoing Mayor to incoming Mayor.

9.0 PRECEDENCE

The Chairman of a District Council takes precedence throughout the District but passes precedence down to the Town Mayor in their respective towns.

If the Mayor attends functions outside of their town they should only wear their chain of office if permitted by the Mayor/Chair of that town. The office will facilitate seeking approval if required.

The Mayor will choose his/her own consort who can be either a spouse/partner, fellow Councillor, family member or friend. The consort should be given equivalent respect and dignity whenever he/she accompanies the Mayor on Civic engagements. This is an important role, but it is acceptable not to have a consort.

When representing Godmanchester Town Council, the Mayor will usually wear the official Chain of Office. The Chain will normally be worn at all official functions within Godmanchester and can also be worn at functions outside of the town, if agreed by the host Council or their Mayor.

Special arrangements apply when visits are made by the Lord Lieutenant of the County or Royalty to the Town. The Town Clerk will provide advice on these occasions.

In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor is entitled to the Mayor's right of precedence within the Town.

10.0 SUPPORT FOR THE MAYOR

The Town Office will keep the Mayor's diary of engagements, process Mayoral Purse expenditure claims and provide administrative services.

11.0 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TOWN CLERK

The office of Town Clerk is a very ancient one, in more modern times the role is referred to as the 'second citizen' in view of the advisory and ceremonial role played alongside the Mayor (the First Citizen). The relationship is important for the Mayor to be supported by the Council's chief officer and for the dignity of the office.

The Town Clerk may accompany the Mayor not only on civic ceremonial occasions but at other times. It is recognised that society is becoming less formal but for traditional and ceremonial purposes, the Town Clerk should be robed when the Town Mayor is robed.

The Mayor will advise the mayor on the 'public front' which the Council wishes to promote on a range of issues.

12.0 CIVIC ALLOWANCE

There is a Civic Allowance to help the Mayor defray the cost of Office. The town council vote for a sum to be allocated for use during the year. This can be paid as a lump sum in May (following appointment as Mayor) or can be drawn down as events take place and expenses are incurred. The Civic Allowance or 'Mayors Purse' is managed by Officers of the Council and accounts are kept accordingly. Receipts or itemised claim are needed for claims through the monthly town council expenditure.

Should a mayor resign part way through a year if the lump sum has been paid to them, they would be required to refund the purse in proportion to time spent in office or any unspent amount, whichever is greater. And at the end of the year any monies not spent and receipted should also be returned.

Legislation 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 Office.

General items include:

- Costs of purchasing tickets to civic events
- Travel costs
- Collections
- Poppy Wreaths
- Hospitality

There is also a budget for certain civic events, including the Civic Service and Remembrance Day.

13.0 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 absent and requests it.

If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting, the Deputy Mayor must 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 he/she is deputising for the Mayor rather than acting as Deputy.

14.0 CIVIC INSIGNIA AND REGALIA

The Mayor's chain and badge of office are the outward signs of the Civic Office held and should be worn at all civic functions and events to which the Mayor (as the Mayor) has been invited, unless specifically requested chains are not required. The public has an expectation to see the regalia being worn and children particularly can be disappointed if the chain is not conspicuous.

The Mayor should not wear the Civic insignia/regalia in another capacity or 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 the chain over their gown. Similarly, the chain may be worn over academic dress.

15.0 RECEIPT OF GIFTS

In the course of the duty of being Mayor, gifts will sometimes 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 £50 or over that are received in connection with their official duties as a Member, and the source of the gift or hospitality. Gifts or hospitality should be registered, together its source, within 28 days of receiving it.

16.0 THE CIVIC YEAR – EVENTS

At the beginning of the Mayoral year it is useful to be able to produce an event list to enable members and the public to diarise events they wish to attend.

Below is a list of typical events which are organised during the Mayor's year in Office. The Mayor should endeavour to attend these save in exceptional circumstances.

Civic Service – The civic service is a celebration and a recognition of those who contribute to the Town's Civic life. Traditionally this service has usually been held in St Marys Church, but could be officiated by any denomination as requested by the Mayor. The Mayor will liaise with St Marys Church, or wherever, and agree the format of the day. The reception will be held at the QES hall with refreshments arranged by the town office. Civic dignitaries from other Council's together with leaders of local community groups and organisations, colleagues, friends and family are invited.

Annual Town Meeting - This is not the Annual Meeting of the Town Council. It is a legal requirement that all parishes in England hold an 'Annual Town/Parish Meeting' to which all local electors are entitled to attend. In Godmanchester, the meeting is organised and chaired by the Mayor and has in recent years grown in size and is becoming a celebration of what the town has to offer.

The meeting is held on the first Tuesday in May at the Queen Elizabeth School.

Remembrance Sunday – Remembrance Sunday is held on the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of Armistice Day which is on November 11th at 11am. The full Council will meet at the Town Hall at 10.45 and will parade through the Town to the War Memorial. The Mayor will lay a wreath on behalf of Godmanchester Town Council in memory of the men and women who gave their lives for their country. Mayor and Councillors are also expected to attend the Parish service in the evening

17.0 MAYORS END OF YEAR

The Annual Town Council meeting notes the end of the outgoing Mayor's Term of Office. He or she may make a short speech and need to consider a few words of thanks for those who have supported the Mayoral Year and details of the amount raised for charity.

The new Mayor will present the previous Mayor with a Former Mayor's badge.

Civic Protocol

1.0 GENERAL

Dress

It is expected that on all civic occasions all Cllrs will wear dark suits or smart clothing.

The Mayor

It will be for the Mayor to decide following their appointment how they wish to be addressed. It is expected that the address would be 'Mr Mayor' even if the incumbent is female, however, the term 'Madam Mayor' could be chosen.

Robes

Cllrs are required to wear Robes at all Town Council meetings and attendance at Civic functions unless advised otherwise. When wearing robes Members of the Council should not smoke or vape.

Chains of Office

Chains of Office, Former Mayor's or Honorary Freemen badges should not be displayed on election literature

Representation

If the Mayor cannot attend a function, the Mayoress/Consort/Escort does not take precedence over the Deputy Mayor. The Mayor may ask the Deputy Mayor to attend, or a former Mayor may be asked to attend an event on his/her behalf if both the Mayor and Deputy are unable to attend.

2.0 MAYOR MAKING

Appointment of the Mayor is the first item of business at the Annual Town Council Meeting which is held in May. In an election year the Annual Town Council meeting must be held within 14 days of the date of the election. See standing orders for full procedures.

The outgoing Mayor and outgoing Deputy Mayor, together with the incoming Mayor and incoming Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk will be led from the room by the Mace Bearer for disrobing and changing robes and the newly elected Mayor and Deputy will process back into the room led by the Mace Bearer.

3.0 ANNUAL CIVIC SERVICE

The Annual Civic Service is usually held in October and arrangements are undertaken by the Town Clerk. Cllrs are encouraged to attend regardless of personal, religious or political beliefs.

The Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor, Councillors and Town Clerk and Mace Bearer will meet at the Town Hall by 10.30am on the morning of the service. Cllrs can robe in the Town Hall.

The Civic Party will leave the Town Hall to walk to the south door of St Mary the Virgin. Those Cllrs who need to, can meet the Civic Party at the church gates in Chadley Lane.

The Civic Party will be escorted into church by the Priest in Charge in the following order:

- Macebearer
- Town Mayor and escort
- Town Clerk and escort
- Deputy Town Mayor and escort
- Councillors (with partners): in keeping with our general less hierarchical style we will not set an order of precedence for other Cllrs.

The Priest in Charge will escort Mayors and Chairs and other Civic Guests to their seats ahead of the Town Council Civic party. The most senior guest is escorted to their seat after the Town Council have been escorted to their seats.

If the Lord Lieutenant is present, he takes preference over all other dignitaries.

At the end of the service, the Priest in Charge will escort the senior dignitary out followed by the Town Council Civic Party, followed by Mayors and Chairs and other invited guests.

The Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Macebearer and Clerk will wait outside the church to greet visitors as they are leaving. Councillors will escort guests to the QES.

The Mayor's Consort and Deputy Mayor's Consort accompany the guests from the Church to the front of the QES at the rear of the Civic Party.

During the reception the Macebearer will ask for silence to allow the Town Mayor to address the assembled guests.

4.0 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

The Civic Party will meet at the Town Hall at 10.30am. All Councillors must be robed and wearing poppies. Any councillor, including the mayor, may wear their service medals on the right breast. Any councillor may also wear a parent's or child's medals (but only one set). Cllrs are encouraged to attend regardless of personal, religious or political beliefs.

The Town Clerk will arrange for traffic to be stopped for the procession to and from the War Memorial. The procession will leave the Town Hall at 10.45am (regardless of weather) led by the Mace Bearer followed by the Mayor and Town Clerk, Deputy Mayor, Councillors, RAF and USAF representatives, representatives from organisations wishing to lay a wreath and the Guiding/Scouting groups. Cllrs spouses and partners do not join this parade but may walk on the pavement to join the members of public at the War Memorial. For practical reasons, anyone wishing to walk in the parade or lay a wreath should seek advance agreement with the Town Clerk.

The procession pauses at Church Place and the Religious Leaders then lead the procession to the War Memorial. The short service begins at 10.55am with a hymn. At 11.00am the Act of Remembrance is read followed by playing of the Last Post and two minutes silence. Reveille is then sounded and The Mayor lays the first wreath followed by other representatives laying wreaths. Prayers, a further hymn and the

National Anthem conclude the service and the clergy, followed by the Civic Party walk in procession to the Town Hall where refreshments are provided.

5.0 COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Town Clerk will robe at the Town Office. Councillors will be robed and will take their seats in the Council Chamber. The Mace Bearer will announce to all present to be upstanding for the Mayor and will escort the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk into the room. The Mace Bearer will place the mace on its stand in front of the Town Mayors chair at the centre of the table. The Deputy Mayor will sit to the right of the Mayor and the Town Clerk will sit to the left. The Macebearer will sit aside from Cllrs and other members of the public.

At the close of the meeting the Town Mayor, preceded by the Macebearer, followed by the Deputy Town Mayor and Town Clerk will process back to the adjoining office to disrobe.

6.0 FUNERALS

Death of a Mayor in Office

Subject to the family's wishes, the Town Flag will be flown at half-mast on the Town Hall on the day of the announcement and day of the funeral. Cllrs will be invited to attend the funeral and robes should be worn.

Procession Leaving Church

- Coffin
- Family Mourners
- Mace and Chain (if a new Mayor has been appointed) – if a new Mayor has *not* been appointed the Mace would proceed the coffin with the remainder of the civic party following the family mourners
- Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk
- Councillors, MP, Honorary Freemen etc
- Mayor's Consort (if not a family member)

Death of a Serving Member of the Town Council

Subject to the family's wishes, Town Councillors, led by The Mayor, should meet the family mourners at the Church and follow behind them. The Mayor should graciously waive his/her precedence on such an occasion and the Mayoral Chain should not be worn. If councillors attend, robes should not be worn.

Death of a Serving Town Clerk

Subject to the family's wishes, The Mayor, should meet the family mourners at the Church and follow behind them. The Mayor should graciously waive his/her precedence on such an occasion and the Mayoral Chain should not be worn.

Other Funerals

If the Mayor is invited to a funeral which is not ceremonial, he/she should wear no Chain or Badge but attend purely as a mourner unless the family express a wish to the contrary.

The Town Clerk should consult the members of the family as to the desirability of having a full ceremonial funeral. At a funeral where they attend officially, the Mayor and Councillors follow immediately behind the family mourners.

7.0 CIVIC TWINNING VISITS

Invitations may be received directly from the Mayor of the Twin Town or via twinning association. Visits are relatively infrequent and generally coincide with special events in either town or notable anniversaries. Before accepting any invitations, the costs payable by the Town Council must be confirmed and be covered by the Twinning budget and the Town Council should be in agreement that these expenses are approved. The Mayor may choose to pay their own expenses, but acceptance of the invite still requires agreement of the Town Council. If civic robes are to be taken it is desirable the party includes the Mace Bearer who would require funding. The Town Clerk will ensure insurance is in place to cover all Civic Regalia.

Where spouses/partners or Council Members wishing to attend in their own right are accompanying the party, each shall be responsible for payment of their own expenses.

All delegates are responsible for ensuring they have adequate travel insurance.

Gifts may be exchanged during the visit. As a general guideline, the Town Council will not in normal circumstances spend more than £50 on a gift and such expenditure should be limited to purchase of a gift for the host country. It is customary to give a small token gift to those representing each of the Twin Towns.

If the Town Council has agreed to host a formal reception for delegates from a twinned town, Cllrs will be robed and the Mace will be present.

There may be other occasions where the Mayor or other councillor attend an event which specifies that 'medals may (or will) be worn' - eg an official invitation to a military graduation, during a major national event, or the funeral of a notable military figure.

Amendment History:

Paragraph	Detail	Approval Date
Original	Initial Version	January 2019
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Reviewed		July 2022