

Civic Policy



Adopted by:	Watton Town Council
Date:	May 2022
Review date:	May 2024

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 Watton, 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 Watton, or on occasions outside the town as a ceremonial representative of the Council
- d) Undertaking official openings or presentations within Watton 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 Major

Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by the Town Council staff, under the general direction of the Town Clerk.

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

The Town Council Office receives invitations for the Mayor and liaises with the Mayor before accepting/declining invitations.

The Town Council Office is responsible, if 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 Watton. 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 Clerk, who will provide the necessary information.

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 Town Council Office 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-deductible 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 Civic Sunday and the Civic Reception. 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.

The terms of the Mayor's Allowance are set out in the Watton Town Council Expenses Policy – section 3 – Chairman's Expenses.

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 Office staff 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, 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.

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 and office staff 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.

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.

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)

Watton Town Councillors

Watton Ward County Councillors

Watton Ward Breckland Councillors

Former Watton Mayors

Lord Mayor of Norwich Town Mayor

Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk

Chairman of any of the neighbouring parish councils.

Mayor of Swaffham, Dereham, Attleborough & Thetford

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

(Office holds generic list - includes those below plus others)

All Watton Church Leaders: Lay and Clerical

All uniformed Youth Organisation Leaders plus a representative body

Watton Safer Neighbourhood Team,

Watton Fire Service

Community Relations Royal British Legion, Chairman

Watton Museum Chairman

Chairman (or equivalent) of Community Organisations

Watton District Scouts, District Commissioner

All Heads of Watton schools.

Twinning Reps.

Miscellaneous Events Outside of 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
- f) 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 Town Council Office which 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) Watton 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 is able to 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.

Annex B – Watton Town Crier

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

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 Watton without the prior knowledge and permission of the Mayor, Chairman or Proper Officer of Watton 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

Watton 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 Watton Town Council to be given out at the Mayor's discretion for worthy acts or if noticeable recognition is deemed appropriate.