

Sleaford Town Council

CONSTITUTION Chapter 7 Civic Protocol



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Introduction

This Civic Protocol has been produced to assist the Town Mayor/Chairman and Deputy Mayor/Deputy Chairman to understand their roles and responsibilities and provide some useful information.

Becoming the Mayor

Councillors considering the prospect of becoming Mayor should contemplate the following issues which they will likely encounter before or during their year in office:

- a) The effect and consequences of becoming Mayor on their family and friends;
- b) The effect and consequences of their career, their job or any fixed commitments;
- c) The effect on a political career, given that from a legal standpoint, party politics can play no part in council activities at parish and town council levels;
- d) The effect on personal and religious beliefs;
- e) The self-confidence required to effect high profile ceremonial activities on behalf of the Town and the Town Council;
- f) The effect on non-council interests, activities and pastimes;
- g) The effect on the Mayor's spouse or partner;
- h) The effect on a Mayor's relationship with other councillors and officers;
- i) The effect on the Mayor's relationship with constituents;
- j) The effect on the prospective Mayor's general health and well-being;
- k) The time commitment in undertaking this role (e.g. number of events and possible hours)

The Election of the Mayor/Chairman

The election of the Mayor/Chairman is the first item of business at the Annual Town Council meeting, with the election being decided by a majority of members present. The Mayor/Chairman-elect must be a member of the Council and make a declaration of Acceptance of Office within two months of the day of the election, which declaration must be delivered to the Council's Proper Officer.

Definition and Distinction of the Mayor and Chairman

Sleaford Town Council's Chairman is also the Council's Mayor. The two roles are as follows:

Role and Function of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor

The Mayor will:

- Will carry out a wide range of civic and ceremonial duties
- Promote public involvement in Sleaford's activities
- Attend functions and engagements within Sleaford, and on occasions outside the town, as a ceremonial representative of the Council
- Undertaking official openings or presentations on behalf of the Council
- Organising events to raise funds for the Mayor's chosen charities
- Representing the Council during royal, celebrity, twinning or VIP visits to the town
- Representing the Town Council during events such as St Georges Day
- Attending civic events at NKDC and Lincolnshire County Council
- Other events as required by the Council

Role and Function of the Chairman or Deputy Chairman

- Be the Chairman of the Council and the Council's principal spokesman
- Offer considered direction and judgement to the Council
- Preside over meetings of the Town Council and ensure that meetings follow the procedures set out in Standing Orders
- Has the casting vote in the event of a tie.

NB: For all functions of the Chairman, please refer to page 6, number 10 of the Standing Orders.

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

Precedence and Protocol

A formal distinction has to be made between the style of address of a Mayor and that of a Town Mayor. Town Mayors should be addressed as 'Mr/Madam 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 will be able to offer further advice and assistance on these matters.

Support Staff

Detailed operational policy support and advice on a day to day basis is provided by:

- The Town Clerk
- Administrator

Town Clerk

- The Town Clerk's prime responsibility is the management and administration of the Town Council and the execution of the Town Council's determinations. This includes management of the civic budget and providing direction and guidance on matters of civic procedure and protocol and ensuring the safety of the Mayor and the civic insignia.

Administrator

- The Administrator is responsible for providing practical administration support, diary management, assisting the Mayor in arranging the Civic Service and any Mayoral events and providing the administration support for this, ceremonial protocol and etiquette and the preparation of mayoral correspondence.
- All incoming invitations should be received by the Administrator for entering into the civic diary and to ensure that necessary insurance is in place to attend a venue/events. Invitations will then be forward to the Mayor for consideration. If the Mayor is unable to attend, then the invitations for consideration should be forwarded to the Deputy Mayor for their consideration.

- In respect of civic invitations, whenever a firm booking for civic engagements is made, written confirmation is sent to the organisers.
- At the beginning of the Mayoral year it will be agreed with the Mayor exactly what they wish to have entered in the civic diary.
- The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will regularly report to Full Council on functions that have attended, in their civic role.
- Ideally before an event, support the Mayor/Deputy Mayor (if they so require) with additional information such as details of any awards to be presented and bullet-points for speeches, dress code, parking arrangements etc.

General Requirements

- The Mayor must endeavour to carry out a full year's programme of engagements. Mayoral engagements are very wide ranging. Where possible all invitations will be accepted, provided the engagements are appropriate and that the Mayor, or Deputy Mayor, is available.

The Mayor should accept as many engagements in person as possible. The Deputy Mayor is normally called upon in the event of the Mayor's unavailability or in unforeseen circumstances etc.

- Upon the commencement of taking Office, the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor should advise the Administrator of their availability (particularly if they are in employment) and of any meetings or events already scheduled in their personal diaries.

Receipt of Hospitality Gifts

In the course of the duty of being Mayor, 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 over a specified limit that are received in connection with their official duties as a Member, and the source of the gift or hospitality. 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.

Political Neutrality

Every Mayor/Chairman must be a Councillor and, by definition, a diplomat with clear responsibilities to the electors in their ward.

Mayors should go out of their way to display neutrality in political matters during their year in office. It is inappropriate for the Mayor to be associated with any politically contentious or divisive issues.

Civic Insignia and Regalia

When representing Sleaford Town Council, the Mayor and Consort will usually wear the Chains of Office. The Chains of Office will normally be worn at all official functions within Sleaford and they can also be 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.

An important point to remember is that the dignity of the Office must be maintained, and the use of civic chains should not be a matter of routine. When wearing the mayoral chain, the Mayor/Deputy Mayor should be appropriately dressed as befits the Office and never wear inappropriate, casual clothing such as t-shirts, jeans or trainers.

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.

When not in use, the chains should be kept in their official box. Although insurance cover is in place when the chains are in the possession of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor, it must be accepted the Chains are irreplaceable. The chain should never be left unattended (such as in the Mayor's vehicle) or placed at risk at any time.

The Mayor should take personal responsibility to ensure adequate security measures are always in place whilst in possession of the Chain. The Chain should remain in its designated box at the Town Hall other than when being worn on official or ceremonial duties.

The above equally applies to the Mayoress or Mayor's Consort and the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress or Deputy Consort's Chains of Office, which should only be worn when required on official occasions.

Mayor's Civic Service

Each year the Mayor holds a Civic Service. In previous years this has taken the form of a Civic Service reflecting religious and civic importance. However, the specifics of the event are entirely the choice of the Mayor but must be kept within the agreed budget, must be held in the parish of Sleaford and must be a suitable civic occasion inviting local and regional civic dignitaries. The Mayor must discuss and agree the proposal with Council so the full implications of organising and arranging these events are clear and they can be monitored. A Civic Reception could also be organised to co-ordinate with the Civic Service.

Mayor's Charities

The Mayor's charity raises funds for local charities and good causes in the Sleaford area.

The Mayor may decide on either one main charity to support a number of local charities or good causes. It is common to announce the chosen charity at the Annual Town Council Meeting when the Mayor is elected. The chosen charity or charities 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.

During the Mayor's Term of Office, they can hold fund-raising events for their charities e.g. a ball, dinner, dance, quiz etc. Events/functions must be cost neutral to the Council and be organised by the Administrator. Other events may be organised by local organisations, clubs or institutions, with proceeds given to the Mayor's charity. The Council relies on local business for donations to enable the Mayor to raise funds for their charities. These can be used for raffles and tombolas.

Although many businesses do support the Mayor's Charity, there are still those who will not donate prizes. The Mayor may feel 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 consequently more likely to support the charity.

The Mayor will announce the total amount raised for their charity at the end of the Term of Office. The Annual Town Council Meeting might be considered an appropriate time to present cheques to the charities nominated. The local press are invited to attend however if absent, photographs will be taken and press releases sent to local newspapers for their use.

Civic Expenses

In your civic role, expenses will be incurred for the maintaining of the dignity of the Office, these can be reclaimed and must be approved by the Town Clerk. This will include ticket purchase, travel, raffle tickets and donations.

There are also other budget lines which contain provision for certain Civic events including the Civic Service, the Mayor's inauguration (Annual Town Council Meeting) and one-off Town Council events supported or hosted by the Mayor. Once the budget level has been reached, subsequent events must be self-funding.

Any underspend goes back into Council funds.

Christmas E-Cards

The Mayor is expected to send Christmas E-Cards to other Civic Heads, Past Mayors, Town Councillors and local organisations. Payment of postage costs for cards sent by the Mayor for family and friends is the Mayor's personal responsibility and will not be met by the Council.

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 during a meeting with the Mayor, the Town Clerk and the Administrator at the beginning of each new year to suit the Mayor's diary.

Civic dignitaries from the Council's designated list 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 Sleaford, the meeting is organised and chaired by the Mayor and can adopt any format showing the work of the previous year and the aims and objectives going forward are given.

Organisations that have been supported through the Town Council's grant scheme may be invited to display their information and refreshments are offered. The meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June each year and the venue is open to discussion.

Remembrance Sunday - Remembrance Sunday is held on the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of Armistice Day which is on November 11th at 11am.

Whilst the parade and the day's events are organised by the British Legion, the Mayor is always invited to the service and will lay a wreath on behalf of Sleaford Town Council in memory of those men and women who gave their lives for their country.

Miscellaneous Events - various miscellaneous events are attended by the Mayor, examples of which are included in the list below: Town twinning events – Sleaford is twinned. Opening of and attendance at fayres / garden parties / shows / unveilings etc. Events, exhibitions and presentations at local schools.

The Christmas lights "Switch On," STC organised events LCC and NKDC Civic Services, Civic Events and Charity Fund-raising Events

Mayor's End of Year

At the Annual Town Council Meeting which notes the end of the Mayor's Term of Office, the outgoing Mayor makes a short speech and needs to consider a number of matters:

- Thanks to support staff is always appreciated
- Thanks to the Mayor's personal supporters – spouse/partner, family, friends etc.
- Thanks to the Deputy Mayor for support and assistance
- Thanks to the charity supporters, Councillors who have helped and anyone else who has influenced or assisted in any way throughout the year
- Talking to the successor, when announced, giving advice and information. The new Mayor will also present the previous Mayor with a Past Mayor's badge