



Wellingborough Town Council

HANDBOOK ON THE MAYORAL OFFICE AND CIVIC INSIGNIA

1 INTRODUCTION

The Mayor is the first citizen of the civil parish. They act as Chairman of the Council. By virtue of their office, the Mayor is in a unique position to relate the work of the Council to the community it serves, to help in establishing a sense of civic pride and to further a sense of harmony between communities and between different groups of citizens within those communities.

The Mayoral tradition and concept helps to maintain the important links between the Council and the very many organisations, voluntary and otherwise, in the civil parish. The Mayor also represents the Council and, through it, the local community, at formal and ceremonial occasions in the civil parish. It is important from the Council's point of view, that the Mayor should be enabled to discharge the duties of their office effectively and that there should be a clear understanding of the Mayoral and civic role. (History of the Office of the Mayor Appendix 1)

2 CIVIC ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MAYOR

The Mayor represents the civil parish as a whole and generally the office is held in deep regard. The Mayor should adopt an impartial role in discharging the duties of the office and be scrupulously fair in conducting business at meetings of the Council. The Mayor should seek to avoid taking a sectional view in any controversy if this has the effect of impairing their ability to discharge the duties of the office in an impartial and objective manner.

The Mayor is, of course, also a Councillor and in that capacity will become involved in the ordinary business of the Council and its committees. The Mayor cannot by convention hold Chairmanship of the Staffing Committee and does not normally hold the chairmanship of a committee during their Mayoral term of office to demonstrate impartiality. It is not considered appropriate for the Mayor to take part in the activities of political groups as the Mayor. Normally, the Mayor should refrain from accepting official invitations to attend social functions, e.g. dinners, dances, which are organised by political bodies.

In addition to their purely civic functions, the Mayor undertakes a large number of engagements which brings them into contact with many different bodies. These occasions vary from formal dinners, ceremonies and church services, to more localised events, such as school visits and coffee mornings, to raise funds

for charities. In all these matters the Mayor represents the Council and the local community.

Section 3(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, provides that the Mayor has precedence in the parish but not so as to prejudicially affect Her Majesty's Royal prerogative. There are many detailed consequences to this rule, which means, in effect, that the Mayor takes precedence within the parish on any formal occasion except when the Sovereign, members of the Royal Family or the Crown's lawful representative (i.e. the Lord Lieutenant or a Vice-Lord Lieutenant) are present.

During their term of office, the Mayor should not accept, as the Mayor, any post with a local organisation except as Chairman or President.

The Mayor should receive guests at formal civic functions where appropriate and, at other functions, should normally be placed at the table or on the platform, on the right hand of the person presiding. If they are to speak, their toast should appear early in the toast list.

The Mayor should not accept engagements outside the parish without the consent of the Mayor or Chairman of that parish/town Council, though in practice, the Mayor's Secretary will seek such consent as a matter of course. Even so, they would not normally wear their robes unless specifically invited to do so by the Mayor/Chairman of the parish/town they are visiting. They would normally wear their Chain of Office and Badge.

When inviting civic heads to attend civic functions in the parish, the Mayor will specify, on the invitation, whether they desire Badges and/or Chains of Office and, exceptionally, robes to be worn.

The Mayor should take part in any official ceremony associated with the Council's own business, e.g., opening a new public facility. The Chairman of the appropriate committee usually presides at such functions and, if no person has been specially invited to officiate at the ceremony, the Mayor will undertake this role. The detailed arrangements depend to an extent on the particular circumstances of each occasion.

They should act in an impartial and non-political way, taking into account that they represent the whole community.

The Mayor takes the Chair and presides at meetings of the Council and they are able to vote and, if necessary, to exercise a casting (second) vote. The Mayor should ensure that they are available for all meetings of the Council. The rules governing meetings of the Council are contained within the Standing Orders and the Mayor should familiarise himself/herself with these before meetings.

3 ELECTION OF THE MAYOR AND APPOINTMENT OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR

Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1972, provides that the Chairman of a Council (the Mayor) shall be elected annually by the Council from among the

Councillors. The Section also provides that the Council may pay such allowance as it thinks reasonable to the Mayor to enable them to meet the expenses of their office.

Section 5 of the Act requires the Council to appoint a member of the Council to be the Deputy Mayor who may act on behalf of the Mayor. The Deputy Mayor may utilise the allowance allocated to the Mayor when attending events on behalf of the Mayor.

By convention, the Mayor changes each year. To enable the Mayor to gain experience it is expected that any prospective Mayor will first be elected as a Deputy Mayor, before progressing to role as Mayor the following year.

The Annual Meeting of the Council takes place in May each year. Election of Mayor is the first item of business on the agenda.

After the vote has been taken and the new Mayor elected, both the newly elected Mayor and past Mayor leave the chamber to transfer the robe to the newly elected Mayor. Upon return to the chamber the Mayoral chain is presented to the new Mayor by the past Mayor and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office is signed in the presence of the Town Clerk. The newly elected Mayor resumes the chairing the meeting. After a speech by the Mayor, the Past Mayor and Past Consort are presented with their badges.

The second item of business at the Annual Town Council Meeting is to elect a Deputy Mayor. Upon election, the past Deputy Mayor presents the Deputy Mayoral chain to the newly elected Deputy Mayor. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office is signed in the presence of the Town Clerk. The newly elected Deputy Mayor resides next to the Mayor at the front of the chamber.

The Annual Town Council Meeting is followed by a Mayor's reception, usually held in the Mayors parlour with the new Mayors friends, family, freemen/women and fellow councillors.

4 OTHER CIVIC PERSONALITIES

Mayoress/Consort and Deputy Mayoress/Consort

These roles are not recognised by law. The role of the Mayoress/Deputy Mayoress was originally bestowed on the Mayor's wife. If the Mayor/Deputy Mayor chooses to appoint a Mayoress/Consort/Deputy Mayoress/Deputy Consort, the role may be undertaken by a spouse, partner, friend or relative and is accorded precedence alongside the Mayor/Deputy Mayor. Should the Mayor choose to nominate a charity to support in their Mayoral term, a member of the charity may also be appointed as consort. The chosen charity must be a charity whose services benefits the inhabitants of the town of Wellingborough but can be a national charity. It is the Mayor's responsibility to lead in any fund-raising initiatives on behalf of charities of their choice.

It is generally understood that the mayoress/consort will provide assistance as

follows:

- personal support to the Mayor;
- accompany the Mayor on engagements;
- observance of civic protocol;
- support with Mayor's charities.

The Mayoress/Consort wears a Chain and Badge of Office and is sometimes asked to undertake engagements in her/his own right. If the consort wishes to wear insignia, then the Badge affixed to the Chain of Office of the Mayoress can be removed and attached to a collarette.

The Deputy Mayoress/Consort wears a Chain and Badge of Office.

In carrying out their roles, the Mayor/Deputy Mayor/Mayoress/Deputy Mayoress/Consort/, should consider the public nature of their office. Behaviour and manner will need to be appropriate at all times and not bring the office into disrepute. They should follow the advice and guidance issued by the Mayor's Office and should not:

- attend any function or otherwise give support to any organisation or person whose objectives are contrary to law and/or Council policy;
- solicit engagements or visits or otherwise procure favours by virtue of office.

On occasions when the Mayoress/Consort/Deputy Mayoress/Deputy Consort is unable to escort the Mayor/Deputy Mayor to an appointment, the Mayor can choose to either attend alone or take another person to escort them. Should the Mayor/Deputy Mayor wish to take another escort, it is important that this person does not wear the chain and that advanced notification of the person attending is given so she/he can contact the person/organisation which had invited the Mayor/Deputy Mayor.

Past Mayors/Past Mayoresses/Past Consorts

On important civic occasions Past Mayors and Past Mayoresses/Past Consorts would be expected to wear the Badges presented to them.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk normally accompanies the Mayor on formal civic occasions. In processions and on other formal occasions, they normally accompany the Mayor on their right side; the Mayoress/Mayor's Consort processes on the Mayor's left.

5 MAYORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Invitations

It is essential that all who seek the Mayor's presence at their events should complete the online form on the council website or email mayor@wellingboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk.

A measure of effectiveness of the Mayoralty in undertaking quality engagements is maintained. Care should be taken to avoid accepting invitations which are not appropriate to the office. If necessary, the Town Clerk will advise. Parish events always take precedence over engagements outside the civil parish. It is not normal practice for the Mayor to attend functions outside the County.

When an invitation to the Mayor to attend a function is received, a questionnaire is sent out to the organisers, with the acceptance, asking for full details (e.g., date, time, venue, any special purpose of the function, whether the Mayor is to speak or to play any other part in the proceedings), together with a request for any relevant background information. Details are made available to the Mayor before the function.

The Mayor will be expected to speak on many occasions during their term of office. It is for the Mayor to agree whether they are to speak and, if so, what they are to say. The Mayor should seek to avoid unnecessary controversy in what they say. If the Mayor chooses they may appoint a Chaplin to speak at civic events.

If the Mayor is unable to attend an event, they may pass the invitation onto the Deputy Mayor.

Mayor's Parlour

The Council provides a Mayor's Parlour at Swanspool House, for the use of The Mayor. The Mayor's Parlour is, in effect, an extension of The Mayor's own residence, which is provided to facilitate the performance of their duties, however, it is subject to Council policies and practices. It is entirely a matter for The Mayor to determine the use of the Parlour, but discretion should be used.

Should the Mayor wish to entertain guests in the Parlour and provide food and drink, they will be responsible for such provision and also for serving and clearing away after the function.

Addressing the Mayor

The Mayor is referred to in correspondence and in the third person as The Worshipful The Mayor. The Mayor should be addressed as Mr Mayor or Madam Mayor. The Mayoress is addressed as Madam Mayoress. The Deputy Mayor is referred to as the Deputy Mayor and addressed as Mr.... or Madam..... Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayoress would be addressed as Madam Deputy Mayoress. The Consort would be addressed as Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss....

6 CIVIC FUNCTIONS

Civic functions are those formal, social and religious functions which are organised on behalf of the Council and in which The Mayor is expected to participate.

Regular functions include: -

- Annual Meeting of the Council and reception;
- Civic Service;
- Remembrance Day Service and Parade;
- Civic Ball or Civic Dinner (if the Mayor chooses to hold the event);

The Mayor is normally expected to attend a number of civic functions organised by other local authorities and bodies. They do so as the formal representative of the Council and may be accompanied by the Town Clerk when this is requested.

When the Mayor attends funerals in an official capacity, they will wear the Chain of Office and the Badge. If the Mayor is attending a civic funeral, they will wear the Mayoral robes.

Wearing of Civic Insignia

The robe is worn on the more formal occasions and these are governed by well-established national traditions and local convention. When the Mayor is robed, they will usually be accompanied by the Town Clerk.

The full insignia - Chain, Badge, Robe, Hat, Jabot (frill on shirtfront) and white Gloves are worn on the following occasions: -

- Meetings of the Council;
- Annual Meeting of the Council and reception;
- Civic Service;
- Remembrance Day Service and Parade;
- Civic Ball or Civic Dinner (if the Mayor chooses to hold the event).

It is appropriate for The Mayor to wear their Robe on certain other special occasions, depending on the circumstances e.g., a visit by Royalty and a Freedom Ceremony etc. For the Induction of a Priest when the Bishop is present, it would be appropriate to wear the Chain of Office and Badge.

The Hat may be carried or worn when The Mayor is robed, but is always worn when inspecting parades, such as on Remembrance Sunday.

The Chain of Office and Badge are normally worn by the Mayor and the Mayoress, if attending and the Chain of Office and Badge are worn by the Deputy Mayor and the Deputy Mayoress/Consort at all functions when they are acting officially. The Mayor's Badge, with collarette, can be worn at functions such as

dances.

The Deputy Mayor should wear the Chain of Office and the Badge, and the Deputy Mayoress/Consort should wear the Chain of Office and Badge on all occasions when acting for the Mayor (and Mayoress/Consort). The Deputy Mayor should not wear the Robe, even in the absence of the Mayor. The Chain of Office and the Badge of the Deputy Mayor (and Deputy Mayoress/Consort) should not generally be worn when they are present with The Mayor at engagements, but should be worn at the following civic functions: -

- Meetings of the Council;
- Annual Meeting of the Council and reception;
- Civic Service;
- Remembrance Day Service and Parade;
- Civic Ball or Civic Dinner (if the Mayor chooses to hold the event).

Insurance of Civic Insignia

All assets are listed on the asset register and insured based on their current value.

7 FINANCE

Mayoral Expenses

- 1.1 A budget of £1,000 is set aside for the Mayor each year for the:
 - (a) Reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses to attend events to which the Mayor has received an official invitation through the Town Council offices. (The HMRC approved rates, currently 45p per mile for 2021/22, are used for private vehicles.)
 - (b) Reimbursement of the cost of any tickets for events to which the Mayor has received an official invitation through the Town Council offices.
 - (c) Initiation of Mayoral events to raise funds for their chosen charity.
- 1.2 If the Mayor is unable to attend an event to which they have received an official invitation through the Town Council offices, the Deputy Mayor may be requested to attend as a substitute. In these instances the Deputy Mayor will be reimbursed according to 1.1(a) and 1.2(b) above. The expenses will be charged against the Mayor's budget.

Appendix 1

HISTORY OF THE OFFICE

The word Mayor is derived from the French Monsieur le Maire and the Latin Major, i.e., greater or superior. In the 7th Century, Mayors of the Palace were appointed by the Kings of France and grew so powerful that they eventually supplanted the legitimate rulers and assumed regal status.

The origins of English municipal government are obscure but derive in part from the grant of royal charters conferring certain privileges on local communities, in particular, the right to administer the law in their own areas. In the Middle Ages, The Mayor's main role appears to have been as the principal local magistrate with wide powers of local administration and by the 17th Century, in many Boroughs, The Mayor had become an extremely important person.

In the 19th Century, the structure of local government was regulated by a number of legislative reforms and the position of The Mayor as Chairman of an elected and incorporated Council - was prescribed and restricted by statute.

In 1935 Finedon Urban District Council was abolished and incorporated to the Borough Council of Wellingborough.

Appendix 2

CIVIC INSIGNIA

Insignia

Insignia denotes physical accoutrements associated with the office of Mayor, the Chain and Badge of Office, Robe and the Mace.

Mayoral Robe and Cocked Hat

The Mayoral Robe and the Cocked Hat were presented to The Mayor (Councillor A W Northen) at the former Borough Council Meeting on 1st October, 1974 by Mr E Blake, on behalf of L Blake and Company Limited and by Mr R V Matcham of Gallay Limited.

The Mayoral Robe was made by Ede Ravenscroft of London and is described as follows:

- Scarlet superfine faced cloth
- Broad facings of choice Musquash fur
- Trimmed black velvet to sleeves and around hem
- Foreparts lined white art silk

The Cocked Hat was made by the same Company and is described as follows:

- Cocked Hat of art silk
- Complete with gold loop and netted button

There is a black overlay to cover the gold loop when the cocked hat is worn at funerals.

Chain of Office and Badge of The Mayor

The Mayor's Chain of Office is that previously worn by the Borough Council of Wellingborough's Mayor and previously by the Chairman of the Wellingborough Urban District Council. The was second Chain used by the Urban District

Council. It is of solid silver, Sheffield Hallmark, with Tudor Rose Enamel centre, manufactured by W F Knight Limited, Wellingborough 1966 - 67.



ARMS: *Sable on a Chevron between in chief two Leopard's Faces and in base a Garb Or five Fountains.*

CREST: *On a Wreath of the Colours issuant from Flames proper a demi Bull Sable armed unguled and supporting a Crosier Or pendant from the neck by a Riband Or an Escutcheon Argent charged with a Tudor Rose proper.*

Motto 'ASPICE RESPICE' - Look forward, look backward.

Granted 23rd August 1949 to the former Urban District Council. Following their dissolution, it sat unused until 2022 when it was granted to Wellingborough Town Council.

The black field is a reference to the industrial background of Wellingborough's life. The leopard's faces are from the lions of England and commemorate the frequent associations of the town with the Royal House — the confirmation of the Church to Croyland by William I; the devolution of the Wellingborough lands to the Crown at the dissolution of the monasteries; and the patronage of Wellingborough in 1628 by Charles I for the benefits of the chalybeate springs. The chevron is taken from the Hatton Arms, together with the sheaf, which also represents agriculture. The five heraldic fountains represent the five chief

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springs of the area, the Red, White, Stan, Bury Moor and Rising Sun Wells or springs.

The flames represent the Great Fire of 1738, and also the furnaces connected with the iron smelting industry. The black bull is from the arms of Northamptonshire County Council and refers also to the leather industry. The crosier refers to Croyland Abbey and the Tudor rose to the 16th century charters affecting the town, and also to Wellingborough School in whose arms it appears.

The motto is taken from the inscription over the old schoolhouse of 1620 and expresses the idea of progress directed by past experience.

The Mayor's Badge of Office, which attaches the Chain of Office is manufactured in silver gilt, decorated in enamel and set with eight amethyst jewels.

The Mace

The Mace was presented to The Mayor (Councillor John L H Bailey) at the former Borough Council Meeting on 5th October 1976 by Mr Christopher Weatherby of Weatherbys Limited.

It is constructed in hallmarked sterling silver throughout. The head consists of a polished sterling silver casting with open central area and affixed in this opening on both sides of the head are the full Coat of Arms of the former Borough Council of Wellingborough, carved in sterling silver and finished in parcel gilt. The tapered stem is constructed from sterling silver ribbed tube with the ribs finished alternately polished and matt. The stem of the mace is divided by a smaller piece of ribbed tube and the enlarged sterling silver barrel-shaped butt-cap is fitted with 2 applied sterling silver hand carved mounts. The base of the butt-cap is a plain disc suitable for engraving.

The Mace is contained in a polished mahogany case with a removable polished mahogany stand inside for display purposes on official occasions.

The Mace is a symbol of civic authority and is used only in formal processions, when it is carried by the Mace Bearer immediately in front of The Mayor, Mayoress/Consort and Chief Executive. The Mace is currently not in use, but when in use it is used at all Meetings of the Council and when the Council is in session is laid on the table in front of The Mayor.

Civic Plate

A small collection of silver and other items donated are stored at Swanspool House and the following: -

SILVER SALVER 16" Silver Waiter (Salver) of the Paul De Lamarie design. Presented to the Urban District Council on 21st January 1970 by the S W Wood Group Limited.

SILVER PLATED SILVER Presented by the Environmental Health Officers Association on 28th January 1975 to mark the Chairmanship of Mr A J Stroud, Borough Environmental Health Officer.

Base Metal (copper) silver plated engraved with vine leaf border.

SILVER JUBILEE BELL Presented by Councillor and Mrs G P Timms on 24th May 1977 to mark the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Bronze A1 silver plated with ebony handle, made by W F Knight Limited

SILVER FLAGON This silver flagon was originally presented by the townspeople of Wellingborough to the Wellingborough Corps of the Northamptonshire Rifle Volunteers in September 1877 to be competed for at their Annual Rifle Meeting. It has now been returned to the Borough of Wellingborough by The Royal Anglian Regiment to mark the granting of the Freedom of the Borough to the Regiment on 27th April 1985.

SILVER PUNCHBOWL AND LADLE

Presented by Councillor and Mrs John L Jessop, Mayor and Mayoress 1988/1989.

Distinguished Visitors Book

A Distinguished Visitors Book, presented by 3914 Abnron Squadron (SAC) of the United States Air Force, is maintained in The Mayor's Parlour, and distinguished visitors are asked to sign this when visiting the Borough.