

## Report on Mayoral Handbook

**Purpose:** To consider proposed changes to Mayoral Handbook

**Recommendation:** That Council agrees to the amendments in section 6.1 and 14.2 and reviews the limit set for non receipted expenditure.

### Background

The handbook was last reviewed in 2019, since then the number of civic functions has reduced significantly. With the retirement of the Assistant Clerk, it is important to clarify the amount of administration support that the Town Council office can offer.

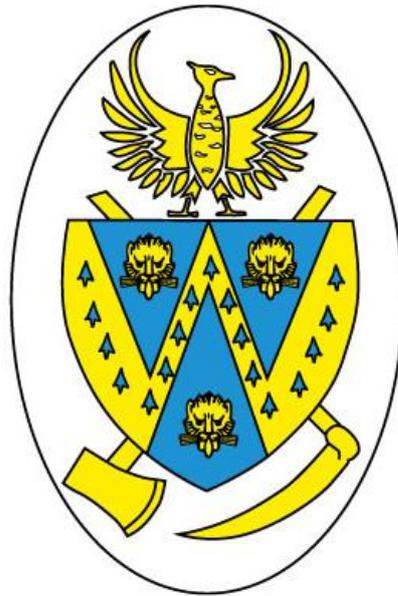
All proposed changes relate to section 6.1, 8 and section 14.2. The key changes are outlined below:

### Details of the support provided by the Amenities and Services Officer:-

- ~~Provide some day to day administrative support - remove as other items clarify admin support~~
- Deal with correspondence and draft letters, relating to civic matters, for the Mayor's signature.
- Manage the Mayor's civic diary.
- Receive and follow up invitations.
- Provide limited administrative support for the Mayor's charity events (if required) please note this does not include printing of tickets, designing of posters, production of seating plans or managing ticket sales.
- Advise on civic dress and protocols.
- While messages for the Mayor can be taken by the Town Council Office, the Office cannot undertake constituency work on behalf of the Mayor.
- Provisionally advise on acceptance of engagements.
- Provide and receive background information on events.
- Update the website in respect of Mayoral matters.
- Liaise with local press.
- Take into account the Mayor's well-being, safety and security.
- Organise civic functions in liaison with the Mayor.
- Issue invitations to civic functions.
- Provide such other support that is necessary and appropriate as approved by the Town Clerk.

### 8 Allowances

Non receipted expenditure - this is currently set at £20. The Town Council may consider increasing this to £25.



# Wem Town Council

## Mayoral Handbook

(amended 26.9.19)

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## 1.0 Introduction and Background

The Local Government Act 1972 gives Parish Councils the power to give themselves the title Town Council and the Chairman of such a Town Council is entitled to be called Town Mayor. The Mayor is the official representative of the Crown in the town, and consequentially takes precedence over everyone except the Queen (or the Lord Lieutenant) and the Chairman of the Unitary Council.

The Mayor, as the First Citizen of the town is the first person (after the Lord Lieutenant, if present) to speak to Royalty when they visit the town. They are then entitled to request leave to present other civic notabilities to the member of the Royal family.

In general, the Mayor should be prepared to take the lead in all matters of concern in the life of the town – e.g. an appeal, a welcome to a returning regiment etc. as well as leading civic events.

The Mayor should consider with care the acceptance of office for any local organisation during the year of office, although the acceptance of traditional posts (e.g. President, Vice-Chairmanship of long-standing organisations) is generally acceptable. The Mayor should seek the Town Clerk's advice if invited to take up such a role during their term of office.

## 2.0 Role of the Mayor

The Mayor is elected by the full Council at the Annual General Meeting in May and would ordinarily be the Member who has carried out the duties of Deputy Mayor for the previous year; a new Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting. The new Mayor makes the following declaration when accepting the term of office at the Annual General Meeting.

I.....having been elected to the office of Mayor of the Council of Wem (Town) in the county of Shropshire DECLARE that I will undertake office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgement and ability.

I undertake to observe the Code as to the Conduct which is expected of Members of the Council.

The Mayor's term in office is for one year and during this time the Mayor continues to be a member of the Town Council and presides over the meetings of the Town Council.

During the Civic year the Mayor supports a wide variety of events throughout the area. The Mayor receives invitations to all kinds of events and every invitation is considered equally. If the Mayor cannot attend a function the Deputy Mayor may attend on his/her behalf.

## 3.0 Mayor - Job Description - The Mayor is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the business of the Full Council is planned and managed effectively and transparently in the interests of the wider Council and the public.
- Ensuring that the plans and strategies that form the Council's Policy Framework are considered by the Council in a planned and co-ordinated manner.

- Ensuring that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community encouraging citizenship and participation in the life of the town.
- Has a vote as a 'normal' Councillor and a casting vote to ensure the resolution, in accordance with the Council's standing orders, of any disagreement within the Council particularly in respect of the budget and the policy framework.
- Presiding, as ceremonial head of the whole Council over its functions attending such civic, social and ceremonial functions as the Council requires.
- Receiving important visitors to Wem and welcome members of the Royal Family, dignitaries and visitors, observing civic protocol.
- Upholding and promoting the purposes of the Council's constitution, the interests of the wider Council and the public.
- Chairing meetings of the Town Council and enable its business to be carried out in an orderly and proper manner, having regard to statutory obligations and the Constitution of the Council for the conduct of meetings.
- Acting as signatory on official documents on behalf of the Council.
- To celebrate success, internal as well as external to the Town Council.
- The Mayor should give a report (ether verbal or written) on their activities during the month at the Town Council meeting. The Town Clerk should be informed in order that it may be placed on the agenda.
- The Mayor will report to the Council at the Annual Meeting the results of the charity appeal during the year and if possible make a presentation to the charity just prior to the end of the term of office.

#### **4.0 Mayoress/Consort/Escort**

- These roles are not recognised by law. The role of Mayoress was originally bestowed on the Mayor's wife. If the Mayor chooses to appoint a Consort, the role may be undertaken by a spouse, partner, friend or relative of either sex and is accorded precedence alongside the Mayor. It is generally understood that they will provide assistance as follows: -
- Personal support to the Mayor
- Accompany the Mayor on engagements
- Observance of civic protocol
- Support with Mayor's charities
- In carrying out their roles, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Mayoress, Consort, or Escorts, should consider the public nature of their office. Behaviour and manner will need to be appropriate at all times and not bring the Council into disrepute. They should follow the advice and guidance issued by the Town Council.

#### **5.0. Town Council's Expectation of the Mayor**

Local government must capture and retain the interest of local communities. To achieve this it is vital that the Mayor:

- Articulates aspirations, needs and priorities
- Assists in co-ordinating the Council's work with other organisations
- Helps to focus and shape the future work of such organisations
- Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in the area
- To act as a representative of the Community at joyous and tragic occasions.

The central role of the Mayor is as a representative for the Town Council, the community and local democracy. The Office of Mayor can be used to take into account the following factors:

- That the Town Council is here to provide services to the people of Wem
- That the Mayor takes a leading role to promote the Town Council's aims and objectives
- That the Mayor is the figurehead and public face of the Town Council in Wem
- That the Mayor welcomes visitors
- That the majority of the Mayor's activities should be in Wem
- That the Town Council resources used to raise funds for Charity should not be disproportionately high.

## 6.0 The Amenities and Services Officer

The Amenities and Services Officer 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.

Currently part of this officer's time is used in connection with the Mayor. This position involves, arranging a meeting with the new Mayor once elected at the Annual Meeting to arrange the Civic Year i.e. dates and venues of functions.

The Town Council receives invitations into the office for the Mayor and the Amenities and Services Officer liaises with the Mayor before accepting / declining invitations. A record is kept in the office of all events the Mayor is attending and the Mayor will always receive the original invitation for information and a copy will be held by the office.

If the Mayor is unsure of anything or requires some guidance, then this should first be raised with the Amenities and Services Officer or the Town Clerk who will provide the necessary information.

### 6.1 Details of the support provided by the Amenities and Services Officer:-

- ~~Provide some day to day administrative support~~
- Deal with correspondence and draft letters, relating to civic matters, for the Mayor's signature
- Manage the Mayor's civic diary
- Receive and follow up invitations

- Provide limited administrative support for the Mayor's charity events (if required) please note this does not include printing of tickets, designing of posters, production of seating plans or dealing with ticket sales.
- Advise on civic dress and protocols
- While messages for the Mayor can be taken by the Town Council Office, the Office cannot undertake constituency work on behalf of the Mayor
- Provisionally advise on acceptance of engagements
- Provide and receive background information on events
- Update the website in respect of Mayoral matters
- Liaise with local press
- Take into account the Mayor's well-being, safety and security
- Organise civic functions in liaison with the Mayor
- Issue invitations to civic functions
- Provide such other support that is necessary and appropriate as approved by the Town Clerk

## 6.2 Engagements

- All invitations should be sent to the Amenities and Services Officer via the Town Council Office.
- The Mayor should attend punctually (but not too early), and be ready to take their places at the appointed time, complete with chains if necessary.
- The Mayor should not attend commercial functions where his/her name might be used for advertising purposes, except in cases where they are clearly for the benefit of the Town.
- The wearing of chains or badges of office at functions organised by a Parish or Town Council and hosted by the respective Chairman or Town Mayor will, be a matter for the Chairman or Town Mayor to determine. Permission should be sought from the appropriate Parish or Town Council if the Mayor wishes to wear their chains at a non civic event outside of the Town.

## 7.0 Chosen Charities (amended 26.9.19)

Should they wish to the Mayor may choose to raise funds for local charities; it is up to the newly elected Mayor to decide on either one main charity to support or two or three local charities or good causes. The chosen charity will then be notified and all funds raised at the events held by the Mayor will be donated to the chosen charities. that a record of all funds raised and donated must be kept by the Mayor which shall be presented at the end of the Mayor's year in office.

Funds raised for the Mayors Charities cannot be used for any other purpose other than as a donation to the Charity identified except to cover all reasonable costs to raise the funds.

## 8.0 Allowances

Within the Precept the Mayor is set an allowance, the allowance is retained by the Town Council and the Mayor reimbursed for reasonable receipted expenditure incurred specifically as a result of the office of Town Mayor e.g.

- Cost of tickets to civic events within Shropshire and close neighbouring local authorities.
- Reasonable travel expenses to civic events within Shropshire and close neighbouring local authorities.
- Postage and stationary.
- Expenditure on civic events.
- Where the Deputy Town Mayor represents the Town Council, in the absence of the Town Mayor, they may draw down funding from the receipted element of the Town Mayor's allowance.

Payment of claims should generally be transacted at the Monthly meetings of the Town Council, all claims must be submitted at least quarterly. A receipt should accompany all expenditure claims however in recognition of the fact that it is sometimes difficult to obtain a receipt for smaller items of expenditure the Town Council will accept non-receipted expenditure up to the value of £20 provided that this is accompanied with a written explanation of why a receipt was not available.

Any unspent balances of the Mayor's allowance at the end of February (unless otherwise agreed) each year are paid to the Mayor via the Town Council's payroll and subject to Tax and NI.

A separate budget is set each year for hospitality costs at Civic Events.

It is the sole responsibility of the Mayor to plan out the year in office within these budgets. No increase will be given by the Council once the budget level has been reached and no payments or further orders can be placed by the Council.

## **9.0 Support of the Deputy Mayor**

The Member elected as Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year by representing the Town Council when the Mayor is unable to act or the office of Mayor is vacant.

- In the absence of the Mayor the Deputy is entitled to the Mayor's right of precedence but he/she does not wear the Mayor's chain or adopt the title of 'Mayor'.
- Official invitations to represent the Council are to be sent to the Amenities and Services Officer, Town Council offices. They will invariably be for the Mayor to attend but the Mayor may ask the Deputy to attend if he/she is unavailable. No invitation may be entertained if it is a direct invitation to the Deputy Mayor in that capacity. Mayor and Deputy can never both attend in an official capacity. Should a Deputy Mayor be present in another capacity at an event at which the Mayor is present, care should be taken to ensure that the Mayor as "First Citizen" is afforded clear and full precedence.
- The Deputy Mayor chairs meetings of the Council in the Mayor's absence.
- The Deputy Mayor has full legal status as a Vice-Chairman and should be given precedence immediately after the Mayor.

## **10.0 Precedence**

Inevitably, senior and prominent Members of County, Parish and Town Councils find themselves on a regular basis involved in civic, social, and ceremonial events and clear, agreed and settled rules of protocol will do much to minimise unnecessary misunderstanding which may arise from time to time.

- In the town the Mayor takes precedence over everyone except the Queen (or the Lord Lieutenant) and the Chairman of Shropshire Council including precedence over such dignitaries as Bishops or Archbishops of the Established Church.
- The Town Clerk may advise the Mayor on matters of precedence and the order of procession for those attending a particular function or civic event.
- The Local Government Act 1972 gives precedence to the Chairman of the Shropshire Council throughout the County. Local practice is that the Mayor of Wem is given precedence over the Chairman of Shropshire Council at town events and functions organised by the Town Council.
- When the Lord Lieutenant is visiting in his official capacity representing the Queen he/she has precedence over the Mayor. In procession, if the Lord Lieutenant is present he/she must be accompanied by the Mayor and at a civic service he/she would normally sit with the Mayoral Party. If the particular church service is not solely civic, he/she may prefer to be given a special seat and arrive last in the Church after the civic procession, and leave at the end of the service before the Mayor. If a Deputy Lieutenant is requested by the Lord Lieutenant to attend the function in his place, he/she should be accorded the precedence due to the Lord Lieutenant himself. On other occasions, the Deputy Lieutenants have no status as such, but they may be included in the Mayoral Party, placing them next after the Member of Parliament.
- The Town Clerk should accompany the Mayor at his right hand (or immediately behind if the Mayor is accompanied by the Lord Lieutenant or other guest accorded special precedence) on all ceremonial occasions.

## **11.0 Chains of Office**

- If the Mayor's Chain, Deputy Mayor's Chain or Badge of Office are to be worn outside the town, the Town Clerk must be advised and permission of the relevant Council obtained.

## **12.0 The general rules for wearing, chains and badges are:**

- Generally, if the Mayor is present at any event and wearing his chain of office the Deputy Mayor does not wear the Deputy Mayors chain of office. If the Mayor is not present at any function then the Deputy Mayor can wear his chain of office as long as he is attending in his capacity as Deputy Mayor.
- On the following occasions  
 Mayor's Civic Service  
 Remembrance Sunday  
 Armed Forces Day  
 Full Council Meetings  
 The Mayor wears Mayor's Chain and the Deputy Mayor may wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.

- In the interest of security chains and badges of office should not be visible in public areas except when worn on pre-arranged civic duties. A suitable over garment should be worn or the chain or badge carried in some secure manner.
- The Mayoress' chain can be worn by the Mayoress/Consort or other person officially accompanying the Mayor at civic events and functions.
- If another Councillor is asked to attend an event outside of the town that cannot be attended by either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, they may wear the Badge of Office.

## 12.1 Chain and Badge – Safe Custody Guidelines

The Council has agreed the following guidelines for the safekeeping of the Civic Regalia. You should read these carefully and adhere to them. If you have any doubts, please contact the Town Clerk.

## 12.2 Responsibilities:

### The Council will:

- Maintain insurance cover for all civic regalia under the Corporate 'All Risks' Insurance Policy;
- Be responsible for the maintenance of the regalia including any damage or wear and tear, etc. as set out in the exclusions section 2 to the Corporate all risks policy.

### The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will:

- Ensure the specific conditions of the Council Insurance are followed as outlined in the guidance below; and
- As far as is practical follow the other guidelines as to the safe custody of the regalia.

### Specific Conditions of the Insurance:

- The regalia **must not** be left in an unattended vehicle **unless** all the doors, windows and other means of access have been secured and locked and all keys of the vehicle removed to a place of safety **and** the regalia is placed in the boot of the vehicle or is otherwise out of sight.

### Other practical measures:

- The regalia, unless being worn, should be kept in the case provided by the Council.
- During any holiday periods or when it is likely that the member will be away from home, the regalia should be kept safely.
- The Mayor/ Deputy Mayor should normally only wear the regalia on arrival at a function.
- The regalia should not be left unattended in its case or roll.

- Members should not attempt to clean the regalia other than with a soft cloth. Any damage or wear and tear should be reported to the Town Clerk as soon as possible.
- Regalia should not be loaned or placed in the custody of any other person other than the Town Clerk
- The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should inform the Town Clerk immediately if their Chains of Office are lost, mislaid, stolen or otherwise missing in order that the Council's insurers can be informed.
- Whilst wearing the Chain of Office on walk-about engagements the Mayor must be accompanied.

### **13.0 Forms of Address**

- The formal forms of address are:
- for a man: "The Mayor of Wem, Councillor X"
- for a woman: "The Mayor of Wem, Councillor Miss/Mrs/Ms Y"
- in conversation or writing: "Mr Mayor" or "Madam Mayor"

### **14.0 Standard Functions For The Mayoral Year**

Within the precept there are budgets for the Mayor's functions listed below which are organised working within these budgets. All monies raised throughout the year at these events are for the nominated charity and can only be used for this purpose.

**14.1 Civic Service** – The Mayor's Civic Service is usually held in September and takes place at the Mayors designated church. The Amenities and Services Officer. will send out invitations to all those on the standard invitations list and will receive the replies. The collection from the service is donated/distributed to local charities in accordance with the wishes of the Mayor. A reception is held after the service usually in the Town Hall (which is provided free of charge). The cost of the refreshments for this event are reimbursed from the Town Council's hospitality budget up to a maximum of £750.

**14.2 Mayor's Civic Ball / Dinner / Fundraising Events** - The Mayor will decide the arrangements for the fundraising evening at a meeting with the Assistant Clerk. Where the venue, times, entertainment and ticket prices will be organised (The Town Hall will provide one evening a year free of charge for a Mayor's fundraising event). The Mayor will endeavour to avoid date clashes with other Mayors. The Mayor is responsible for booking the venue and organising the event.

**14.3 Honorary Townsman's Evening** – This award evening is usually held in November, the Mayor is expected to give a short welcoming address and provide the drinks for the evening which are funded from any remaining funds left in the hospitality budget after the Civic Service.

### **14.4 Invitation List**

Listed below is the standard invitation list for functions organised by the Mayor:

All Town Councillors + partners  
Unitary Councillors + partners  
Former Mayors of Wem + partners  
All Mayors of other Councils in Shropshire + partners  
Honorary Townsmen of Wem  
Headteachers of local schools  
Representatives from RAF Shawbury  
Representatives from Local Organisations  
Members of the Clergy  
Police  
Chairman and Leader of Shropshire Council  
Member of Parliament for Wem  
High Sheriff of Shropshire  
Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire

The Mayor may wish to add family and friends to the above list and it is helpful to have this list at the commencement of the Mayors year in office.

## **14.5 Donations**

To enable the Mayor to raise funds for local charities, the Mayor may contact local businesses to donate prizes to be used on raffles etc.

## **15.0 Receiving Gifts**

The Mayor/ Deputy Mayor should treat with extreme caution any offer of gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them. The person or organisation making the offer may be doing, or seeking to do, business with the Council or may be applying to the Council for planning permission or some other kind of decision.

There are no hard or fast rules about the acceptance or refusal of hospitality or tokens of goodwill. For example, working lunches may be a proper way of doing business, provided that they are approved by the Town Council and that no extravagance is involved. Likewise, it may be reasonable for a member to represent the Council at a social function or event organised by outside persons and bodies.

The Mayor/ Deputy Mayor is personally responsible for all decisions connected with the acceptance or offer of gifts or hospitality and for avoiding the risk of damage to public confidence in local government. A good guide is that gifts of more than a nominal value should be accepted on behalf of the Council and not retained personally. Whilst, under the local scheme relating to the Code of Conduct and Declaration of Hospitality which was adopted by the Council, the Mayor is not obliged to declare gifts and hospitality, for reasons of transparency. The Mayor/ Deputy Mayor should be recommended to declare gifts and hospitality over an estimated value of £25.00. Such gifts or hospitality may also still need to be declared as "Code of Conduct" interests at meetings.

Generally minor tokens of goodwill or flowers can be accepted as personal gifts. The code of conduct also states:

"A member must within 28 days of receiving any gift or hospitality over the value of £25, provide written notification to the Authority's Monitoring Officer of the existence and nature of that gift or hospitality."

Advice on gifts and hospitality can be obtained from ... (Monitoring Officer) or ... (Deputy Monitoring Officer)".

The Amenities and Services Officer can arrange for letters of thanks to be issued.

## **16.0 Flag Flying**

The flying of flags may be governed by the Flag Flying Policy but guidelines are adhered to for the following:

### **Occasions on which flags may be flown at half- mast**

- From the announcement of the death until after the funeral of the Sovereign,
- except on Proclamation Day when they are hoisted right up.
- The funerals of members of the Royal Family, subject to special commands from Her Majesty in each case.
- The funerals of Prime Ministers and Ex-Prime Ministers of Great Britain.
- Other occasions' by special command of Her Majesty.
- On the death of the Mayor or Mayoress' from the announcement of the death until after the funeral.
- On the death of :-
  - An Honorary Townsman
  - A Councillor or an ex Councillor
  - A Former Mayor

## **17.0 Neutrality**

The convention has been that during the Mayoral Year, the Mayor reduces his or her political profile. Mayors generally go out of their way to display their even-handedness in political matters during the year. It would be inappropriate for an individual to be associated with a contentious issue or election process, which confuses roles. The Mayor should also maintain this apolitical role when chairing Council meetings.

## **18.0 Election Purdah**

Special conditions apply to the issue of publicity in the period leading up to elections. During the period of six weeks or so leading up to an election, the Council must take special care not to issue any publicity that might conceivably be perceived as having the potential to influence the outcome of the poll. Details can be found in the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Local Government Act 1986 and the Local Authority Publicity Code of Recommended Practice published in 2001. To ensure compliance with the various Acts and Publicity Code, the Council therefore enters a period of Purdah in the six weeks leading up to an election where it will avoid issuing any publicity in the name of or associated directly with any Councillor.

The Mayor is strongly advised to ensure the dates of major Civic events are arranged to ensure there is no conflict with the Purdah period.

## **19.0 Training**

A number of training courses will be available which may be helpful to the Mayor and the Town Clerk can arrange attendance. Suggestions are:

25.4.24

## Agenda item 10 Mayoral Handbook Review

- Chairing Skills
- Public Speaking and Speech Writing
- Dealing with the Media”

### **20.0 Security**

The Mayor may be away from home for much of the Mayoral Year and is advised to consider home security arrangements, particularly considering the Mayor's diary of engagements being in the public domain. Further information is available in Millward's Civic Ceremonial which can be loaned from the Town Council office.