

SOUTHAM TOWN COUNCIL Mayor's Protocol



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INTRODUCTION

This Mayor's Protocol booklet has been produced to assist the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor to understand their roles and responsibilities and provide some useful information, which may be of assistance when undertaking the civic role.

The Mayor's Protocol also assists Mayors and Council staff to apply a consistent approach when dealing with issues connected to the civic function.

The object of the information is to try and ensure that the civic year runs as smoothly as possible. Not all eventualities will be covered by this booklet but remember that assistance is always available at the Council Offices.

BACKGROUND

Town Mayor

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 a Town Council is entitled to the style of 'Town Mayor'. A Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as a local Council Chairman.

The Councillor becoming Mayor

Being the Mayor is different from being a Councillor. A Mayor, by virtue of the Office, can use their decision to stimulate community pride, encourage business, promote the voluntary sector and mould social cohesion.

A Mayor may also have many meetings with dignitaries, evening engagements, late nights, early mornings and is in the public eye for the whole year. With this in mind, the Mayor will need to exhibit a keen and genuine interest in those they meet, show enthusiasm and commitment to the role, ensure that they are non-party political when on civic duty, speak up for the town's interests and always be mindful of the dignity of the Office.

The Mayor is elected by Southam Town Council at the Annual Town Council Meeting in May in accordance with Standing Orders, Standing Orders can be suspended by resolution of the council if the Standing Orders criteria cannot be met. Unless they have ceased to be a Councillor, the Deputy Mayor automatically becomes the Mayor should they wish to, at the next Annual Town Council meeting. A new Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting.

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. A Councillor can be Town Mayor for more than one year and consecutive years by resolution of the council

The Mayor will choose their 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 they accompany them on civic engagements.

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

The Mayor also has a number of statutory functions which are set out below:

- To Chair the Southam Town Full Council meeting.
- In the event of a tie, take the casting vote
- Ensure, together with the Town Clerk, that the Council makes legal decisions
- Ensure the agenda is followed correctly

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR THE MAYOR

Day to day support is provided by the Deputy Clerk who is the Mayor's Secretary, under the general direction of the Town Clerk. Regular meetings are held with the Mayor. All correspondence is organised by the Mayor's Secretary.

MAYOR'S CHARITY

The Mayor may appoint a charity or charities to support during their time in office. Charity events vary with individual Mayors and donations may be requested from local businesses to support the fundraising. Funds raised for the designated charities cannot be used for any other purpose other than as a donation to the charity identified when the funds were raised, save for covering all reasonable costs to raise the funds. At the end of the Mayoral Year all funds remaining in the Mayoral Bank account will be split between the designated charities

MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE

An allowance can be given 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:

- Clothing
- Consort's clothing
- Donations to charities
- Collections
- Personal hospitality (including lunches and dinners)
- 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 budget contains provision for certain civic events including Remembrance Sunday, Civic Sunday and receiving Civic visitors. 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.

ROLE OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR

The Councillor elected as Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year by representing the Council when the Mayor is unable to attend. If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting, the Deputy Mayor must preside.

CIVIC INSIGNIA AND REGALIA

The Mayor's chain and badge of Office are the outward signs of the civic office held. This should not be worn at the civic insignia in another capacity without express permission from the Council.

PRECEDENCE AND PROTOCOL

It is suggested that 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, except for Royal visits.

RECEIPT OF GIFTS

In the course of the term of Office, gifts may be offered to the Mayor. It is suggested that all Councillors should treat with extreme caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally.

Standing Orders require Councillors, including Mayors, to register any gifts or hospitality that are received in connection with their official duties as a Councillor, and the source of the gift or hospitality. Any gifts or hospitality offered, whether accepted or declined, with an estimated value of £50 or above must be declared. There is a separate form to complete for this, which will be supplied by the Monitoring Officer on request.

The Mayor's Public Register of Members' Interest would need to be updated, it is covered under the Code of Conduct

You must register the gift or hospitality and its source with the Clerk within 28 days of receipt. Be aware that this will now be considered a personal interest- if a matter under consideration is likely to affect a person who gave you a gift or hospitality that is now registered.

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 Deputy Clerk at the beginning of each new year to suit the Mayor's diary.

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 Southam, the meeting is chaired by the Mayor. The meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June each year and is generally held at The Grange Hall.

Remembrance Sunday

Remembrance Sunday is held on the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of Armistice Day which is on November 11th at 11am. The parade is organised by the Town Council in conjunction with the Royal British Legion. The Mayor is always invited to the service and will lay a wreath on behalf of Southam Town Council in memory of those men and women who gave their lives for their country. The Mayor is also invited to lay a wreath on Armistice day.

Civic Service

The Mayor can choose to hold a Civic Service. It is generally held in September at St James' Church.

Civic Dinner

Civic dinners can be held at the discretion of the Mayor

Award of Merit Evening

The Award of Merit Evening to celebrate the achievements of individuals and organisations throughout the year in Southam. The awards are nominated by Councillors during the year which are then considered by the Mayor, nominations are resolved by the end of March. These are then awarded as part of the Mayor Making meeting at the end of May.

END OF MAYORAL YEAR

At the Annual Town Council Meeting (Mayor Making), which notes the end of the Mayor's Term of Office, the outgoing Mayor can make a short speech of thanks.

The new Mayor will present the previous Mayor with a Past Mayor's badge. This meeting is then adjourned for refreshments.

1. STANDING ORDERS - ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR AND DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

- 1.1 No member of the Council shall be considered for election to the office of Town Mayor until that person has completed four consecutive years' service ending on the date of the election of Town Mayor as a member of the Council.
- 1.2 No member of the Council shall be considered for appointment to the office of Deputy Town Mayor until that person has completed three consecutive years' service ending on the date of appointment of Deputy Town Mayor as a member of the Council.
- 1.3 The person elected as Town Mayor shall be the person who was appointed Deputy Town Mayor at the immediately preceding Annual Meeting of the Council, provided that this person has not ceased to be a member of the Council.
- 1.4 If the application of Standing Orders 1.1 and 1.2 results in no member qualifying for election then the member elected as Town Mayor or appointed as Deputy Town Mayor as the case may be shall be on the basis of seniority of continuous service (ending on the date of election of Town Mayor or appointment of Deputy Town Mayor) as a member of the Council.
- 1.5 If the application of Standing Order 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 results in more than one member of the Council qualifying for election then the eldest by age shall be elected as Town Mayor or appointed Deputy Town Mayor as the case may be.
- 1.6 No person shall be eligible for election to the office of Town Mayor, if:
 - a) he/she shall have been so appointed to that office at the immediately preceding Annual meeting of the Council; or
 - b) previously he/she shall have held that office and there be members of the Council eligible for election under Standing Order 1.1 above; or
 - c) previously he/she shall have held that office for more than one term and there be members of the Council eligible who have held that office for a lesser number of terms.