



LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

CIVIC PROTOCOL

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Civic Protocol 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.
- 1.2 The Civic Protocol also assists Mayors and Council staff to apply a consistent approach when dealing with issues connected to the Civic function.
- 1.3 The object of the information is to try and ensure that the Civic year runs as smoothly as possible.
- 1.4 Not all eventualities will be covered by this protocol and assistance is always available from the Town Clerk.

2. **Background**

- 2.1 **Town Mayor:** Section 245 (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 gives 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 title of 'Town Mayor'.
- 2.2 A Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as a local Council Chair.
- 2.3 **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, mould social cohesion etc.
- 2.4 A Mayor may also have many meetings with dignitaries, endless engagements, late nights, early mornings and is in the public eye for virtually the whole year. With this in mind, the Mayor needs to exhibit a keen and genuine interest in those they meet, show enthusiasm and commitment to the role, ensure they are non-party political, speak up for the town's interests and always be mindful of the dignity of the Office.
- 2.5 For those chosen, or who are thinking of putting themselves forward for selection, one thing is clear - being Mayor is most different from being a Councillor, as it has different roles, different hours, different restraints etc. However, it is also most probably a hugely enjoyable and rewarding role if entered into in the right spirit.
- 2.6 The Mayor is elected by Ledbury Town Council at the Annual Town Council Meeting in May. A new Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting.

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 The Mayor will choose their own consort who can be either a spouse/partner, fellow Councillor, family member or friend. If the consort is female, she is often referred to as the Mayoress. The consort should be given equivalent respect and dignity whenever they accompany the Mayor on Civic engagements.
- 2.9 When representing Ledbury 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 Ledbury 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.
- 2.10 The Mayor also has a number of statutory functions as set out below:
- If present at a Full Ledbury Town Council meeting, the Mayor must chair the meeting;
 - The Mayor has a casting vote in the event of a tied vote;
 - The Mayor should ensure, in consultation with the Town Clerk, that all decisions taken by the Council are legal;
 - The Mayor has a duty to ensure the agenda is followed correctly when chairing meetings;

3. Support for the Mayor

- 3.1 Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by a member of staff under the general direction of the Town Clerk.
- 3.2 All correspondence for the Mayor is kept in the town council office.

4. Mayor's Charity

- 4.1 The Mayor may appoint a charity/charities to support during their time in office.
- 4.2 Funds raised for the Mayor's charities cannot be used for any other purpose other than as a donation to the charity/charities identified when the funds were raised, except to cover all reasonable costs to raise the funds
- 4.3 A dedicated member of staff will maintain a balance sheet of funds coming in and going out of the Mayor's Charity Account, which will be a separate account from that of the Council's bank accounts.

5. Mayor's allowance

- 5.1 The Mayor may be paid an allowance to meet the expenses of their office it is commonly described as recompense for the expenses of maintaining the dignity of the Office.

6. Support by Deputy Mayor

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

7. Civic insignia and Regalia

- 7.1 The Mayor's chain and badge of office are the outward signs of the Civic Office held. The Mayor should not wear the Civic insignia/regalia in another capacity or another area without express permission from the Council.
- 7.2 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.

8. Precedence and Protocol

- 8.1 It is suggested that Town Mayors should be addressed as 'Mr/Madam Mayor'. **NB** - a female Mayor is not a Mayoress.
- 8.2 Precedence and protocol for visits and events is often set by custom and practice, with the exception of Royal visits.
- 8.3 The Town Clerk will be able to offer further advice and assistance on these matters.

9. Receipt of Gifts

- 9.1 In the course of the duty of being Mayor, often gifts will 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.
- 9.2 The Code of Conduct requires Councillors, including Mayors, to register any gifts or hospitality worth £25 or over that are received in connection with their official duties as a Councillor, and the source of the gift or hospitality.

9.3 You must 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.

9.4 If in doubt, consult the Town Clerk.

10. The Civic Year - Events

10.1 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 Mayor's Secretary at the beginning of each new year to suit the Mayor's diary.

10.1.1 **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 Ledbury, the meeting is organised and chaired by the Mayor and can adopt any format.

The meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June each year and the venue is open to discussion.

10.1.2 **Civic or Mayor's Service:** A celebration or service of the Mayor's choosing which showcases the Mayor's interests and highlights particular aspects of the Ledbury community chosen by the Mayor.

The mayors of all the Herefordshire market towns and towns local to Ledbury in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire are invited, as are the county civic dignitaries and the Chairman of Herefordshire Council. Representatives of local community groups, schools and of HMS Ledbury are also invited.

A reception is usually held for invited guests before or after the service/celebration depending of the time of day arranged for the event.

10.1.3 **October/Mop Fair:** The annual autumn street fair granted permission within Ledbury's Market Charter. Held in the streets of the town centre on the 2nd Mon-Tue of October.

The Mayor hosts a reception at the Town Council Offices for the Rogers Family and for invited Mayors of the Herefordshire Market Towns and towns local to Ledbury in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. The Mayor's guests parade accompanied by the Town Cryer to officially open the fair and to sample the rides

- 10.1.4 **Remembrance Sunday:** Remembrance Sunday is held on the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of Armistice Day which is on 11 November 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 Ledbury Town Council in memory of those men and women who gave their lives for their country.

A document containing guidelines and a summary of the event can be provided by the Clerk.

11. **Mayor's End of Year**

- 11.1 At the Annual Town Council Meeting, which denotes the end of the Mayor's Term of Office, the outgoing Mayor can make a short speech of thanks.
- 11.2 The new Mayor will also present the previous Mayor with a Past Mayor's badge.

