



# YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

## CIVIC GUIDE

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**Town Clerk**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This Civic Guide has been produced to assist the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, their escorts/consorts, Councillors and employees to understand the civic roles and responsibilities of the Mayoralty and provide useful information for when undertaking a Civic Role.

## 2 THE ROLE OF THE MAYOR

### 2.1 Background

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 the Town Council the title of 'Town Mayor'.

The Mayor is elected by the Full Council at the Annual Town Council Meeting (Mayor Making) in May. A Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting. The new Mayor and Deputy Mayor each make the following declaration when accepting the Term of Office.

*"I, ....., having been elected to the Office of Mayor of Yeovil Town, declare that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgement and ability."*

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office is signed by both the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor and is witnessed by the Town Clerk.

The Mayor is the representative of the Crown in the Town and as such is the First Citizen of the Town.

### 2.2 The Role of the Mayor as Chair of the Council

A Mayor has the same rights and duties as a Local Council Chair. The Mayor is the Chair of the Town Council and is a member by virtue of being elected to the Office of Mayor (ex officio) of all Council Committees. As Chairman of the Town Council the Mayor may exercise a casting vote in addition to their ordinary vote in decision making by the Full Town Council but otherwise has no additional formal powers to those of other Councillors.

The Mayor will concentrate on representing the whole Town of Yeovil during their term of office whilst maintaining an appropriate and active role in their ward.

The Mayor will act as the principal ambassador for the Town. The Mayor can expect to be asked for public statements concerning Town Council policies and actions. Any statements given should reflect the agreed policy of the Town Council rather than individual or party-political views. The Town Clerk is available for advice on any aspect of Town Council policy. On occasion, the Mayor may need to make it clear whether they are speaking as Mayor, as a Councillor or in a personal capacity to avoid confusion.

### 2.3 The Civic Role of the Mayor

The office of Mayor of Yeovil is respected and held in high regard by the community because of its service to the community and the dignified behaviour of the successive Mayors and Deputy Mayors. A Mayor, by virtue of the Office, can use their position to stimulate community pride, encourage business, promote the voluntary sector and mould social cohesion. The Mayoralty can also be a front-

line focus for the expression of community concerns. The Town Clerk will support and advise the Mayor.

A Mayor will also have many meetings, some with dignitaries, numerous engagements and is the public eye for virtually the whole year. With this 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.

For those chosen, or who are thinking about putting themselves forward for selection it is essential to discuss this with employers and family in advance of accepting the office.

### **3 INVITATIONS AND EVENTS**

Invitations are received from a wide variety of organisations to meetings and events within the Town and outside.

Invitations are considered on their own merits and should be ranked in order of priority:

- State occasions
- Invitations and events within the Town
- Invitations and events within South Somerset District
- Invitations within Somerset
- Other events

The Town Clerk will advise where there is a clash of events or any other issue concerning engagements.

All engagements are arranged through the Town Council office through the Mayors PA. Where the Mayor is approached personally concerning an official Mayoral event, they must advise that contact through the Town Council must be made, either by telephoning, emailing ([mayor@yeovil.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@yeovil.gov.uk)) or writing.

All engagements are reported to Town Council to ensure public accountability and openness.

Neither the Mayor nor Deputy Mayor or any other Councillor must solicit engagements or visits or otherwise obtain favours by virtue of office.

The Mayor should not accept engagements that coincide with Town Council meetings. These engagements should be offered to the Deputy Mayor. If neither the Mayor, nor the Deputy Mayor is available, then the engagement should be offered to the Chair of Policy, Resources and Finance, if this is acceptable to the organisation issuing the invitation.

### **4 MAYOR/DEPUTY MAYOR'S ATTENDANCE PRO FORMA**

A copy of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor's Attendance Pro Forma (Appendix A) is sent out to organisers that have invited the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to attend their function. The information returned provides the necessary information to attend, including function details, the dress code and whether a speech is required. If the pro forma is not completed, the Mayor's PA will contact the organisation to confirm.

## **5 MAYORESS AND CONSORT**

The Mayor may signify an official Mayoress or Consort at the Annual Mayor Making. The Mayoress or Consort maybe a spouse/partner, fellow Councillor, family member or friend. The Mayoress/Consort will accompany the Mayor on engagements but other than that has no other civic role and must not undertake engagements alone.

## **6 MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN**

The Mayor may signify a recognised minister of religion to act as Mayor's Chaplain at the Annual Mayor Making. The Chaplain may be invited to provide spiritual support to the Mayor and Council and to act as the religious lead on certain civic occasion such as Remembrance Sunday.

## **7 MAYOR'S CADET**

The Mayor may signify young people to act as Mayor's Cadets at the Annual Mayor Making. The Cadet(s) will accompany the Mayor at certain official functions when invited to do so. The Mayor should provide the cadet with a description of their roles and responsibilities. At the conclusion of the year of office, it is customary for an outgoing Mayor to present the cadet(s) with a small token of thanks.

## **8 MACE BEARER**

The Mace Bearer provides assistance and advice to the Mayor. The Mace Bearer is subject to their own set of rules and must adhere to the guidance within "The Official Handbook of the Guild of Mace Bearers". This handbook supersedes any information held within this Civic Guide unless otherwise advised by the Town Clerk.

## **9 CIVIC REGALIA**

Official chains and badges of office are normally worn for civic engagements within the Town. Permission for the Mayor to wear the chain must be requested if an engagement is in another Town or Parish. Invitations should specify the regalia to be worn. In any case of doubt, clarification on the most appropriate regalia must be sought with the event hosts.

Chains of Office will normally be worn in public places where the Mayor is accompanied by the Mace Bearer. The Mace Bearer under the direction of the Town Clerk is responsible for the Chains of Office.

The maintenance and security of the civic regalia is the responsibility of the Mace Bearer under the direction of the Town Clerk.

Guidance on wearing the chain and badge of office and other items of regalia is set out beneath:

| <b>Item of Regalia</b>                     | <b>Guidance on wearing them</b>  |
|--|--|
| Mayors Chain and Badge of Office           | The Mayor can wear the chain and badge of office in both public and private places.  |
| Mayoress'/Consort's Chain and Badge        | The Mayoress/Consort will only wear the chain when accompanying the Mayor  |
| Deputy Mayors Badge of Office              | The Deputy Mayor can the badge of office in both public and private places.  |
| Deputy Mayoress' Chain and Badge of Office | May be worn when accompanying the Deputy Mayor   |
| Past Mayor's Badge                         | May be worn at civic events when the Mayor is present and at other occasions when clearly indicated on the invitation or notification. |
| The Mace                                   | Carried by the Mace Bearer before the Mayor at certain events. Placed in front of the Mayor at meeting of Town Council.                |

The Town Clerk will provide further guidance if required.

The Council provides insurance cover for the regalia and robes. The chains and badges should be kept locked away between engagements and overnight in the safe at Town House unless other secure arrangements have been agreed with the Town Clerk. Where secure arrangements are situated in the individuals' home, it is the Mayor's and/or Deputy Mayor's responsibility to inform their insurance provider. During any holiday period or where it is likely that the Mayor or Deputy Mayor will be away from home for a long period of time, the chains should be returned to Town House and locked in the safe.

The Council will be responsible for the maintenance of the regalia and robes, including any damage or wear and tear. However, any damage should be reported to the Town Clerk as soon as possible.

The Mace is a ceremonial item and a symbol of the Mayor's authority. The Mace indicates that the Mayor is present in their official capacity. The Mace immediately precedes the Mayor on all official occasions to represent their authority as delegated from the Crown. The Mace Bearer carries the mace over their right shoulder, they walks in front of the Mayor and no one (except a member of the Royal family) must come between the mace and the Mayor. The Mace Bearer should attend any engagement when the Mayor is adorned in the robes and chain.

The Mace is used at official ceremonies, such as Mayor Making and also at Town Council meetings. If the Monarch is present, the Mace is reversed, which signifies that the Mayor is surrendering the token of their power. When the Mayor is seated the Mace rests horizontally before them with the crown end to their right hand or in the more important direction. Should the Mayor occupy a pew in a church the crown of the Mace should be towards the altar.

At the Annual General Meeting, during the ceremony for the election of the Mayor, the outgoing Mayor, after being handed the mace by the Mace Bearer, then hands it to the newly installed Mayor thus publicly displaying the transfer of office.

There may be occasion where the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor attends events out of the country, for example with Yeovil Twinning Association. If the Mayor or Deputy Mayor intends to take the regalia out of the Country, for the purposes of insurance they must inform the Town Clerk. In addition, the

Town Clerk will supply the Mayor or Deputy Mayor with a letter of authorisation on behalf of the Council.

## 10 MAYORAL SUPPORT

Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by the Mayor's PA under the direction of the Town Clerk. The exact nature and extent of support and processes will be agreed with the Town Clerk. The Mayor may expect all diary arrangements and processes to support them in undertaking duties.

The Mayor's PA will be responsible for keeping the Mayoral engagement diary and liaison between the events host and Town Council. The Mayor must refer and agree all such matters with the Town Council office to avoid confusion concerning event arrangements.

If the Mayor is unable to accept an invitation then it may be passed to the Deputy Mayor and then the Chair of Policy, Resources and Finance (if this is acceptable to the inviting organisation).

Once an invitation has been properly accepted it should not be cancelled unless absolutely necessary.

All correspondence for the Mayor is kept in Town House; it will be opened by Officers (alongside all other mail) and belongs to the Town Council. Items addressed in error to former Mayors will be redirected by the Town Clerk to the current Mayor. Personal invitations and correspondence to former Mayors will be forwarded as appropriate.

## 11 EVENTS

### 11.1 Civic Events

The Mayor is expected to attend the following Civic Events:

|                    | <b>When</b>               | <b>Robes?</b>                   | <b>Councillors to attend *</b>   |
|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mayor Making       | May                       | ✓                               | ✓<br>Mandatory - smart dress     |
| Civic Service      | June / July               | ✓                               | ✓<br>Mandatory - smart dress     |
| Clergy Tea Party   | Mayor's choice            | x                               | x                                |
| Armistice Day      | 11 <sup>th</sup> November | x                               | ✓<br>Discretionary – smart dress |
| Remembrance Sunday | Second Sunday of November | ✓<br>not at Cemetery war graves | ✓<br>Mandatory - smart dress     |
| Civic Day          | Mayor's choice            | x                               | x                                |
| Civic Evening      | Mayor's choice            | x                               | ✓<br>Discretionary – smart dress |

|                        | <b>When</b>                                      | <b>Robes?</b>     | <b>Councillors to attend *</b>   |
|------------------------|--|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| St George's Day Parade | April – Sunday closest to 23 <sup>rd</sup> April | ✓<br>If requested | ✓<br>Discretionary – smart dress |
| Freedom of the Town    | As requested by RNAS Yeovilton                   | ✓                 | ✓<br>Mandatory - smart dress     |
| Wells Cathedral        | As per invitation                                | ✓                 | x                                |

*\* Councillors should contact the Town Clerk if they require clarification on dress code.*

Only in extenuating circumstances should the Deputy deputise for the Mayor, the Town Clerk will advise.

If a member of the Royal family visit Yeovil, specific instructions will be circulated by the Town Clerk.

The protocol to mark the death of a senior member of the Royal family will be actioned as appropriate.

## **11.2 Other Events**

The Mayor is expected to attend the following events:

|  | <b>When</b>               | <b>Robes?</b> | <b>Councillors to attend *</b>                 |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|--|
| Super Saturday                                       | September                 | x             | ✓<br>Discretionary - Volunteers (casual dress) |
| Mayor's Ball   | Last Saturday of November | x             | ✓<br>Discretionary – black tie/formal wear     |
| Town Crier's Competition                             | April                     | x             | ✓<br>Discretionary – smart dress               |
| Yeovil College University Centre Graduation Ceremony | December                  | ✓             | x  |
| Christmas Lights Switch On                           | November                  | ✓             | ✓<br>Discretionary – smart warm dress          |

*\* Councillors should contact the Town Clerk if they require clarification on dress code.*

## **12 MAYOR'S CHARITIES**

The Mayor should give some consideration to the charity or charities they propose to support in their Mayoral year. The choice is left to the discretion of the Mayor but tends to be a local based charity. The Mayor may identify the charity or charities of their choice at the Annual Mayor Making.

## **13 MAYORAL ALLOWANCE**

The Local Government Act 1972 allows for the Mayor to be paid an allowance to meet the expenses of their term in office. The Town Council sets the budget for the Mayoral allowance during its budget setting process and is the responsibility of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee. The Mayoral Allowance is separate from the Councillors Basic Allowance

The provision of the Mayoral Allowance is to allow any Councillor to be able to be Mayor regardless of personal financial circumstances and to allow each Mayor to fulfil the duties of the role with dignity.

General items of appropriate expenditure may include (but not be limited to):

- Clothing for civic representatives to be worn at events
- Donations to charities and collection
- Tickets for events
- Hospitality provided by the Mayor
- Travel to engagements and subsistence
- Appropriate gifts and/or cards.

The Mayoral Allowance is paid to the Mayor in instalments over the year, with heavier weighting to the earlier months of the municipal year to fund expenditure for Civic Events such as Mayor Making and Civic Service. The Mayor will set up a bank account specifically for Mayoral expenditure and the Mayor's Allowance shall be paid directly into this account.

For purposes of transparency, the Mayor must maintain a spreadsheet expenditure, which is reconciled to the Mayor's Bank Account on a quarterly basis by the Mayor and Town Clerk. A summary of expenditure will be produced and reported back to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee following the end of the municipal year. Any donations for the Mayor's Charities are asked to be made Payable to Yeovil Town Council and any cash donations are paid immediately to the office at Yeovil Town Council.

## **14 DEPUTY MAYOR**

The Councillor elected as Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year and will represent the Council when asked to do so.

If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting the Deputy Mayor must preside if present. The Mace is never carried in front of the Deputy Mayor. In this instance, the mace is placed before the meeting starts and collected when the meeting is finished.

The Deputy Mayor has no standing in that role when the Mayor is present but assumes the precedence and standing of the Mayor when deputising for the Mayor.

## **15 MAYOR'S END OF YEAR**

At the Annual Town Council which denotes the end of the Mayor's Term of Office, the custom is to invite the outgoing Mayor to make a short speech as response to a vote of thanks for their services during the year. This normally comprises a short review of their period office, thanks to the

organisation and people of Yeovil who extended hospitality and have worked with the Mayor and Town Council during the year and to any other supported.

The new Mayor will present the previous Mayor with a Past Mayor's badge.

Retired Mayors are encouraged to help incoming Mayors to familiarise themselves in the role.

## **16 MAYORS AWARD**

Every year the Mayor will award an individual or an organisation who provides a worthwhile service to the community. The recipient(s) of this award will receive a silver salver as a token of recognition and thanks on behalf of the Mayor and the Town. Their name will also be added to the Mayor's Award Roll of Honour.