



# DOVER TOWN COUNCIL

## Civic Guide

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A copy of this document is also available in large print please contact the office if this is required.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Civic Guide has been produced to assist the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, their escorts/consorts and Councillors to understand the civic roles and responsibilities of the Mayoralty and provide useful information, which may be of assistance when undertaking a Civic role.

The Mayor of Dover serves, represents and leads the community of the Town. The first Mayor of Dover took office in 1086, over 1000 years ago and is a position of honour and respect within the Town.

The role of the Town Council and the Mayoralty is constantly evolving and changing. Over recent years there has been increased public scrutiny of the Mayoral role and assessment

Where there are references to the Mayor and Mayoress/Consort in this Guide these also apply to the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress/Consort

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Further information can be found in:

The Good Councillors Guide  
Civic Ceremonial

All available from the Council Offices

### **3 The Role Of Mayor**

#### **3.1 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 Chairman 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 the Deputy each make the following declaration when accepting the Term of Office

*"I.....having been elected to the Office of Mayor/Deputy Mayor for Dover Town Council, hereby declare that I take the said Office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties thereof according to the best of my knowledge and ability.*

*I undertake to observe the Code as to the conduct which is expected of Members of Dover Town Council"*

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

#### **3.2 Ambition Plan**

The Town Council's Ambition Plan 2011-15 includes the following which particularly relate to the Mayoralty;

Deliver: The Mayor to continue to be the Town's Ambassador in Dover and Beyond"

#### **3.3 The Role of the Mayor as Chairman of the Council**

A Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as a Local Council Chairman. The Town Mayor is the Chairman 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 Town 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 community of Dover during their term of office while maintaining an appropriate and active role in their ward.

When present at a meeting of the Full Town Council the Mayor will chair the meeting in accordance with Standing Orders. As Chairman of the Council the Mayor is expected to act as the leader of the elected Councillors, ensure fair debate and decision making and to promote good working relationships between all members of the Council to enable Council decisions to effectively reflect the wishes of the community.

The Mayor will act as an ambassador for the Town. The Mayor can expect to be asked for public statements concerning Town Council policies and actions. As Mayor the statements should reflect the agreed policy of the Town Council rather than individual or party political views. The Town Clerk or Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is available to provide a briefing on any aspect of Town Council policy. On occasion the Mayor may need to make it very clear whether s/he is speaking as Mayor, as a Councillor or in a personal capacity to avoid confusion. The Mayor should not on any occasion use or give the impression of using the prestige of the historic office of Mayor for personal or political advantage.

The Mayor will be consulted by the Town Clerk as appropriate on matters related to the business of the Council, including both strategic and day to day issues. S/he will be a member of the Senior Member Management Team.

### **3.4 The Civic Role of the Mayor**

The Office of Town Mayor of Dover is respected and held in high regard by the community because of its service to the community and the dignified behaviour of 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 at all times.

The Mayor will be the first point of contact concerning the appointment of Honorary Freeman in consultation with the Town Clerk.

The Mayoralty can expect to be asked to fulfil in the region of 200-300 engagements each year and the role has the potential to be both mentally and physically demanding. The Town Council is fully committed to the letter and the spirit of Equalities Legislation. Support will be made available to enable any Councillor whatever their circumstances to be an effective and committed Mayor.

A Mayor will also have many meetings, some with dignitaries, numerous 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.

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 working hours and different restraints. It is essential to discuss this with employers and family in advance of accepting the office. However, it is a hugely enjoyable and rewarding job if entered into in the right spirit.

#### **4 Invitations And Events**

Invitations are received from a wide variety of organisations to meetings and events within the Town and outside. The Town Council considers that the first consideration when deciding whether to accept an engagement is the benefit to the community of the Mayor's attendance. The Town Council is financially transparent and it is expected that the costs of attendance are considered in relation to the benefit to the Town.

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 in Dover District and/or other Cinque Port Towns
- Other events

The Town Clerk will advise where there is a clash of events or on any other issue concerning engagements. The Town Clerk is responsible to the Town Council for the proper use of Council resources including officer time.

All engagements are arranged through the Town Council office. Where the Mayor is approached personally concerning an official Mayoral event s/he must advise that the Town Council office is the only route through which an engagement is authorised.

All engagements are reported to the Full 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.

#### **5 Mayoress And Consort**

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

If the Mayoress/Consort is also a Councillor they may decide to attend civic functions to which they are invited as a Councillor in either role. (However they should not wear the Mayoress's chain/Consort's badge when robed as a Councillor.)

Where the Mayoress/Consort is not available or has not been signified the Mayor may, in consultation with the Town Clerk invite an appropriate person to accompany her/him to an engagement.

## **6 Mayor's Chaplain**

The Mayor may signify a recognised minister of religion to act as Mayor's Chaplain or Chaplain to the Town Council 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 occasions such as Remembrance Sunday. It is customary to provide the Chaplain with a small honorarium.

## **7 Mayor's Cadet**

The Mayor may signify a young person from a local cadet force to act as Mayor's cadet at the Annual Mayor Making. The Cadet will be presented with the cadet's swagger stick and will accompany the Mayor at certain official functions when invited to do so. At the conclusion of the year of office it is customary for an outgoing Mayor to present the cadet with a small token of thanks.

## **8 Civic Regalia**

Official chains and badges of office are normally worn for civic engagements within the Town. Officers must request permission for the Mayor to wear the chain if an engagement is in another Town or Parish if appropriate. Invitations should specify the regalia to be worn. In any case of doubt Town Council staff will clarify the most appropriate regalia with the event hosts.

Chains of Office will normally be worn in public places where the Mayor is accompanied by the Town Sergeant or other Officer of the Council. The Officer is responsible for the Chains of Office and any other Town Council property. The Town Clerk is responsible to the Town Council for the safe keeping of Town Council assets and does not have the power to authorise use of the chain or other assets in any case of unacceptable risk.

An escort's badge may be worn by the person accompanying the Mayor other than the Mayoress or Consort.

The maintenance and security of the civic regalia and historic items is the responsibility of the Town Sergeant under the direction of the Town Clerk.

Civic chains are not worn with military uniform but may be worn over academic dress or full canonicals by a member of the clergy.

Guidance on wearing and/or use the chain and badge of office and other items of regalia is set out below

<b>Item of Regalia</b>	<b>Guidance on wearing/use of item</b>
Mayors Chain and Badge	Public places: when accompanied by Town Sergeant or other authorised Officer of the Council.  Private places such as schools or churches: with agreement of Town Clerk may be worn without an Officer of the Council present.
Mayors Badge of Office	May be worn alone without the chain without an Officer of the Council present with the agreement of the Town Clerk.
Mayoress's/Consort's Chain and Badge	The Mayoress/Consort will only wear the chain when accompanying the Mayor wearing the chain and the same guidance applies.
Mayoress/Consorts Badge	The Mayoress/Consort will only wear the badge of office when accompanying the Mayor wearing the badge and the same guidance applies.
Deputy Mayors Chain and Badge of Office	May be worn without an Officer of the Council present with the agreement of the Town Clerk.
Deputy Mayoress's Chain and Badge of Office  Deputy Consort's Badge	May be worn when accompanying the Deputy Mayor without an Officer of the Council present with the agreement of the Town Clerk.  The badge of the Deputy Mayoress may be detached and worn on a collaret if a Deputy consort is signified.
Escort's Badge	May be worn by person accompanying the Mayor or Deputy Mayor without an Officer of the Council present with the agreement of the Town Clerk.
Civic Representative's Badge	May be worn alone without an Officer of the Council present with the agreement of the Town Clerk.
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 Dover Jewell	May be worn on certain formal evening engagements. The same guidance applies as to the Mayor's Chain of Office.
Wand of Office	Carried by the Mayor at certain events including Mayor Making and the Civic Service
Dover Mace	Carried by the Town Sergeant/Mace Bearer before the Mayor at certain events.  Placed in front of the Mayor at meetings of the Full Town Council.
Town Plate and other historic items	Displayed at suitable events with the agreement of the Town Clerk

## 9 Support For The Mayor

Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by Town Council officers under the direction of the Town Clerk. The exact nature and extent of support and processes will be agreed with the Town Clerk and will be proportionate to the duties undertaken by each Mayor. The Mayor may expect all diary arrangements and processes to support them in undertaking duties in a comfortable and relaxed manner appropriate to the occasion. This may include the use of the civic vehicle and the attendance of the Town Sergeant or other appointed driver.

Town Council officers are responsible to and take instruction from the Town Clerk. Officers will be responsible for keeping the Mayoral engagement diary, travel arrangements and liaison between the event hosts and the 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. If the Deputy Mayor has a known area of interest then an invitation may be prioritised for the Deputy Mayor by the Mayoral Team. If neither the Mayor or Deputy Mayor is available to fulfil an invitation and it is considered of particular significance then the Mayor may signify a Civic Representative to attend who may wear the Civic Representative's badge.

Once an invitation has been properly accepted it should not be cancelled unless absolutely necessary. All engagements are important, no matter how small.

All correspondence for the Mayor is kept in the Town Council Office, will be opened by Officers (as with 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.

## 10 Mayor's Charitable Activities

An individual Mayor may choose to use their term of office to raise funds for nominated charities and other ad hoc charitable purposes. In each Mayoral year the Mayor will have the opportunity to propose a timetable of events which can be agreed by the Town Clerk (with delegated authority from Council) bearing in mind available resources.

Income and direct costs for events will be separately identified in the financial records of the Council and included in the Mayoral budget. No event will take place, if in the view of the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), it is likely to be loss making or present undue risk to the Council.

Charitable donations from the surplus from events will be authorised by the Town Clerk/RFO (with delegated authority from Council) in consultation with the Mayor. Charitable donations may be to individuals and/or organisations and will be for the benefit of the community and will not conflict with the general principles set out in the Councils Ambition Plan.

It is expected that the surplus from fund raising events will be expended within the same financial year.

The Mayor may use his/her expenses of office budget to make donations to charitable events and organisations.

## 11 Mayor's Expenses Of Office

The Mayor may be paid expenses to meet the expenses of office (LGA 1972, s 15(5) and 34(5)). The Local Government Act does not stipulate the type or category of expenditure. The Town Council sets the budget for Mayoral expenses and hospitality during its budget setting process. The Mayors Expenses of Office Budget is separate from the Parish Councillors Basic Allowance.

Mayoral budgets are the responsibility of the Civic and Special Purposes Committee who have delegated powers to manage expenditure. The objective of the provision of Mayoral expenses 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 collections;
- Tickets for events
- Hospitality provided by the Town Council

- Travel to engagements;
- Appropriate gifts and/or cards

Cash to meet out-of-pocket expenses can be paid in advance in reasonable amounts agreed by the RFO but remains the property of the Council until accounted for by reporting expenditure substantiated with receipts where possible. All expenditure forms part of Town Council expenditure and is presented for approval to the Full Town Council. Where amounts are held by the Mayor at the end of the term of office they should be returned to the Town Council promptly.

## **12 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 Deputy Mayor has no standing in that role when the Mayor is present but assumes the precedence and standing of the Mayor when s/he is deputising for the Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor should not wear the Deputy Mayor's Chain of Office in the presence of the Mayor excepting on his or her election at Mayor-Making.

Subject also to the provisions of the above section concerning expenses of office the Deputy Mayor may incur such expenses as agreed in advance by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor.

The civic car and Town Sergeant/driver may accompany the Deputy Mayor if available.

## **13 Precedence And Protocol**

Dover Mayors are always addressed as 'Mr Mayor' regardless of gender.

The title 'The Right Worshipful The Town Mayor' has been awarded to Head Cinque Ports Town-such as Dover.

Precedence and protocol for visits and events is often set by custom and practice, with the exception of Royal visits. Reference should be made to the publication 'Civic Ceremonial' for detailed guidance a copy of which is held in the office.

The Town Clerk will offer further advice and assistance on protocol matters.

## **14 Gifts**

The Mayor will often receive gifts. It is suggested that all Members should discuss any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally or otherwise with the Town Clerk and in any case of further doubt with the Monitoring Officer before accepting or refusing.

It is strongly advised that all gifts and related items including raffle prizes acquired in the course of official duties be declared by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The Code of Conduct requires all 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 within 28 days of receipt. All gifts declared to the Town Clerk or designated Officer including raffle prizes will be registered in the Declaration Book. The Declaration Book will record the date of receipt, the details of the gift, the value of the gift (or reasonable estimate) and what has happened to the gift. The RFO is responsible for reviewing the Declaration Book.

The acceptance of the gift or hospitality may become an interest declarable in law at a Town council meeting if connected in any way with a matter under discussion.

The Town Clerk should be consulted in any case of doubt. The Monitoring Officer at Dover District Council can also offer guidance.

## **15 Mayor's End Of Year**

At the Annual Town Council Meeting 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 a response to a vote of thanks for their services during the year. This normally comprises a short review of their period of office, thanks to the organisations and people of Dover who extended hospitality and have worked with the Mayor and Town Council during the year and to any other supporters.

The new Mayor will present the previous Mayor with a Past Mayor's badge. Where a Past Mayor has already received a Past Mayor's Badge for a previous term of office a second badge will not be presented but a bar will be added to the badge previously received.

Retired Mayors are encouraged to help incoming Mayors to find their feet and become comfortable in the role. It is helpful to avoid confusion by members of the public to ensure that an outgoing Mayor does not attend events which are being attended by the incoming Mayor or Deputy Mayor except in a particularly private capacity. Former Mayors are advised not to comment on the style or actions of the current Mayor as this may be seen as criticism by members of the public.

## **16 Council Delegations**

Responsibility for the Mayoralty is delegated to the Civic and Special Projects Committee. The Committee may resolve to convene a Civic and Ceremonial Working Group to discuss and advise on specified issues.