



DOVER TOWN COUNCIL

Civic Guide

Maison Dieu House
Dover
Kent
CT16 1DW

01304 242625

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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 of its benefits and costs to the Town and people of Dover. The Town Council is committed to being fully transparent and accountable.

Where there are references to the Mayor and Mayoress/Consort in this Guide these also apply to the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress/Consort. While terms such as Mayoress and Consort may have traditionally been used to refer only to persons of one particular gender, Dover Town Council aims to be fully inclusive and welcomes persons of all genders to all civic roles.

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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 Chairperson 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 may also be 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 by the Town Clerk.

3.2 Town Council Policy and Budget

Policy and support in respect of the Mayoral Role is resolved by the Town Council in Policies and the Annual Budget.

3.3 The Role of the Mayor as Chairperson of the Council

- A Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as a Local Council Chairperson;
- The Town Mayor is the Chairperson 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 Chairperson 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 represents the whole town & community of Dover during their term of office alongside an appropriate and active role in their ward;
- The Mayor will chair meetings of the Town Council when present in accordance with Standing Orders. As Chairperson of the Council the Mayor acts as the leader of Council, ensures fair debate and decision making and promotes good working relationships between all members of the Council to enable Council decisions to effectively reflect the wishes of the community;

- The Mayor acts as an ambassador for the Town. The Mayor may 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 Deputy Town Clerk is available to provide a briefing on any aspect of Town Council policy. The Mayor should make it clear whether they are speaking as Mayor, as a Councillor or in a personal capacity. See Communications Policy.
- The Mayor must not use 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. They will be a member of the Senior Member Management Team.

3.4 The Civic Role of the Mayor

- The Office of Town Mayor is respected and held in high regard by the community;
- A Mayor, by virtue of Office, can:
 - i) Stimulate community pride;
 - ii) Encourage business;
 - iii) promote the voluntary sector;
 - iv) Encourage social cohesion.
- The Mayoralty is often the 1st port of call for expressions of community concerns. The Town Clerk provides support and advice to the Mayor;
- The Mayor is the first point of contact concerning the appointment of Honorary Freemen in consultation with the Town Clerk; (See Procedure for Honorary Freemen);
- The Mayoralty maybe invited to over 300 engagements each year and the role is both mentally and physically demanding;
- The Town Council takes its responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 seriously;
- Support will be made available to enable any Councillor whatever their circumstances to be an effective and committed Mayor if elected;
- The Mayor will also participate in:
 - i) Many meetings;
 - ii) Numerous engagements, often with late nights & early mornings.
- The Mayor is in the public eye for the whole year;

- The Mayor needs to exhibit a keen and genuine interest in those they meet, show enthusiasm and commitment to the role, ensure they are apolitical, speak up for the town's interests and always be mindful of the dignity of the Office;
- The role of the Mayor is very different from that of a Councillor. It has different functions, different working hours and different expectations. It is essential to discuss the commitment required with employers and family in advance of accepting the office. It is a hugely enjoyable and rewarding job, but requires resilience & commitment.

4 INVITATIONS AND EVENTS

Invitations to meetings and events both in the Town and beyond are submitted by a wide variety of organisations. 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 complies with the transparency code and it is expected that Mayors will consider the costs of attendance at an event taking account of benefits 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 civic engagements must be arranged through the Town Council office. Where the Mayor is approached personally concerning an official Mayoral event, they must direct the organiser to contact the Town Council office, so that the engagement is properly arranged.

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 may solicit engagements or visits or otherwise seek to obtain advantage 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 will not normally undertake engagements alone.

If the Mayoress/Consort is also a Councillor they may decide to attend civic functions to which they are invited in either role. However, they will not wear the Mayoress's / Consorts chain and / or 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 them to an engagement.

6 MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN

The Mayor may signify a recognised minister of religion to act as Honorary Chaplain to the Town Council at the Annual Mayor Making. The Chaplain will be able to provide spiritual support to the Mayor and Council and to act as the religious lead on certain civic occasions such as Remembrance Sunday. The Chaplain is paid 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 appropriate engagement is in another Town or Parish. Proformas indicate whether regalia should be worn. In any case of doubt Town Council staff will decide the most appropriate regalia with the event organiser.

The 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.

The person accompanying the Mayor to an engagement may, with the agreement of the Town Clerk, wear the Mayoress's / Consort's chain and / or badge of office or a Civic Escort's badge.

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 of the chain and badge of office and other items of regalia is set out below:

Item of Regalia	Guidance on wearing/use of item
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/nominated Consort or other person with the agreement of the Town Clerk will only wear the chain when accompanying the Mayor wearing the chain and the same guidance applies as to the Mayor's chain and badge.
Mayoress/ Consorts Badge	The Mayoress/nominated Consort or other person with the agreement of the Town Clerk will only wear the badge of office when accompanying the Mayor wearing the badge and the same guidance applies as to the Mayor's badge.
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/ Consort's Chain and Badge of Office	The Deputy Mayoress / Consort or other person with the agreement of the Town Clerk, will only wear the chain and / or badge of office when accompanying the Deputy Mayor wearing the chain and / or badge of office and the same guidance applies as to the Deputy Mayor's chain and / or badge.
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 Jewel	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 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 a 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 may be responsible for keeping the Mayoral engagement diary, making travel arrangements and liaising 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 directed to the Deputy Mayor by the Mayoral Team. If neither the Mayor or Deputy Mayor is available or appropriate 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 brief or small-scale.

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

A Mayor may choose 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. An event may not be authorised, 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 made to organisations that will not conflict with any general principles set out in the Councils Ambition Plan or Policies.

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

The Mayor may use their 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 Projects 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.

Items of appropriate expenditure may include but not be limited to:

- Clothing to be worn at civic events & engagements;
- 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 will 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 they are deputising for the Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor should not wear the Deputy Mayor's Chain of Office in the presence of the Mayor except on their 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 be used to support the Deputy Mayor, when deputising and agreed by the Mayor & Town Clerk.

13 PRECEDENCE AND PROTOCOL

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

The proper address & title is 'The Right Worshipful, The Town Mayor'.

Precedence and protocol for visits and events is usually in line with custom and practice, with the exception of Royal visits.

The Town Clerk will provide advice on protocol matters.

14 GIFTS

The Mayor may receive gifts.

It is strongly advised that all gifts and similar items including raffle prizes acquired in the course of official duties be recorded in the Gift Register held at MDH, not

only by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor but by any Councillor, within 28 days of receipt. The Register 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 if connected in any way with a matter under discussion at a Town Council meeting.

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 TERM

At the Annual Town Council Meeting which marks the end of the current 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 outgoing Mayor with a Past Mayor's badge. Where an Outgoing Mayor has already received a Past Mayor's Badge for a previous term of office, a bar will be added to the badge already received.

Former 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 for the first 6 months of their term. 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

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