



# **CIVIC HANDBOOK**

## Foreword

This booklet is produced to offer some details and insights into the operations of the mayoralty, and is intended as a helpful guide. Whilst some local aspects are based upon custom and practice, which can often be unique to an individual parish, there is much that is founded on “best practice” guidance from the National Association of Civic Officers, or is directed by legal requirements or nationally-accepted conventions and protocols.

### 1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Local Government Act 1972 gives parish councils the power to give themselves the title Town Council and the Chairman of such a town council is entitled to be called Town Mayor. The Mayor is the official representative of the Crown in the town, and consequentially takes precedence over everyone except the Queen (or the Lord Lieutenant) and the Mayor of the Borough Council.
- 1.2 The Mayor, as the First Citizen of the town is the first person (after the Lord Lieutenant, if present) to speak to Royalty when they visit the town. They are then entitled to request leave to present other civic notabilities to the member of the Royal family.
- 1.3 In general, the Mayor should be prepared to take the lead in all matters of concern in the life of the town – e.g. a charity appeal, a welcome to a returning charity fundraiser etc. as well as leading civic events.
- 1.4 The Mayor should consider with care the acceptance of office for any local organisation during the year of office, although the acceptance of traditional posts (e.g. President, Vice-Chairmanship of long-standing organisations) is generally acceptable. The Mayor should seek the Town Clerk’s advice if invited to take up such a role during their term of office.

### 2. Choosing to stand as Mayor

If you are choosing to stand as Mayor you will already be aware that it can be a hugely enjoyable and rewarding job if entered into in the right spirit. You should however consider the following factors which you may face during your year of office:

- The effect on your family and friends as your family and social life may be disrupted.
- The effect on your career if you have to balance the two in time and energy.
- The effect on your political career as this will have to be put on hold for your year of office.
- The effect on your personal and religious beliefs as you will be unable to deliberately avoid invitations to particular places merely because of your political and religious views.
- The effect on non-Council interests as you may not find time to keep your outside interests and hobbies during the term of office.
- The pomp, circumstance and protocols of the Office of Mayor can be very traditional and at times very formal and you will have to operate within these constraints whilst adding your own personality and flair to the proceedings.
- You should ensure that you are in a position to accept 95% of all engagements, expecting the Deputy Mayor to be involved only in the case of unforeseen illness, annual holiday or double booking.

- The effect on your Mayoral partner as they will be expected to play a full part in your Mayoral world although many Mayoral partners enjoy the privileges of office without the need to chair the Council meetings.
- Last, but by no means least, is the effect on the prospective Mayor themselves. Having considered the effect of being Mayor on others it is important that you do not forget your own needs and feelings.

### **3. What is expected of the Mayor**

Throughout your term of office you will be required to undertake the following:

- Carry out your Civic duties in a politically impartial way
- Chair and preside over Council meetings positively and assertively with guidance from the Town Clerk
- Promote the town on a local, national and possibly international level
- Take an active interest in all aspects of the local community and related issues
- Have the ability to network and socialize without prejudice with all members of the local community
- Attend an annual programme of civic events
- Attend funerals and memorial services as a representative of the Council
- Officiate at opening ceremonies and be prepared to make a speech
- Make speeches of welcome to visitors
- Attend local events of all kinds
- As first citizen, act as an Ambassador for Hatfield Town Council and welcome visitors, including dignitaries and in some cases members of the Royal Family
- As first citizen, act as an Ambassador for Hatfield Town Council and welcome
- Host receptions

### **4. Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor**

- 4.1 Election of the Mayor for the forthcoming civic year must be the first item at the Annual Town Council meeting as per Standing Orders. This meeting is often referred to as “Mayor Making”. The retiring Mayor, or in their absence the retiring Deputy Mayor, presides over the election. If neither is present, the Council must appoint some other Councillor to preside. The person presiding may vote and must give a casting vote if necessary. The exception to voting rights is if the person presiding is a retiring Mayor who is about to cease as a Councillor, in which case they have only a casting vote, which they must use if voting is equal. When a new Mayor accepts office, the previous Mayor and Deputy Mayor automatically retire.
- 4.2 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor must be Councillors.
- 4.3 The term of office of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor is from their acceptance of office at the Annual Town Council Meeting until the successor Mayor is elected (unless they resign or are persistently absent or cease to be qualified or become disqualified).
- 4.4 The Deputy Mayor may be appointed at any time and holds office (unless they resign or become disqualified) until immediately after the appointment of the successor Mayor. The Deputy Mayor is usually appointed at the Annual Town Meeting after the Mayor has accepted office and the retiring Mayor has been thanked.

### **5. Role of the Mayor**

- 5.1 The primary legal function of the Mayor is to act as Chairman of the Council and preside over meetings of the Council; if they are present at a meeting of the Full Town Council they must preside.

- 5.2 When present at The Annual Town Meeting the Mayor must preside. If the Mayor is not present and the Deputy Mayor is present then the Deputy Mayor must preside.
- 5.3 As the person presiding at meetings of the Council they have a second or casting vote in the event of an equality of votes. Where a casting vote is necessary it is generally regarded that it should be exercised to preserve the status quo.
- 5.4 The Mayor, as a matter of course, will receive guests and preside at the town's civic functions.
- 5.5 The Mayor is the proper person to represent the town on ceremonial occasions elsewhere.
- 5.6 Where the Mayor is invited to dine at functions by organisations in the town, they should be placed at table on the right hand of the Chairman of the organisation (assuming Royalty or the Lord Lieutenant is not present). If they are to speak their toast should appear early in the toast list, usually the first toast after the Loyal Toast.
- 5.7 The Mayor should not accept an invitation to attend, in their official capacity, a function in another town or parish, district or borough without the consent of the Chairman of the relevant Town or Parish Council and/or District/Borough Council. The Mayor should not, even when such consent has been obtained, wear the Mayor's Chain without approval from the Mayor/Chairman of the town being visited. There is an agreement (renewable each year) with adjoining town & parish councils that the Mayor may wear the Mayor's Chain if the Town Clerk notifies the Clerk of the relevant council.
- 5.8 The Mayor receives an allowance from the Council to offset the costs arising from the Office for use at their sole discretion. The Council agrees the amount of the allowance annually. Payment for tickets etc for functions being attended by the Mayor will be made from the allowance when the Mayor's Secretary accepts the invitations. The Finance Manager arranges payments of the allowance to the Mayor. This amount is taxable.

## **6. Role of Deputy Mayor**

- 6.1 The primary role of the Deputy Mayor is to discharge all the functions of the Mayor if for any reason the Mayor is unable to act or the office of the Mayor is vacant.
- 6.2 In the absence of the Mayor the Deputy is entitled to the Mayor's right of precedence but they do not wear the Mayor's chain, nor adopt the title of 'Mayor'.
- 6.3 Official invitations to represent the Council are to be sent to the Mayor's Secretary at the Town Council offices. They will invariably be for the Mayor to attend but the Mayor may ask the Deputy to attend if they are unavailable. No invitation may be entertained if it is a direct invitation to the Deputy Mayor in that capacity. Mayor and Deputy can never both attend in an official capacity. Should a Deputy Mayor be present in another capacity at an event at which the Mayor is present, care should be taken to ensure that the Mayor as "First Citizen" is afforded clear and full precedence.
- 6.4 The Deputy Mayor chairs meetings of the Council in the Mayor's absence.
- 6.5 The Deputy Mayor has full legal status as a Vice-Chairman and should be given precedence immediately after the Mayor, High Steward and Sheriff.

## **7. Precedence**

- 7.1 In the town the Mayor takes precedence over everyone except the Queen (or the Lord Lieutenant) and the Chairmen of District Councils and the County Council. This

includes precedence over such dignitaries as Bishops or Archbishops of the Established Church.

- 7.2 The Town Clerk advises the Mayor on matters of precedence and the order of procession for those attending a particular function or civic event.
- 7.3 The Local Government Act 1972 gives precedence to the Chairman (Mayor) of the District (Borough) Council throughout the district.
- 7.4 When the Lord Lieutenant is visiting in their official capacity representing the Queen they have precedence over the Mayor. In procession, if the Lord Lieutenant is present they must be accompanied by the Mayor and at a civic service they would normally sit with the Mayoral Party. If the particular church service is not solely civic, they may prefer to be given a special seat and arrive last in the Church after the civic procession, and leave at the end of the service before the Mayor. If a Deputy Lieutenant is requested by the Lord Lieutenant to attend the function in his place, they should be accorded the precedence due to the Lord Lieutenant himself. On other occasions, the Deputy Lieutenants have no status as such, but they may be included in the Mayoral Party, placing them next after the Members of Parliament.

## **8. Chain of Office, Badge of Office and Past Mayors' Badges**

- 8.1 The Mayor's Chain consists of two parts. The main chain - made of heavy links, the badge of office.
- 8.2 If the Mayor's Chain is to be worn outside the town, the Town Clerk must be advised and permission of the relevant Council obtained.
- 8.3 Past Mayors are given a badge in recognition of their service to the town. The cost of this is included in the Council's budgets. Past Mayors wear their Past Mayor's Badge at civic occasions.
- 8.4 The general rules for wearing chains and badges are:

Special and public functions organised by or directly connected with the business of the Council

- Mayor wears Mayor's Chain, Deputy Mayor wears Deputy Mayor's chain.

Civic Services, Non-Civic functions in the town at which Royalty is present, Civic Dinners organised by the Council, Receiving guests and during dinner, Other Civic functions in the town e.g. organised by other councils, Non-Civic functions in the town, Charity meetings Chaired by the Mayor

- Mayor wears Mayor's Chain, Deputy Mayor wears Deputy Mayor's chain

Local organisation meetings in the town, fetes, etc

- at their sole discretion, the Mayor may wear the Mayor's Chain (if requested by organisation). If the Mayor is unsure they should seek the Town Clerk's advice, (Deputy Mayor wears Deputy Mayor's Chain if attending instead of the Mayor).

Any functions outside the town

- Mayor wears Mayor's Chain, provided it is agreed with the Chairman of the town or parish where the function is held. If the Mayor is unsure, the Town Clerk's advice should be sought.

- 8.5 The Mayor's Chain or Deputy Mayor's Chain or Past Mayor's Badge should not be worn with service or other uniform except academic dress or the canonicals of a clergyman.

- 8.6 In the interest of security chains and badges of office should not be visible in public areas except when worn on pre-arranged civic duties. A suitable over garment should be worn or the chain carried in some secure manner.
- 8.7 The Mayor's Chain is normally kept in the Council's secure storage. The Mayor can collect them from the Council offices at any time during office hours and at other times by arrangement. The Mayor is asked to ensure the Chain and Badge are kept securely while they are in their possession and to return them to the Council offices as soon as possible. The Mayor's Chain and Badge are insured under the Council's insurance. If they are to be taken outside the town or immediate locality, the Town Clerk must be informed so that appropriate insurance can be arranged. If the Mayor's Chain and other regalia are to be taken abroad, the Town Clerk will arrange appropriate insurance and clearances.

## **9. Facilities for the Mayor**

- 9.1 The Council provides for secretarial support for the Mayor. The Mayor's Secretary (Office Manager) deals with the Mayor's Civic diary only.

## **10. Consorts**

- 10.1 Although the Mayoress and Deputy Mayoress (or Mayor's Consort and Deputy Mayor's Consort), unless a Councillor, have no legal position in relation to the Council they are often placed beside the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in presentation lines as a matter of courtesy.
- 10.2 Provision is made for spouses or consorts to be seated in reserved seats in the Church or at other events before the civic procession arrives
- 10.3 In the interests of security and the dignity of the office, a Mayoress or Consort appointed by the Mayor/Deputy Mayor should be over the age of entitlement to vote at Parliamentary Elections. No person below this age will be permitted to wear the Mayoress' Chain.

## **11. Mayor's Charity**

- 11.1 The Mayor's Charity is chosen by the Mayor every year and funds raised during the Mayoral year for that particular charity.
- 11.2 At the Annual Town Council Meeting the Mayor will declare the specific charity or charities they wish to support during the course of the year.

## **12. Specific Events**

12.1 The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and other Councillors are requested to attend several civic occasions during the year. These will normally be at least:

- Annual Town Meeting
- Annual Town Council Meeting (Mayor making)
- Music Festival
- Hatfield Rail Crash Memorial
- Poppy Appeal Launch
- War Graves Remembrance Ceremony
- Remembrance Sunday
- Firework Event
- Santa's Rounds

12.2 The order of the civic procession at civic occasions is as follows:

1. Mayor and Deputy Mayor
2. Past Mayors
3. Leader of the Council
4. Committee Chairs
5. Other Councillors

## **13. Forms of Address**

13.1 The formal forms of address are:

- for a man: "The Mayor of Hatfield, Councillor X"
- for a woman: "The Mayor of Hatfield, Councillor Miss/Mrs/Ms Y"
- in conversation or writing: "Mr Mayor" or "Madam Mayor"

## **14. If a vacancy occurs**

14.1 If the Mayor resigns, ceases to be qualified, or becomes disqualified, or dies in office the Council must elect a successor. The successor is elected at a full meeting of the Council.

## **15. Christmas Card**

The Mayor is traditionally expected to choose a Christmas card which is sent to all those on the civic list. You may decide to choose a charity card or a picture of your choice which can then be reproduced with your own personal wording. If you choose to do this the selection process needs to be started in September to allow time for printing. (The Office Manager will advise). You will be expected to handwrite all the cards and sign them, pre-printed address envelope labels are provided by the Office Manager.

## **16. Gifts**

In accordance with Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000 Mayors are required to inform the Town Clerk of any gifts or hospitality they have received, or have been offered, over the value of £25. Advice should be sought from the Office Manager as to whether they should be kept personally or displayed in the Mayor's Parlour. Generally minor tokens of goodwill or flowers can be accepted as personal gifts.

You may be required to present civic gifts on certain occasions, particularly when visiting or receiving guests. Such gifts, and their value, should be discussed with the Office Manager.

You should always write a thank you letter for any gift received.

## **17. Funerals**

The Mayor is required to attend funerals of serving councillors, Past Mayors and others as appropriate.

## **18. Lord Lieutenant**

The office of Lord Lieutenant dates back to the sixteenth century and has its origins in the military, when the holder became responsible for local military defence and the maintenance of order. By the eighteenth century, the militia was reorganized under the control of the Lord Lieutenants but direct control of the militia was lost by virtue of the Regulation of the Forces Act 1871.

Although their military role has largely disappeared, Lord Lieutenants retain their links by association with Volunteer Reserve Forces and are also often connected with other uniformed organisations such as the fire service, the police force, ambulance service and various volunteer bodies.

The office of Lord Lieutenant has, throughout its history, been associated with the work of the Magistracy, and the Lord Lieutenant appointed the Clerk of the Peace until the nineteenth century.

The Local Government Act 1972 (section 208) required Her Majesty to appoint a Lord Lieutenant for each county in England and Wales and for Greater London.

Lords Lieutenant retire at the age of 75.

The fundamental principle concerning the office of Lord Lieutenant is that he or she is Her Majesty's representative in a county and consequently it is his / her first and foremost duty to uphold the dignity of the Crown.

The Lord Lieutenant is expected to give encouragement to the voluntary services and benevolent organisations and to the industrial and social life of the county. However, as Her Majesty's representative, the Lord Lieutenant will stand aloof from local politics.

The main duties of the Lord Lieutenant include arranging visits of members of the Royal Family and escorting royal visitors to the county, carry out a variety of duties connected with the armed forces of the Crown such as the inspection of troops on parade and presenting colours, the presentation of medals and awards on behalf of Her Majesty and Keeper of the Rolls and leadership of the local magistracy as Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Justices of the Peace.

## **19. High Sheriff**

The office of High Sheriff is at least 1000 years old and is the oldest continuous secular office under the Crown, although the title 'Sheriff' (Shire Reeve) does not occur until 1055. Originally, the office held many powers now vested in the Lord Lieutenant, High Court Judges, Magistrates, Local Authorities, Governors and HM Revenue and Customs.

Under the Sheriffs Act 1887, sheriffs are appointed annually for each County.



The office of High Sheriff had precedence over all in a county until 1908, when the Lord Lieutenant became the prime office under the Crown as the sovereign's personal representative. However, the High Sheriff remains as the Sovereign's representative for all matters relating to the Judiciary and the maintenance of law and order.

## **20. Scrap Book**

The Office Manager prepares a scrap book of press cuttings throughout the mayoral year and this remains with the Town Council archives.

## **21. Meetings of the Council**

The Mayor is required to Chair all meetings of the Council and you should ensure that you are available for all dates given in the municipal calendar. If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting the Deputy Mayor has to preside.

As Chairman the Mayor has responsibility to:

- Be informed as to the business and objects of the meeting by discussing the agenda with Town Clerk prior to the meeting
- Preserve order in the conduct of those present
- Ensure that the proceedings are properly conducted according to the law and standing orders
- Ensure that all shades of opinion are given a fair hearing so far as is practicable
- Ensure that the sense of the meeting is accurately ascertained

In case of a balanced vote, the Mayor has an additional chairman's casting-vote. It is generally-accepted best- practice to use this to maintain a status-quo, on the principle that if opinion on the matter really was equally divided, then more research or detail might be most appropriate, before rescheduling the issue for further debate at a later meeting.

## **22. Training**

Herts Association of Parish and Town Councils offer training courses for Chairmen.

Please liaise with the Town Clerk as to their availability.

## **23. Past Mayor Badges**

At the conclusion of your mayoral year you will be presented with a Past Mayor badge. These badges should only be worn at civic processions and functions that you are invited to attend as a Past Mayor within the town.

If you are already in possession of a badge having been Mayor on a previous occasion you will not be entitled to receive a further gift.

## 24. Staff

The only practical support you receive from the Office Manager is organising your diary, they are not your Personal Assistant and have many other jobs to carry out for the Town Council. Please make appointments to meet with them to discuss your diary in advance, as they will have many other demands upon their time.

From experience the Office Manager respects the fact that all Mayors are different in terms of personality, standards and requirements. In order to work with different personalities it is essential to communicate on a regular basis, possibly at weekly meetings rather than constantly 'popping in'. Regular liaison with the Town Clerk is also necessary on matters pertaining to the Council. Meetings should always be by appointment wherever possible.

### ***Contact information:***

Council Reception - 01707 262023 (main switchboard)  
Town Clerk - 01707 280401

During office hours, it is recommended that you use the main switchboard number, as the officer on duty will be able to take messages, or indicate the whereabouts or time of expected return of anyone not currently present.

## TOWN COUNCIL EMBLEM



The three crowns are from the arms of the Manor, granted to the monks in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and later when Ely became a bishopric, the bishops built a palace at Hatfield which later passed to Henry VIII.

The Oak Tree depicts what was known locally as Queen Elizabeth's Oak, the tree beneath which she was sitting when informed of her accession.

The wings at the very top give acknowledgement to the aircraft industry which played such a great part in Hatfield's history during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The golden acorns and circle are for prosperity.