HAVERHILL TOWN COUNCIL

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CIVIC HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

This handbook on Civic Protocol has been produced to assist the Town Mayor and Deputy to understand their roles and responsibilities and provide useful information, which may be of assistance when undertaking the civic role.

The Civic Protocol also assists Mayors and Council staff to apply a consistent approach when dealing with issues connected to the civic function.

The object of the information is to try and ensure that your civic year runs as smoothly as possible.

Not all eventualities will be covered by this booklet but remember that advice is always available from the Mayor's Secretary or Town Clerk.

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Date Adopted: **Minute**

1. BACKGROUND

Town Mayor

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 a Town Council is entitled to the style of 'Town Mayor'.

A Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as a local Council Chairman.

The role is neutral and not party political. The public still see the role as 'above politics'. This must be maintained by whoever is incumbent.

The Councillor becoming Mayor

A Mayor, by virtue of the Office, can use his/her position to stimulate community pride, promote the town, encourage business, support the voluntary sector, mould social cohesion etc.

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 he/she meets, show enthusiasm and commitment to the role, ensure he/she is 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, it should not be entered into lightly as the reputation of the Council rests heavily on the Mayors shoulders and should never be used to promote the incumbent or their business. One thing is clear, being Mayor is different from being a Councillor, as it has different roles, different working hours, different restraints etc. However, it is also most probably a hugely enjoyable and rewarding job if entered into in the right spirit.

The Mayor is elected by the Full Council at the Annual General meeting in May, through a transparent process of selection. A new Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting.

The new Mayor makes the following declaration when accepting the Term of Office at the Annual General Meeting:

I …… having been elected to the office of Mayor for Haverhill Town Council hereby 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.

I undertake to observe the Code of Conduct which is expected of members of Haverhill Town Council.

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office is signed by both the new Mayor and the Town Clerk (as the Chief Executive Officer of the Council). The new Deputy Mayor also makes a similar declaration.

The Mayor's term in 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. ROLE OF THE MAYOR

During the Civic year, the Mayor supports a wide variety of events throughout the area. The Mayor receives invitations to all kinds of events and every invitation is considered equally. These invitations are not personal invitations. They are requests for the Mayor to attend in their official capacity and it is on that basis they are considered, not the personal preferences of the incumbent. If the Mayor cannot attend a function, the Deputy Mayor may be asked to attend on his/her behalf.

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

- Carry out your Civic duties in a politically impartial way
- Promote the town on a local, national and international level
- Take an active interest in all aspects of the local community and related issues
- Have the ability to network and socialise without prejudice with all members of the local community
- As first citizen, act as an ambassador for Haverhill Town Council and welcome visitors, including dignitaries and in some cases members of the Royal Family
- Attend an annual programme of civic events as detailed under 'Engagements'
- Attend funerals and memorial services as a representative of the Council

- Officiate at opening ceremonies and be prepared to make a speech
- Attend local events of all kinds
- Make speeches of welcome to visitors
- Speak to the media
- Host receptions
- Make official visits, for example to our twin towns
- Organise events to raise funds for the Mayor's chosen charities
- Act as host on behalf of the Council at functions organised by the Council

The Mayor will choose his/her own consort who can be either a partner or fellow Councillor, or a family member or friend. The same level of decorum is expected of the consort as representative of the town and that role should not be given or accepted lightly. A female Mayor is styled "Mayor"– the title "Mayoress" is reserved for the wife of a male Mayor. The male partner of a female Mayor, or a female partner other than a wife is "Consort".

When representing the Town Council, the Mayor and consort will normally wear the official Chains of Office. The Chains of Office will normally be worn at all official functions within the Town. They are also usually 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.

The Mayor also has a number of statutory functions as set out below:

- If present at the Annual Town Council meeting, the Mayor must chair the meeting
- If present at Full Town Council meetings the Mayor must chair the meeting
- The Mayor has a casting vote in the event of a tie
- The Mayor should ensure, together with the Town Clerk, that the Council makes legal decisions
- The Mayor has a duty to ensure the agenda is followed correctly

3. SUPPORT FOR THE MAYOR

Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by the Mayor's Secretary under the general direction of the Town Clerk. The Mayor's Secretary is an employee of the Town Council who, as well as carrying out other duties for the Council, assists the Mayor with organising their term in office. This position involves arranging a

meeting with the new Mayor once elected at the Annual Meeting to arrange the Civic Year, ie dates and venues of functions.

The Mayor's Secretary receives invitations for the Mayor and liaises with the Mayor before accepting/declining invitations. A diary is kept in the Town Council Office of all events the Mayor is attending and the Mayor will always receive a copy of the invitation for information.
The Mayor (or the Deputy Mayor if deputising for the Mayor) will normally use their own transport to attend Civic functions.

If the Mayor is unsure of anything or requires some guidance, then this should first be raised with the Mayor's Secretary, who will provide the necessary information, occasionally this may also require the assistance of the Town Clerk.

4. MAYOR'S CHARITY

The Mayor's Charity traditionally raises funds for local charities. It is advisable to choose the charity or charities to be supported at an early stage. The Mayor may decide on either one main charity to support or two or three local charities or good causes.

It is common to announce the chosen charity at the Annual General Meeting when the Mayor is elected.

Limited admin support will be given by the Town Clerk and Mayor's Secretary.

The chosen charity will then be notified and all funds raised at the events to be held by the Mayor will be donated to the chosen charity, usually at a presentation to be held at the end of the Mayor's year in Office.

Funds raised for the Mayor's charities cannot be used for any other purpose other than as a donation to the charity identified when the funds were raised, save for to cover all reasonable costs to raise the funds.

Charity events will vary with individual Mayors but may be organised by local organisations, clubs or institutions, with proceeds given to the Mayor's Charity. If the Mayor wishes to hold his/her own charity, then he/she must discuss the proposals with the Town Clerk to be clear as to the full implications of so doing.

Donations

To enable the Mayor to raise funds for local charities, the Council relies on local businesses donating prizes to be used on raffles and tombolas. Although many businesses do support the Mayor's Charity, there are still those who will not donate prizes. The Mayor often feels it necessary to visit local shops, pubs and businesses around the town to ask for prizes as sometimes the local shop owners/businesses prefer a more personal approach and have in the past been more likely to support the charity.

Cheque Presentation

The Mayor will announce the total amount raised for his/her charity at the Annual Town Meeting as one of their last acts of that Mayoral year and presents the cheques to the charities nominated to receive the funds raised throughout the year. Local press are invited to attend but, if absent, photographs are taken and press releases sent to local newspapers for their use.

5. MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE

The Mayor may be paid an allowance to meet the expenses of his office (LGA 1972, ss 15(5) and 34(5). The Local Government Act does not stipulate the type or category of expenditure for which the Mayor may use the Civic Allowance. However, it is commonly described as recompense for the expenses of maintaining the dignity of the office. Furthermore, general items include:

- Clothing
- Partners clothing
- Donations to charities
- Collections
- Personal hospitality (including lunches and dinners)
- One-off events held by the Mayor

It should be noted that the purchase of the above items would not necessarily qualify towards the allowance for tax-deductive purposes; it merely suggests that the items relate to maintaining the dignity of the office. There is no need to submit invoices or receipts to account for this money but it is strongly advised that the mayor keeps a careful record of their expenditure in relation to the Allowance, as it could be subject to challenge. For this reason, and for the

purposes of tax, the amount of Allowance given to the Mayor is kept as low as practical.

In the event of a Mayor's term ending before the following May, a proportionate sum must be repaid.

The Civic expenses budget contains provision for the Mayor and Deputy to submit expenses claims for mileage and other expenses for which receipts are required. It also covers certain civic events including the Mayor's inauguration and Civic Carol Service, Christmas Cards and Mayor's At Home. In the event that the Town Mayor is invited to, and accepts, a visit to one of the Twin Towns as part of a Civic Delegation, then the allowance is increased accordingly.

It is important for the Mayor to plan the use of the allowance over the year.

Once the budget level has been reached, no payments can be made or further orders placed by Council staff without a resolution of the Council, in public.

6. SUPPORT BY DEPUTY MAYOR

The Member elected as Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year by representing the Council when the Mayor is absent and requests it.

If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting, the Deputy Mayor must preside.

Some confusion has arisen in the past over the status of the Deputy Mayor. In effect, the Deputy Mayor has no standing as Deputy Mayor when the Mayor is present but assumes the precedence and standing of the Mayor when he/she is deputising for the Mayor rather than acting as Deputy.

Invitations to the Deputy Mayor should be dealt with as follows:

- Invitations to functions should not be sent to (or solicited by) a Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor should not normally attend functions in his/her own right, except when deputising for, or attending with, the Mayor.
- All invitations should be sent for consideration by the Mayor as First Citizen and, if the Mayor cannot attend, it may be appropriate to 'pass down' an invitation. However, this should be by no means automatic or desirable.
- On the rare occasion when the Deputy Mayor is invited to a function in his/her own right, there should be a clear procedure whereby the invitation

is shown formally by the Mayor's Secretary to the Mayor, in order that there is no misunderstanding.

7. CIVIC INSIGNIA

The Mayor's robes, chain and badge of office are the outward signs of the civic office held, ie its insignia.

The robes of office consist of a red robe, trimmed with fur, a bicorn hat (male), tricorn hat (female) and a lace stock worn around the neck.

The Mayor will wear the robe of office at formal ceremonial occasions, such as the Civic Service, Remembrance Sunday and Royal Visits. If the ceremony is out of doors, the Mayor will wear the hat.

The chain and badge are worn with the robes but are often also worn without.

The Council has no formal protocol regarding the wearing of robes. It is important to maintain the dignity of the office and that any use of the robe is not overdone; generally on day-to-day civic occasions the Mayor will wear only the chain with formal clothing suited to the occasion.

The Mayor should not wear the civic insignia in another area without express permission from the Council for that area.

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. The chain signifies the dignity of the office of Mayor and as such should not be worn with clothing that detracts from that dignity, e.g. fancy dress, casual clothes or swimwear.

The Mayoral Robes are generally sent away for cleaning at a convenient time before a new Mayor is elected.

The Civic Chain is insured both in the UK and in Europe and this cover extends to being securely stored at the Mayor's place of residence. In the event of any loss or damage to the Chain, however caused, the Mayor must notify the Town Clerk within 48 hours in order to comply with the Town Council's insurance cover.

8. PRECEDENCE AND PROTOCOL

A formal distinction has to be made between the style of address of a Mayor and that of a Town Mayor. It is suggested that, at least in the presence of the Borough Mayor, Town Mayors should be addressed as 'Mr / Madam Town Mayor'.

NB - a female Mayor is not a Mayoress.

Precedence and protocol for visits and events is often set by custom and practice, with the exception of Royal visits. See Appendix 'C'

The Town Clerk or Mayor's Secretary will be able to offer further advice and assistance on these matters.

9. RECEIPT OF GIFTS

In the course of the duty of being Mayor, often gifts will be offered to the Mayor in their official capacity and this is a gift to the Council, e.g. presentation from a visiting dignitary. It is suggested that all Members should treat with extreme caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally.

The Code of Conduct requires Members, including Mayors, to register any gifts or hospitality worth £25 or over that are received in connection with their official duties as a Member, and the source of the gift or hospitality.

The Mayor must register the gift or hospitality and its source in the gifts register held by the Town Clerk within 28 days of receiving it.

Be aware that this may constitute a pecuniary interest in matters later transacted by the Council, if a matter under consideration is likely to directly affect a person who has given the Mayor a gift or hospitality that is registered.

If in doubt, consult the Town Clerk.

10. THE CIVIC YEAR - EVENTS

Below is a list of typical events which are organised during the Mayor's Year in Office. These dates are discussed and arranged during a meeting with the Mayor,

Town Clerk and Mayor's Secretary at the beginning of each new year to suit the Mayor's diary.

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 Parish Meeting' to which all local electors are entitled to attend. In Haverhill, the meeting is called and chaired by the Town Mayor. It must be held between 1st March and 1st June each year. The Town Clerk will lead this process on your behalf.

Remembrance Sunday

Remembrance Sunday is held on the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of Armistice Day, which is on November 11th at 11am. The Service of Remembrance is organised by St Edmundsbury Borough Council and the Royal British Legion. The Haverhill Town Mayor will be invited to attend ceremonies at both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill and will lay a Wreath at both ceremonies.

The Civic robes are worn.

Civic Carol Service

The Civic Carol Service is held in one of the town churches. Consultation for the date of the Service is carried out by liaising with the Vicar / Father of the church.

Invitees will include Civic Dignitaries from the Borough and neighbouring Town Council's, Town Councillors and representatives of local organisations. Other invitees will be at the discretion of the Town Mayor, as advised by the Mayor's Secretary and Town Clerk.

The Civic Robes are worn on this occasion.

Mayor/Mayoress "At Home"

This event will be held at the discretion of the relevant Town Mayor.

'Civic Reception"

This event will be held at the discretion of the relevant Town Mayor.

Charity Dinner Dance

This event will be held at the discretion of the relevant Town Mayor.

Charity Events

Other events which may be organised in the Mayor's year may include the following, but the events programme will be at the discretion of the Mayor:

- Mayor's Ball
- Charity Evenings
- Market Stall
- Supermarket 'bag-packs'

Miscellaneous Events within the Town

Various miscellaneous events are attended by the Mayor, examples of which are listed below:

- Town Twinning events
- Armed Forces Day
- Opening of Fayres / Garden Parties / Coffee Mornings
- 100th Birthdays
- Presenting Awards and Prizes to individuals and organisations
- Entertaining guests and visitors at the Town Council Offices
- Art Exhibitions and presentations at local schools
- Winter in Haverhill Firework Display and Best dressed window competition
- Attending and meeting Royal Visitors to the Town

Miscellaneous Events outside of the Town

The Mayor is invited to a number of events organised by Civic Dignitaries from the surrounding areas, which may include:

- Civic Services
- Civic Carol Services
- Civic Dinners
- Charity Evenings

Holidays

Whilst it can be anticipated that your Mayoral Year is 'not your own', you still need down-time to cope with what can be a very busy schedule.

Please plan holidays well in advance and give any dates for absences to the Mayor's Secretary as soon as possible so that she is aware of when you are unable to attend engagements and can make alternative arrangements.

Dietary Requirements

You should make the Mayor's Secretary aware of any special dietary requirements, i.e vegetarian, diabetic or anything that you do not eat, either on religious grounds, allergies or just because you do not like it.

11. ISSUES OF RELIGION

The Mayor and Religion

The UK is an increasingly secular society and it is inevitable that the office of Mayor may be held by someone of a different faith to the established church, a Humanist or of no faith at all.

Taking on the office of Mayor inevitably means attending religious services throughout your term of office. This is a fact of civic life. Regardless of personal belief or opinion, the Mayor is required to attend these civic occasions as the First Citizen of Haverhill and prime representative of the Town Council. Whilst you are expected to attend such services, you are not required to take an active part in them if you do not want to. If this facet of Mayoral life is going to present unresolvable issues for you, then it is respectfully suggested that you do not put your name forward for consideration as Mayor.

Mayor's Chaplain

The Mayor may, if they wish, appoint a suitable person to act as the Mayor's Chaplain during the Mayor's term of office. The Chaplain would normally be someone who is an official of a religious group, which may or may not reflect the Mayor's own religion.

Irrespective of the Mayor's personal beliefs, it is undoubtedly worthwhile for a Chaplain to act as a focal point for religious groups in the area and to advise the Mayor on religious matters. Whatever religion the Chaplain comes from, what is important is that the support given to the Mayor, helps the Mayor to understand and lead all sections of the Community.

The post of Mayor's Chaplain is an honorary one, and as such is unpaid.

12. MAYOR'S END OF YEAR

The outgoing Mayor needs to consider a number of matters:

- Thanks to support staff is always appreciated
- Thanks to the Mayor's personal supporters - partner, family, friends, etc
- Thanks to the Deputy Mayor for support and assistance
- Thanks to the Mayor's Charity supporters, those Councillors who have helped - and anyone else
- Talking to the successor, when announced, giving advice and information

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

During the Mayoral Year, arrangements will be made for an official photograph. The Mayor will be given the opportunity to purchase a copy of this photograph.

APPENDIX 'A'

Civic Protocol

Mayor and Deputy Mayor

1. General

(a) All invitations should be sent to the Mayor at the Town Council Offices. Official invitations received at the Mayor's home address must be passed to the Mayor's Secretary.

(b) If the Mayor cannot attend then he/she will decide whether the Deputy Mayor should be asked to deputise.

(c) For events out of the town, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would not ordinarily attend different functions on behalf of the Council. If the Mayor has accepted an invitation to a particular event on a particular day, then all other invitations out of the town on that day would normally be declined.

(d) For events in the town, it is envisaged that there may be occasions when the Mayor is attending one function and the Deputy Mayor could attend another. The Mayor will be consulted on all such matters and will decide whether the Deputy Mayor should attend a function in the town in such circumstances.

(e) If an invitation to any function, in or out of the town is sent directly to the Deputy Mayor then he/she should inform the Mayor's Secretary who will inform the Mayor and seek his/her views.

(f) If neither the Mayor nor Deputy Mayor is available to attend an engagement, a former Mayor will be approached initially. If no former Mayor is available, the most appropriate member of the Council will be invited to attend the engagement (to be decided by the Mayor and Mayor's Secretary), and that member will be provided with the Mayor's consort badge to be worn for the occasion.

(g) As a general rule, the Deputy Mayor will not attend as Deputy at functions at which the Mayor is present, save for those occasions when the Deputy Mayor has a civic role to play. The Deputy Mayor will wear his or her Badge of Office whilst deputizing for the Mayor and on other occasions with permission from the Mayor.

(h) In the event that the Deputy Mayor deputises for the Mayor in chairing a meeting of the Council, the Deputy Mayor shall wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.

APPENDIX 'B'

Mayor's Role

1. Overview

1.1 The Mayor, and in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor, has two main roles; a ceremonial role and a procedural role.

2. Ceremonial Responsibilities

1.1 To represent the Town during his/her term of office.
1.2 To promote public involvement in the Council's activities.
1.3 As the first citizen of Haverhill, to perform an ambassadorial role both inside and outside the Town and to attend such civic and ceremonial functions as the council or he/she determines appropriate.
1.4 To promote Haverhill in a positive manner.
1.5 To act as a link between the Council and various groups and organisations.

3. Procedural Responsibilities

3.1 To preside over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of Councillors and the interests of the community.
3.2 To apply rules of procedure at Full Council meetings.
3.3 To seek the advice of the Clerk in matters of law and procedure.
3.4 To ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community.
3.5 To call meetings of the Full Council in addition to ordinary meetings.
3.6 To act as the Town Clerk's line manager on day-to-day matters.

APPENDIX 'C'

Precedence

The civic "line up" is arranged immediately prior to each event (when guests can be accurately defined) so as to avoid an undignified spectacle or a melee as people try to take their pews in church! The Town Mayor will normally take precedence at all events in Haverhill. However, there are many instances where this is not always the case:

The Mayor will naturally give precedence to Her Majesty the Queen and Members of the Royal Family.

The Town Mayor must also give precedence to the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk when attending in his / her official capacity as representative of the Queen.

The MP does not have precedence over the Town Mayor unless they also are a Privy Councillor or Minister of the Crown.

The Borough Mayor has precedence over the Town Mayor.

In all the above instances, if the Town Mayor is host (e.g. at a Town Council function) then as host they will accompany the most senior guest.

In the event of a royal visit, protocols will be agreed well ahead of time.

Regardless of perceived form as far as precedence is concerned, common sense and grace must be employed by the Mayor to avoid embarrassment, particularly when a misinformed guest disagrees with their allotted station.

The Town Mayor is always followed by the Town Clerk and Chaplain, Spouses or partners of Members of the Council and others are not generally included in a civic procession but arrangements will be made for reserved seating. The Mayoress/Consort and Deputy Mayoress/Consort are (usually) included in a civic procession. Although the Mayoress or Consort has no legal status, he or she customarily follows immediately after, or beside, the Mayor. The Mayoress or Consort cannot function independently of the Mayor.

The Mayor has no status or precedence outside the area of his own Parish.

APPENDIX 'D'

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Address

Haverhill Town Council
Haverhill Arts Centre
High Street
Haverhill
Suffolk
CB9 8AR

Tel: 01440 712858
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Website

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Mayoral Support staff

Colin Poole - Town Clerk

Vicky Phillips – Mayor's Secretary & Assistant Clerk