



# **MAYOR PROTOCOL BEXHILL-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL UPDATED MAY 2023**

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

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor must be Councillors.
- 2.3 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).

- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor shall be ex-officio members of council committees with no voting rights.

### **3. Role of the Mayor**

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 The Mayor, as a matter of course, will receive guests and preside at the town's civic functions.
- 3.5 The Mayor is the proper person to represent the town on ceremonial occasions elsewhere.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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 by the Mayor providing receipts for reimbursement. 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 Clerk arranges payments of the allowance to the Mayor. If taken as remuneration, this amount is taxable.

#### **4. Role of Deputy Mayor**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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'.
- 4.3 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. 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.
- 4.4 The Deputy Mayor chairs meetings of the Council in the Mayor's absence.
- 4.5 The Deputy Mayor has full legal status as a Vice-Chairman and should be given precedence immediately after the Mayor, High Steward and Sheriff.

#### **5. Precedence**

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 The Town Clerk advises the Mayor on matters of precedence and the order of procession for those attending a particular function or civic event.
- 5.3 The Local Government Act 1972 gives precedence to the Chairman (Mayor) of the District (Borough) Council throughout the district.
- 5.4 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.

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

- 6.1 The Mayor's Chain consists of two parts. The main chain - made of heavy links, the badge of office.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 The Mayoral robes may be worn to appropriate occasions.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 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.

- 6.6 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. Civic robes must not be worn with any other form of ceremonial dress. Medals may be worn with civic robes on appropriate occasions as advised by the Town Clerk.
- 6.7 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.

6.8 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.

## **7. Facilities for the Mayor**

7.1 The Council provides for secretarial support for the Mayor. The Mayor's Secretary deals with the Mayor's Civic diary only.

## **8. Consorts**

8.1 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.

8.2 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

8.3 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' / consort Chain.

## **9. Mayor's Charity**

9.1 The Mayor may choose a charity and fund raise during the Mayoral year for that particular charity.

9.2 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, if any.

## **10. Specific Events**

10.1 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)
- Bexhill Day

- Remembrance Sunday

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

1. Mayor and Deputy Mayor
2. Past Mayors
3. Committee Chairs
4. Other Councillors

The mace bearer shall lead the procession.

## 11. **Forms of Address**

11.1 The formal forms of address are:

- “The Worshipful the Mayor of Bexhill-on-Sea Councillor X”
- in conversation or writing: “Mr Mayor” or “Madam Mayor”

## 12. **If a vacancy occurs**

12.1 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.

## 13. **Appointments by the Mayor**

13.1 The Mayor is entitled to appoint a mace bearer, chaplain and town crier for the term of office, as they see fit.