

BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL



MAYORAL HANDBOOK 2023/24

AIM OF THE HANDBOOK

The aim of this handbook is to give to the incoming Mayor and Deputy Mayor a general outline of the kind of things they're likely to encounter during their year of Office, which commences with the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

The contents deal fairly briefly with a number of aspects of the Mayoral year, for example, general notes on the Mayor's role in most of the major annual functions like the Annual Meeting of the Town Council and the Mayor's Civic Sunday, there are also notes on etiquette and financial arrangements.

Whilst the booklet is not comprehensive on all matters, it will hopefully prove to be a useful source of general information during the Mayor's year of Office.

Mrs Sarah Haydon
Chief Officer

April 2023

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1 IS BEING MAYOR FOR YOU?

For those chosen or thinking of putting themselves forward, being Mayor is different from being a Councillor; it has different rules, different working hours, different restraints and is a physically and mentally tiring job. It is, however, a hugely enjoyable and rewarding job if entered into in the right spirit.

The following factors should be considered:

Effect on Family and Friends

The Mayor will inevitably be 'out of the house' more than an ordinary Councillor and often at unsocial hours. A Mayor's social life is disrupted and supplanted with a new social life not of their making and therefore, keeping up with friends and interests may prove difficult.

Effect on a Career/Job

Careful discussions need to take place with the Mayor's employer to ensure a good balance is maintained. Some employers make provision for leave for employees fulfilling a public role.

Effect on Political Career

The Mayor is traditionally neutral and steps back from politics in their term of Office. That is not to say they don't have a vote in Council, the Mayor continues to play a role in the decision making of the Council and in the event of an equity in voting is expected to exercise their casting vote.

Effect on Personal and Religious Beliefs

As Mayor, a Councillor represents all sections of the Council, not merely those who support a particular political, social or religious view. It's the role of the Mayor to acknowledge, celebrate and support diversity in the area. A Mayor will be invited to institutions they may be politically opposed to and church services that may not be aligned to their own religious beliefs. It must be remembered that the Office of Mayor belongs to the public and not the individual that occupies it, or for that matter the Officers who advise it.

Pomp and Ceremony

Some Mayors will feel uncomfortable with the formality of the traditional Office of Mayor. There are Chains of Office to wear and numerous protocols to follow. The public want such trappings of Office. Mayors should operate within

such constraints, but should not be afraid to add their own personality and flair to the proceedings.

Effect on Non-Councillor Interests

The Mayor, as in their capacity of Councillor, must act within the Code of Conduct and as such must be conscious of their private activities and any potential impact on their public role.

Effect on the Mayor's Partner

The Mayor's partner/consort can play a full part in the Mayoral Role. Whilst a Councillor is in politics because they want to be, it may be difficult for their partner to be pushed into a public role.

Mayor's Relationship with Other Councillors

The Mayor is amongst, but separate from other Councillors. They will spend less time on Committee work and there may be some loss of 'political' contact. Senior members will undoubtedly seek the Mayor's help in promoting Council initiatives and as such the Mayor is likely to see a wider cross-section of Council work than before.

Mayor's Relationship with Their Constituents

The Mayor is still a Councillor and their constituents will still need help.

2 ROLE OF THE 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 Chairman of the Town Council the title of 'Town Mayor'. The Mayor is elected by the Full Council at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council (Mayor-making) in May. A Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting.

The history of Mayoralty is important because it is the one well known and continuous factor in people's experiences. The power of the Mayor has undoubtedly reduced throughout the centuries, but the Office continues to have a central part to play in modern Local Councils and modern society and part of this role is because of the traditions it inherits.

The Mayor represents the town as a whole and the Office is held in deep respect. The Mayor as First Citizen of the town should act as a focal point in times of crisis, tragedy or triumph.

The Mayor should adopt an impartial role in discharging the duties of the Office and be scrupulously fair in conducting business at formal meetings of the Council. A Mayor also has endless meetings of Council, with dignitaries, engagements, late nights, early mornings and is in the public eye for virtually the whole year.

2.1 THE IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF THE MAYOR TODAY

There are three main important roles for the Mayor in today's Local Council and society:

A Symbol of Authority

The Mayor can clearly be seen as a symbol of the Authority and its area, with the Chain of Office. The Mayor, through the Office of Mayor and its trappings, connects the present day with the history, customs and traditions of the area and acts as a symbol of continuity.

A Symbol of Open Society

A modern role for the Mayor is that the Office symbolises an open society. Prior to the 20th century, the choice of Mayor was very restricted but today the 'First Citizen' can (and does) come from any class, gender or ethnic background.

Expression of Social Cohesion

The many, often social engagements undertaken by a Mayor are an expression of giving cohesion to the life of the town. The Mayor can act as a link between the various organisations they visit and can feedback the views and concerns of the people into the political fields.

2.2 CEREMONIAL ROLE OF THE MAYOR

The Ceremonial role of the Mayor is:

To be the representative for the Town Council, the community and local democracy and to work to ensure that the dignity and impartiality of the Office of Mayor is upheld.

To host all the Council's Civic events and other major Council sponsored events as appropriate and to welcome visitors to the town on behalf of its members observing Civic protocol.

To act as the Council's ambassador in promoting the town and in selling its locality to industrialists and tourists.

To attend and host receptions and other events associated with charitable and voluntary organisations operating within the Town Council's area; thereby assisting in promoting their good works and affording them due recognition for their valuable contributions to the wellbeing of the local community.

There will be occasions when the Mayor is invited to events outside the Town of Biddulph. If the invitation is received from the Civic Head of that area, the Mayor may accept the invitation. If the invitation is received from anyone other than the Civic Head of that area, permission must be sought to wear Chain of Office.

2.3 CIVIC ROLE OF THE MAYOR AS CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

The civic role of the Mayor as Chair of the Council is:

To uphold and promote the Council's standing orders and governance documents and to interpret the Standing Orders (Council Procedure Rules) when chairing Council meetings.

To preside over the full meeting of the Town Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of Councillors and the interest of the community.

To ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and the place at which members of the public and their elected Councillors can hold the Council/committees to account.

To promote public involvement in the Council's activities.

To be the conscience of the Council.

To call extra meetings of Council, subject to proper procedures being followed as defined in the Council's Standing Orders.

To preside over the Annual Town meeting. Though not a Town Council meeting, the Mayor has a duty to Chair the annual meeting of the electors.

2.4 MAYOR'S ROLE IN THE CHAIRING OF MEETINGS

A Chair's responsibility is to ensure the proper conduct of meetings and to exercise a second or casting vote in the event of a tie in votes on any question to be decided at meetings; for other matters they have the same rights as other Councillors.

The Chair is required, by common law, to ensure that the business considered at a meeting is lawful and that the conduct and/or order of the meeting is proper. A Chair's authority in respect of the conduct and procedure of meetings is detailed in the Council's Standing Orders. Individual Councillors and the public present at the meeting are expected to respect and ultimately obey a Chair's ruling.

A Chair needs to be fair yet firm and must act in good faith. A Chair is required to:

Ensure that motions included in the agenda are lawful and within the remit of the meeting being convened in advance of a meeting.

Be satisfied that a meeting has been lawfully convened, properly constituted and is quorate.

Ensure the minutes of the previous meeting are duly approved by the meeting.

Regulate the conduct of the meeting.

Introduce motions in the agenda and direct them to be moved and duly considered.

Order discussions and debate.

Decide points of order.

Put motions to a vote and if necessary, exercise their casting vote.

Declare the result of a vote.

Adjourn the meeting if necessary.

Close a meeting after its business has been concluded.

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 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 their election at Mayor-Making and at full meetings of the Town Council.

2.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS

Relationship with the Press

The press will frequently ask the Mayor to comment on issues. The Mayor, as Chair of Council, should only speak on behalf of Council on issues that have been discussed by Council. If the matter has been discussed, the Mayor is at liberty to divulge that which Council has resolved but no more. As Chair of Council, by inference, it appears that the Mayor speaks on behalf of the Town Council, which indeed they should, on ratified issues carried by a majority vote.

It may be helpful to remove the word 'I' from any statement to the Press. If the word 'I' is removed, it must be replaced with either 'we' or 'Council', which

focuses the mind and reminds the Mayor that they are issuing a statement not as themselves, but as the representative of Council. Reference should be made to the Chief Officer, who regularly liaises with the press and issues press releases on behalf of the Town Council.

Public Meetings and Politics

Once appointed, the Mayor is apolitical and should not get involved in controversial organisations. The Mayor, as Mayor, should not take part in a political conference, other than to officially open it, which is an acceptable Mayoral engagement. The Mayor is at liberty to chair any Public Meeting, although it is advisable not to get embroiled in anything likely to be too controversial. The Mayor cannot grant permission for a Public Meeting to be held in the Council Chamber free of charge without first obtaining permission from the Chief Officer.

Conduct

The Mayor, when performing official duties, is the visible presence of the Council. It is important that while being seen as warm and friendly, the Office of Mayor is upheld with dignity, avoiding demeaning the role or acting in a way that could be criticised.

2.6 MAYOR DURING THE RUN UP TO ELECTIONS

During the run up to elections, there are statutory guidelines the Town Council must follow regarding publicity. Guidance should be sought from the Chief Officer to ensure the Mayor operates within those guidelines. It is worthy of note that unlike all Councillors who cease Office four days after the election, the Mayor remains in Office until their successor is appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

3. CIVIC PRECEDENCE WITHIN THE COUNTY

3.1 Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire (Ian Dudson CBE – 29 March 2012 -)

S1 Lieutenancy Act 1997 requires HM the King to appoint a Lord Lieutenant for each county in England and Wales. Lord Lieutenants are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Prime Minister and retire at 75. The King may appoint Deputy Lieutenants, the maximum number of which is determined by the population of the county area. Lord Lieutenants and their Deputies are required to have a place of residence in the County.

The fundamental principle concerning the Office of the Lord Lieutenant is that he is the Sovereign's representative in a county and consequently it is his duty to uphold the dignity of the Crown. The Office is non-political.

Lord Lieutenants are unpaid, but receive minimal allowances for secretarial help, mileage allowance and a driver.

The Lord Lieutenant's main duties include:

- Overseeing any Royal Visits.
- Civic/Social – encouraging voluntary organisations.
- Forces – inspecting Troops, presenting Colours.
- Presentation of medals on behalf of the King.
- Keep of the Rolls – Lord Lieutenant is the Chief Magistrate in the County.

If the Lord Lieutenant of the County is present in his official capacity representing the King he will take precedence over all others present. At purely Town Council civic functions the Lord Lieutenant normally surrenders his precedence to the Mayor.

Ian Dudson was appointed as Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire on 29 March 2012. Ian was awarded the CBE for services to the ceramics industry in 2002 and made a Knight of the Order of St John in 2017.

Prior to this appointment he was a Deputy Lieutenant since 2001 and was High Sheriff of Staffordshire in 2010-11. He was Pro-Chancellor of Keele University and Chair of Council from 2005-2012, he was also a founding member of the Local Enterprise Partnership. Currently he is Chair of the Trustees of The Dudson Centre, which acts as a resource centre for voluntary groups, and he

chairs the Magistrates Advisory Committee for Staffordshire. He is also a Council member at Lichfield Cathedral.

He is President of 11 Staffordshire based organisations including:

Douglas Macmillan Hospice,
Tennis Staffordshire,
Staffordshire Community Foundation,
Staffordshire Branch CPRE,
West Midlands Reserves and Cadets Association,
Scouting Staffordshire,
SSAFA Staffordshire,
St John County Priory Group,
and Lichfield Festival.

He is also Patron of the Wildlife Trust Staffordshire, Trent and Mersey Canal Society, Lichfield Science and Engineering Society, Ministry at Work and Joint Patron of Shropshire and Staffordshire Blood Bikes, Burslem Port, Lichfield Cathedral Friends, Peel Society and an Honorary Patron of the Pathway Project in Lichfield.

3.2 High Sheriff of Staffordshire

The High Sheriff (an annual appointment) is the oldest secular Office in the United Kingdom and dates back to Saxon times. The Sheriff is a direct appointment of the Sovereign by warrant and takes Office by making a Declaration of Loyalty. It is an independent, non-political Office. The High Sheriff receives no remuneration and no part of the expenses of their year of Office falls on the public purse.

The High Sheriff's role can be summarised as follows:

To lend active support to the principal organs of the Constitution within their county – the Royal Family, the Judiciary, the Police and other law-enforcement agencies, the emergency services, local authorities, and all recognised church and faith groups.

To ensure the welfare of visiting High Court Judges; to attend on them at Court and to offer them hospitality.

To support the Lord-Lieutenant on Royal Visits and on other occasions as appropriate.

To take an active part in supporting and promoting voluntary organisations within the county.

To uphold and enhance the ancient Office of High Sheriff and to make a meaningful contribution to the High Sheriff's county during the year of Office.

In modern precedence as defined by the Royal Warrant of 1904 the High Sheriff is by right second only in the county to the Lord Lieutenant, but gives precedence to the Mayor when undertaking business in their area.

Nominations to the Office are dealt with through the presiding Judge of the Circuit and Privy Council. Three nominations for each county are considered at a meeting in November, with the Sovereign 'picking out' the preferred candidate.

3.3 Chairman of Staffordshire County Council

The Chairman of Staffordshire County Council takes precedence in the Staffordshire County Council area over everyone, including Town Mayors, subject only to the Royal Prerogative. However, at purely Town Council civic functions the Chairman surrenders his precedence to the Town Mayor.

The Chairman:

Hosts receptions, afternoon teas and celebration evenings to show the county's appreciation for services given to the people of the county by communities, volunteers, groups and individuals.

Promotes the objectives and services of the county council and Staffordshire itself.

Supports the core values with the Council's Strategic Plan.

3.4 Chairman of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

The Chairman of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council takes precedence in the Moorlands Council area over everyone, including Town Mayors, subject only to the Royal Prerogative. However, at purely Town Council civic functions the Chairman surrenders their precedence to the Town Mayor.

3.5 The Mayor of Biddulph

It should be borne in mind that the area over which the Mayor presides is restricted to the outer boundaries of the five wards that make up the Town Council area. The Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Mayor has precedence in their town, 'but not so as to prejudicially affect His Majesty's Royal Prerogative'. The Mayor enjoys precedence in their own area and not that of their neighbours. **Therefore, the Mayor should not accept an invitation to attend, in an official capacity, a function in another area without the express consent of the Mayor/Chair of that area.**

3.6 The Mayoress/Consort

The role of Mayoress was originally given to the Mayor's wife but the Mayor may choose to appoint a Consort and this role can be undertaken by a spouse, partner, friend or relative and is given precedence alongside the Mayor. It is not obligatory to appoint a Mayoress/Consort.

The positions of 'Mayoress' and 'Mayor's Consort' are not recognised by statute. There may be occasions where the Mayoress/Consort is not able to escort the Mayor to an engagement. The Mayor may ask another person to accompany them to the engagement, but it is expected that only the Mayoress/Consort wears the official Chain of Office. The role of the Mayoress/Mayor's Consort is to support the Mayor during their year of Office. Although the role has no civic standing, the support given is invaluable to the Mayor and it's essential the Mayoress/Mayor's Consort is as willing as the Mayor to fulfil the role. If the Mayor is unable to attend an event, the Deputy Mayor should attend on the Mayor's behalf and not the Mayoress/Consort.

At some Civic functions, protocol dictates that the Mayoress/Mayor's Consort does not have the prominence of the Mayor, but this should in no way detract from the role.

3.7 The Deputy Mayor

The Deputy Mayor, when acting for the Mayor, should be accorded the same precedence as that accorded to the Mayor. It must be emphasised that the Deputy Mayor deputises for the Mayor. If the Mayor is unable to attend, they may, by agreement, arrange through the Chief Officer for the Deputy Mayor to attend instead. It is not obligatory to appoint a Deputy Mayoress/Consort.

The Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress/Consort (if applicable) will be expected to attend all the annual civic functions and Chains of Office should be worn as appropriate. The Chain of Office should be worn at all the major annual civic events and for all full Council meetings and when the Deputy represents the Mayor at official engagements. However, at all other events/receptions attended by the Mayor in an official capacity the Deputy's Chain of Office should not be worn unless specifically requested to do so by the Mayor. The Deputy Mayor will deputise for the Mayor at those functions which the Mayor is unable to attend.

4 FORMS OF ADDRESS

4.1 The Mayor

Formal: The Worshipful the Mayor of Biddulph Councillor (**Name**)

In Conversation: If a Man: Mr Mayor
If a Woman: Madam Mayor

If the Mayor identifies as gender-neutral then their address is simply Mayor, as it's a gender-neutral term.

4.2 Royal Family

Royal Visit arrangements are made by the Lord Lieutenant's Office, and guidance will be provided. The King should be addressed as 'Your Majesty' on the first occasion and as 'Sir' on subsequent occasions. Other members of the Royal Family should be addressed for the first time as 'Your Royal Highness' and subsequently as 'Sir' or 'Ma'am'. ('Ma'am' is pronounced to rhyme with jam (not as in marmalade)).

It is always for the Royal Personage to speak first, and it is not courtesy to address a direct question to a member of the Royal Family. If conversation is more than of the shortest kind, the words 'Your Majesty' or 'Your Royal Highness' should be introduced.

Immediately personal notice is made, there should be a curtsy on the part of a lady and a bow from the neck on the part of a gentleman. The curtsy should be made with the body erect, the left foot being placed slightly behind the right foot, in order to maintain a good balance, then the left knee goes down about halfway between the calf and the ankle of the right leg.

Members of the Royal Family invariably shake hands with those presented to them. When this happens, one makes a curtsy (or bow) as the hand is extended; take the hand lightly and briefly. (Note that the hand should not be gripped.)

5. GETTING STARTED

Congratulations on being elected Mayor of Biddulph. We hope you and your Consort/Mayoress (if applicable) have a very happy and successful year in Office. We want your year to be enjoyable and will do everything possible to support you in your role.

Please resist the urge to drastically change the organisation before you know how it really works. Many of the town's Mayoral traditions have evolved over the years through trial and error.

The duties you'll undertake as Mayor will be extremely varied, whilst it is up to you how many events you'd like to attend, it is guaranteed to be a busy year.

There are a few things the new Mayor must consider as they start their Term of Office:

- If applicable, choose a Mayoress/Consort (to be introduced at Mayor-Making). It is not obligatory to appoint a Consort.
- Nominate a local charity/organisation to raise funds for.
- Advise the Chief Officer of any dates where you will not be available during your term of Office.
- Inform the Chief Officer of any mobility issues or special dietary requirements that you or the Mayoress/Consort (if applicable) may have. This will enable the Town Council to advise organisers of events of any special requirements that you may have.
- Consider when and where to hold the Civic Service.

The Chief Officer will be able to provide guidance on Council and Mayoral protocol and Civic Etiquette.

5.1 Everyday Wear

It is expected that where the Mayor attends a function and wears Chains of Office, appropriate dress shall be worn. This also applies to a Mayoress/Consort, (if applicable), if accompanying the Mayor.

5.2 When To Wear the Chain of Office

The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor should wear their chains at all Town Council Meetings and all formal Mayoral engagements, but **NOT** when:

- The Mayor is attending private functions or in a private capacity.
- The Mayor is attending a function outside the Town Council's area, unless with the consent of the Mayor or Chairman of that Local Authority.
- The Mayor is visiting the Palace of Westminster, where it is deemed to be a Palace of the Sovereign.

The Chains and Badges of Office of both Mayor and Deputy and their Consorts are covered by the Council's all risks insurance policy. If it is necessary to take them home, they must be kept appropriately, using common sense. They must not be left unattended in cars or other vehicles.

5.3 Mayoral Attendance at Funerals of Prominent Persons

The attendance of the Mayor at funerals is often at the discretion of the family and on some occasions, it would be inappropriate to wear the Chain of Office. Guidance should be sought at the time, but unless it is a high-profile event, the Mayor and Mayoress/Consort (if applicable) should generally wear their Badges of Office on a black ribbon.

The Chief Officer will contact the Funeral Director or Clergy to confirm seating arrangements. The Mayor and Mayoress/Consort (if applicable) will normally sit in the front pew to the left (i.e. north) of the central aisle in any church or crematorium. Family members must be given precedence in churches/crematoriums with no centre aisle. After the service the Mayor and Mayoress/Consort (if applicable) follow immediately after the family mourners.

The Mayor and Mayoress/Consort (if applicable) do not attend any Committal Service at the crematorium or cemetery unless that is the only service being held.

6. ELECTION OF MAYOR/ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL (MAYOR-MAKING)

The organisation of the event is carried out by the Chief Officer and Council staff. A list of family and friends will be required by the Chief Officer for the Annual Meeting of the Town Council and for the Mayor's Civic Service.

The election of the Mayor is the first item of business at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council (Mayor-Making) in the Town Hall, with the election being decided by a majority of members present and voting at the meeting. Unless the Mayor is disqualified or resigns, they continue as Mayor until their successor is chosen and has made a valid Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Even after local council elections when, possibly, the Mayor has not been re-elected or did not seek re-election, they are required to preside at the meeting to elect their successor. Whilst they would not have a vote to elect their successor, they shall retain a casting vote in the event of equality in votes.

Once elected, the new Mayor and Deputy must make the following declaration:

'I.....having been elected to the Office of Mayor/Deputy Mayor for Biddulph 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 Biddulph Town Council.'

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office is signed by the new Mayor/Deputy Mayor and is witnessed by the Chief Officer. Until this has been done, the Mayor must not exercise the Office and there strictly should be no investing with Chains of Office. The Mayor then announces their Mayoress/Consort (if applicable) for the forthcoming year.

After the meeting, guests are usually invited to partake in light refreshments provided by the incoming Mayor.

Mayor-Making 2023 : 16 May

7. MAYORAL EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

7.1 Annual Town Meeting

The Mayor presents the Annual Report. 2023's Annual Town Meeting will take place on Tuesday 23 May.

7.2 Mayor's Civic Service

The Mayor liaises with the Minister of their preferred place of worship to arrange a suitable date for their Civic Service. The service usually takes place in June or July. The Mayor selects the hymns and readings.

The event is supported by Town Council officers in terms of coordinating invitations, printing, etc. Any buffet, flowers, entertainment or other items that the Mayor may want for this occasion are funded via the Mayoral allowance.

7.3 Remembrance Day (11th November)

The Mayor leads 2 minutes' silence at the Cenotaph. Dress code should be smart to suit the occasion.

7.4 Remembrance Parade

On the nearest Sunday to 11 November, the Mayor leads the town's remembrance to all those who have lost their lives in every theatre of war. The event commences at 10.15 am with a Civic Parade from the Town Hall around the town to the Cenotaph; this parade includes military personnel, uniformed associations, past servicemen and civic dignitaries. A short service takes place with 2-minutes' silence at 11am and wreath laying. This is followed by a service of Remembrance at the Methodist Church in Station Road. Again, the dress code is smart.

The Mayor when laying a wreath at the Cenotaph should:

- lay the wreath,
- take one step back from the memorial,
- pause and return to their place.

2023's Remembrance Parade will take place on Sunday 12 November.

7.5 Christmas Lights Switch-On

Usually, the last Saturday in November. The Mayor leads the town in switching on the Christmas Lights from the Town Hall. Biddulph Moor Christmas Lights

Switch-On is the weekend after. Biddulph's 2023 Christmas Lights Switch-On will take place on Saturday 25 November and Biddulph Moor's on Saturday 2 December.

7.6 Mayor's Ball/Civic Dinner

This usually takes place on the last Friday in April in the Town Hall.

7.7 Engagements

Invitations are received from a wide variety of organisations to meetings and events within the town and outside. 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.

All engagements are arranged through the Town Council office. Where the Mayor is approached personally concerning an official Mayoral event they 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.

Invitations are considered on their own merits and should be ranked in order of priority: 1. State occasions. 2. Invitations and events within the town. 3. Other events.

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

Neither the Mayor nor Deputy Mayor or any other Councillor must solicit engagements or visits or otherwise obtain favours by virtue of Office.

Annual Engagements:

February – Mayor's Race at Knypersley Pool Charity Run

May – Biddulph Rotary Young Citizen of the Year Awards Ceremony

July – Biddulph Festival

June - Biddulph Moor Well Dressing

July – Tea with the Town Council – Date to be confirmed

Saturday 9 September – Classic Vehicle Show

Civic Services for Town Mayors:

Alsager, Ashbourne, Cheadle, Congleton, Kidsgrove, Leek, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stone, Uttoxeter

See the 'Mayor of Biddulph' page on our Council website advising of the protocol to be observed at events. We're happy to add a 'Mayor's Gallery' to this page, but you'll need to email photos to office@biddulph-tc.gov.uk of events attended.

7.8 Speeches

As Mayor, making speeches will be a significant part of the role. It may be worth preparing a short, standard speech that can be recalled and used at any engagement, in the event that you are called on to speak unexpectedly. It's also worth remembering that when speaking in public the Mayor is speaking on behalf of the Town Council and as such should support agreed Council policy.

7.9 Support For The Mayor

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 Chief Officer to the current Mayor. Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by Town Council Officers, under the direction of the Chief Officer. The exact nature and extent of support and processes will be agreed with the Chief Officer and will be proportionate to the duties undertaken by each Mayor. Appropriate liaison between the Town Council office and the event host will take place to ensure that the Mayor may attend functions with sufficient information to enable him/ her to represent the Town Council effectively. 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 Chief Officer. 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. Once an invitation has been properly accepted it should not be cancelled unless absolutely necessary. All engagements are important, no matter how small.

Social Media can play as big a role in your Mayoral year as you wish. Some Mayors do not use it at all. Things that can be posted on social media include:

- Pictures of events that you have attended.
- Thanks to the organisers of events.
- Retweets/sharing of community posts
- Details of fundraising events.

8. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 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)) provides that a 'Council may pay the Mayor for the purpose of enabling them to meet the expenses of their Office such allowance as the Council think reasonable'. 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.

A Civic Allowance Fund is allocated annually in May between the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Town Crier. 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.

It is entirely the Mayor's responsibility to account for its expenditure during their term of Office. Expense claim forms should be submitted periodically to ensure that the funds can be released to cover expenses incurred. This information is shared with the Finance Strategy and Management Committee in June after the Mayoral year, to determine whether the allowance is sufficient.

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.
- Christmas cards.

- Travel to engagements.
- Appropriate gifts and/or cards, such as sending flowers.

The Civic Allowance Policy contains further information in relation to expenses.

9. MAYOR'S CHARITY FUND

It has become customary, but not essential for the Mayor to choose to raise money for an appointed charity(ies)/organisation(s) during their year in Office. It is expected that any funds raised shall benefit local people, therefore if a national charity is chosen; there should be a local branch.

It is usual for donations and fundraising proceeds to the Mayor's adopted charities/organisations to be paid into the Mayor's Charity Account (administered by the Responsible Financial Officer) and subsequently remitted to the appropriate charities at the end of the Mayoral year.

The Mayor can hold whatever events they choose to raise money for their nominated charity. Many Mayors in the past have held charity lunches and dinner dances.

It is the Mayor's responsibility to lead any fundraising initiatives on behalf of any chosen charities/organisations and thought must be given to how these events can be organised and staffed as the Town Hall does not have the resources to support them. The Mayor may be able to call on support from the Mayoress/Consort (if applicable) or could consider establishing a separate committee of friends or colleagues to assist in the planning and execution of activities and events. Individuals from the chosen charity and other voluntary groups may also be willing to help.

Dates for any charity events should be discussed with the Chief Officer to avoid clashes with other events.

10. END OF YEAR

Being Mayor is difficult and often intense. Each Mayor will undoubtedly have 'done things their way' and the new Mayor will want to change things to suit them. This is not a criticism of the outgoing Mayor, but personal preference.

The outgoing Mayor needs to consider a number of matters:

- Thanks to office and support staff – they do work hard, often behind the scenes throughout the Mayoral year.
- Thanks to the Mayor's personal support staff – family and friends.
- Thanks to Mayoress/Consort (if applicable).
- Thanks to the Deputy Mayor and their Deputy Mayoress/Consort (if applicable).
- Thanks to the Town Council for the opportunity to serve as Mayor.
- Thanks to Mayor's charity supporters.
- Thanks to the press.
- Resuming a political career.
- Re-acquainting with friends you've ignored all year.
- Attending clubs and societies you've not been to all year.
- Talking to your successor – personal views and advice are often welcomed.
- Book a holiday and put your feet up!

On the completion of the Mayor's year of Office they are presented with a Badge of Office. This should only be worn on all Civic occasions and, at the family's request, on the occasion of the funeral of a past Mayor. It should not be worn on any other occasion. The badge should be worn on the right-hand side of any attire. The badge should not be worn on Remembrance Sunday.

The retiring Mayor's name is engraved on the Mayoral Roll and a formal, framed photograph is displayed in the Council Chamber.