



# **Kingsteignton Town Council**

## **Mayors Handbook September, 2017**

The Mayor's Handbook is designed and compiled to assist the Mayor and Deputy Mayor with their Civic duties. It does not supersede or take preference over Kingsteignton Town Council's Standing Orders

## **Introduction**

This handbook has been produced to assist the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to understand their roles and responsibilities and give beneficial information with which to undertake the civic role.

The handbook is intended to be used as a guide and its contents are not exhaustive but assistance is always available from Officers of the Council.

Section 245 of the Local Government Act gave Parish Councils the power by resolution to give themselves the title of Town Council. The Chair of a Town Council is entitled to the title of Town Mayor. Kingsteignton Town Council made such a resolution and from 1 January, 2009 Kingsteignton has been a Town and the Chair has been Mayor.

Sections 15 & 34 of LGA 1972 require local Councils to appoint a Mayor as the first business to be transacted at the Annual Council meeting. At the meeting at which the Mayor is elected (or before as is permitted in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders in non-election years) he/she must sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and be guided by the Code of Conduct in the performance of his/her duties. The Mayor's main role is to run Council meetings. He/she is responsible for ensuring that effective and lawful decisions are taken at meetings of the Council and, assisted by the Clerk, guides activities by managing the meetings of the Council, ensuring that all Councillors have the opportunity to speak and that they keep to the point. At the Full Council meeting the Mayor has a casting vote if there is a tied vote.

The Mayor has no more power than any other Councillor except that of a casting vote and has no power to make decisions without the resolution of the Council. The Mayor is the public face of the Council and may be invited to official functions, where he/she must represent the views of the Council and not personal views. Section 15(5) of LGA 1972 enables a Mayor to be paid an allowance to meet the expenses of his/her office – see Mayor's Allowance

The Mayor is the Chair of the Council and can help in the promotion of the Council's objectives in the local community. In turn the people of the Town will have the highest regard for their Mayor and they will expect the Mayor to carry out a full range of duties on their behalf and throughout the Town.

## **Election of Mayor**

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor must be members of the Council.

The election of Mayor is decided at the April Full Council meeting in non-election years and takes up office as the first item of business at the Annual General Meeting in May, in accordance with the Town Council Standing Orders. The election of Mayor is decided by a majority of members present and voting on the matter at the meeting (LGA 1972 s15)

In election years the election of Mayor is the first item of business at the Annual General Meeting held in May.

Unless he/she has resigned or been disqualified, the outgoing Mayor continues in the post until his/her successor has been chosen and made a valid declaration of office.

## **Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Role**

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be elected by the Council annually. The person presiding at the Annual Council meeting must give a casting vote in the event of any equality of votes for the election of the new Mayor.

The role of the Mayor is to undertake Kingsteignton Town Council's civic and ceremonial duties in a dignified manner so as to uphold and enhance the status of the town and stimulate civic pride.

Responsibilities include:

- Attend civic and ceremonial functions and local community activities as the Council and he/she deems appropriate
- Represent the Council at ceremonial events
- Promote Kingsteignton as a place to live
- Host the Mayor's Civic Carol Service held in December
- Act as Chairman at Full Council meetings in accordance with Standing Orders.

The Mayor may call an extraordinary meeting of the Council subject to provisions in the Council's Standing Orders. If the Mayor fails or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days after a request signed by 5 members of the Council, 5 members may call an emergency meeting.

The Mayor's Civic Carol Service shall be held in December at a venue chosen by the Mayor and with delegates being invited by the Mayor. Appropriate food and drink shall be provided and at an appropriate time the Mayor shall make a short speech to those present.

## **Regalia**

The Chain of Office should only be worn when the Mayor is undertaking official duties in his/her capacity as Mayor.

The Chain of Office may be worn for events within the Town where the Mayor considers that those present would consider it appropriate to mark the occasion.

When attending an event hosted by another Council the Chain must be worn, if approved by the host.

The Mayor is responsible for the Chain during his/her term of Office. It is insured by the Town Council but the Mayor must ensure that it is kept safely so that it does not get damaged.

The Deputy Mayor may wear the Deputy Mayor ribbon when deputising for the Mayor at civic events and the same responsibilities must be adhered to the ribbon

## **Political Activities**

The Mayor's role is apolitical; political points should not be made.

## **Promotion of the Council**

The Mayor has a key role in acting as ambassador, promoting the Town to the wider community. This may take a number of forms, including attending events arranged by other organisations as the Council's official representative; hosting events that recognise achievement and/or service by members of the community or to help in achieving a closer relationship or understanding with organisations in the Town. The office of Mayor is a valuable avenue through which to improve ties with the local community.

## **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.

## **Mayor's Allowance**

The Mayor's allowance is paid through pay roll. The Town Council recognises the need for an allowance to be paid to the Mayor in connection with his duties. Although there is no legislation to stipulate how the allowance is spent the list below gives examples of expenditure deemed acceptable:

- Mileage to and from events
- Tickets for events
- Raffle tickets
- Reasonable clothing allowance for civic events

## **Gifts**

When the Mayor attends an event to which he/she has been invited he/she may be presented with a token of appreciation, often in the form of a bouquet of flowers. It is important to remember, that under the Code of Conduct, any such gifts that have a value of more than £25 must be reported to the Monitoring Officer.

There may be occasions when the Mayor will need to present a civic gift. Any such gifts will be paid for out of the Mayor's allowance.

## **Mayor's Charities**

It has become customary, but not essential, that the Mayor supports a charity during his/her term of office. It is expected that the beneficiaries are Kingsteignton based or for the benefit of Kingsteignton residents.

During the Mayor's term he/she may host fundraising events and the Clerk will provide assistance, but consideration must be given to the amount of staff time that this may involve.

## **Remembrance Day Parade & Service**

The Mayor is expected to attend the Remembrance Day Parade & Service organised by the Royal British Legion each year.

## **Engagements and Diary**

On receipt of an invitation for the Mayor, the Town Clerk will forward the Mayor a copy at the earliest opportunity. Invitations need to be replied to as soon as possible after they are received. The Clerk and the Mayor should keep a record of engagements and the Mayor should inform the Clerk of any times that he/she is unavailable for Mayoral duties.

The Mayor should make every effort to attend each engagement, but if he/she is otherwise engaged the Deputy Mayor may attend, with the agreement of the inviter. The Clerk will send an email confirming the Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's attendance as soon as possible.

## **Dietary Requirements**

The Mayor should inform the Clerk of any dietary requirements, such as vegetarian and/or diabetic

## **Mayor's End of Year**

The Annual Council meeting notes the end of the outgoing Mayor's term of office and it is traditional for the outgoing Mayor to make a short speech. Within the speech the outgoing Mayor may give thanks to those who have supported his/her Mayoral term and details of money raised for charity(ies), if applicable.

The newly elected Mayor will present the outgoing Mayor with a Past Mayor's medal.