

# TORPOINT TOWN COUNCIL



## CIVIC PROTOCOLS

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## INTRODUCTION

This Civic Protocol policy has been produced to assist the Council, Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and employees to understand their roles and responsibilities and provide information, which may be of assistance when undertaking this prestigious civic role. The Civic Protocol 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 ensure that the civic year runs smoothly.

Not all eventualities will be covered by this policy. Assistance is always available from the Town Clerk.

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## **1.0 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 Chairman of a Town Council is to be known as 'Town Mayor'.

### **The Councillor becoming Mayor**

When elected to office the Mayor takes on an additional role to that of being a Councillor. A Mayor may have many meetings with dignitaries and various engagements. The Mayor is constantly in the public eye. It can be an enjoyable and rewarding role if entered into in the right spirit.

The Mayor is formally elected by the Town Council at the Annual Meeting in May. 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 Meeting: "I having been elected to the Office of Mayor of Torpoint Town Council for the Civic

Year ..... , declare that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties according to the best of my judgement and ability. "

The Mayor's term in office is for one year (annual meeting to annual meeting (until the new Mayor is elected\*)) and during this time the Mayor continues to be a member of the Council and presides over the meetings of the Council.

\* If the presiding Chairman [Mayor] is no longer to be a member of the council then he/she only has a casting vote.

## **2.0 ROLE OF THE MAYOR**

During the Civic year, the Mayor supports a wide variety of events throughout the town and area. The Mayor receives invitations to all kinds of events and every invitation is considered equally and on merit. If the Mayor cannot attend a function, the Deputy Mayor could be asked to attend on his/her behalf.

Duties which the Mayor may carry out include:

- Organising events to raise funds for the Mayor's chosen charities
- Acting as host on behalf of the Town Council at functions organised by the Council
- Attending functions within Torpoint, or on occasions outside the town as a ceremonial representative of the Council
- Undertaking official openings or presentations within Torpoint on behalf of the Town Council
- Representing the Council during royal or dignitary visits to the town

The Mayor will choose their own Consort and advise the Council accordingly. If the Mayor is male and the consort is female, they may be known as the Mayoress.

When representing the Town Council, the Mayor and Consort or the Mayor and Mayoress 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 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. If the chains are worn outside of the town then permission should be sought from either the parish [town] council where the chains are to be worn. If there is no parish council then permission from the principal authority for the area should be sought.

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

- At the Town Council meeting, the Mayor must chair the meeting
- If present at the Parish [Town] meeting, the Mayor must chair the meeting
- The Mayor has a casting vote in the event of the votes cast being equal
- 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

### **3.0 OTHER ROLES**

The Mayor will choose their own Mayor's Cadet and will advise the council accordingly, the Cadet will wear the Mayor's Cadet Sash and will accompany the Mayor to official functions. The Cadet will normally be selected from the town's uniformed organisations.

The Mayor will choose their own Mayor's Chaplain and will advise the council accordingly, the appointed person will wear the Mayor's Chaplain's preaching scarf. The Mayor's Chaplain is invited to attend all Council meetings in order to lead the Council in prayers ahead of the meeting.

### **4.0 ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR THE MAYOR**

Day to day support for civic duties undertaken by the Mayor is provided by the Town Council Support Officer, under the general direction of the Town Clerk. The Town Council Support Officer 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, i.e. dates and venues of functions. Once the Civic Year is arranged, the Chairmen/Mayors of other local authorities are notified of the dates to ensure, as far as possible, that no other events take place on the same dates.

The Town Council Support Officer 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 Town Council Support Officer is responsible when necessary for making arrangements in conjunction with the Mayor to attend events. The Mayor (or the Deputy Mayor if deputising for the Mayor) will normally use their own transport to attend Civic functions within and outside of Torpoint although in exceptional circumstances, alternative means of transport may be considered for engagements out of the town.

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

### **5.0 MAYOR'S CHARITY**

The Mayor's Charity traditionally raises funds for local charities and this fund is administered by the Mayor. **It should be remembered that the Mayors Charity Fund is a distinct, separate and independent fund from the Town Council finances and is not administered or controlled by the Town Council.** 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 Meeting when the Mayor is elected.

It is essential that a separate support mechanism is set up amongst colleagues, both inside and outside the Council. This may be a separate formal charity committee or informal group of helpers. The Town Council Support Officer can assist **but** it is not within the function or scope of the Town Council Support

Officer to undertake administrative or other duties for the Mayors Charity as this is not a formal civic function.

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 at the Civic Sunday service.

For information, 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 to cover all reasonable costs to raise the funds.

Charity events vary with individual Mayors but may consist of:

- Charity stall
- Supermarket bag packs
- Raffle etc. at the Mayoral Charity Ball
- Charity Evenings
- Market/Table top stall

Other events may be organised by local organisations, clubs or institutions, with proceeds given to the Mayor's Charity.

### **Cheque Presentation**

The Mayor will usually present the total amount raised for his/her charity at the Civic Sunday service following the year in office and will present the cheques to the nominated charities. The Mayor can arrange an invitation for the local press to attend or photographs can be taken and press releases sent to local newspapers.

### **Mayor's Charity Ball**

The Mayoral Charity Ball is a highlight of the Mayor's year and is sometimes held at the Town Hall but the venue is at the Mayor's discretion. VIP Invitees will be at the discretion of the Town Mayor. Use of the Town Hall for the Mayor's Charity Ball will be denoted to be one of the six occasions when the facilities can be used at no cost.

The date of the Charity Ball will be at the discretion of the Town Mayor but every effort should be made to avoid any clash with a similar event organised by a neighbouring authority.

### **Mayors Use of Council Facilities at No Cost**

To assist the Mayor in raising finances toward the Mayor's charity, the Council have resolved to allow the Mayor to nominate six occasions when Council facilities can be used at no cost to the Mayor. If the Mayor's Charity Ball is not held in the Town Hall, then there will be six other occasions when rights for this facility can be exercised. This facility is granted under specific conditions

- The event is for the pursuance of the Mayors Charity fund and for no other purpose
- The booking has to be made through the Council's booking system for audit purposes
- The use of facilities at no charge form is completed for the general record.

## **6.0 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 Mayors Allowance to meet the costs associated with the position of

Mayor. It is also commonly described as recompense for the expenses of maintaining the dignity of the office. Examples of expenditure on general items include:

- Clothing
- Partners clothing
- Donations to charities
- Collections
- Personal hospitality (including lunches and dinners)
- One-off events held by the Mayor
- Attending Mayoral functions in neighbouring parishes, towns and city\*
- Visits to local residents including awards and bouquets given by the Mayor.
- Minor repairs to the civic regalia

\*It is recommended that part of the Mayors allowance for travelling should be apportioned separately. This will allow either the Mayor or if deputising, the Deputy Mayor to claim for travel outside of the parish using the approved formula in the Council's Pay and Conditions policy (section 13).

It should be noted that the purchase of the above items would not necessarily qualify towards the allowance for tax-deductible purposes; it merely suggests that the items relate to maintaining the dignity of the office. For information, income tax is deducted at source under the PAYE system on the total allowance (other than the apportioned mileage allowance).

The Civic Events cost centre and budget contains provision for certain civic events including Civic Sunday (parade, service and reception) and receiving/entertaining civic visitors. Reasonable costs for the Mayor's inauguration at the annual meeting are also met from this budget. Every other year HMS Raleigh exercise the Freedom of the Town and this should be taken into consideration when planning the amount allocated to this cost centre both at the time when the Council Development plan is being produced and also at the budget setting meeting in November. Monitoring of this cost centre is also undertaken monthly by the Finance and Personnel Committee. Once the budget level has been reached, no payments can be made or further orders placed by Council staff without prior approval by the Council or the Town Clerk & RFO working within the scheme of delegation. This cost centre can also be used for other minor civic costs for example updating the Mayoral Board.

## **7.0 ROLE OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

The member elected as Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year by representing the Council when the Mayor is unable undertake this function. If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting, the Deputy Mayor must preside.

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.

The Deputy Mayor will choose their own Consort and advise the Council accordingly. If the Deputy Mayor is male and the consort is female, they may be known as the Deputy Mayoress.

The Deputy Mayor will normally not wear the Deputy's Chain of Office in the presence of the Town Mayor, except where the Town Mayor permits.

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 the Mayor.
- All invitations should be sent for consideration by the Mayor as Council Chairman and if the Mayor cannot attend, it may be appropriate to 'pass down' an invitation. However, this should be by no

means automatic.

- 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.

## 8.0 CIVIC INSIGNIA

- i) The Mayor's chain and badge of office are the outward signs of the civic office held, i.e. its insignia.
- ii) The Mayor wears the civic insignia on occasions such as Council meetings, Civic Sunday, Remembrance Sunday, visits to other towns and parishes for civic functions and Royal Visits.
- iii) 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.

Where the Deputy Mayor is substituting for the Mayor similar protocol applies in all of the above. Past Mayors wear the honorary badge of office denoting their previous terms of office as Mayor for events within the parish of Torpoint. The honorary badge of office should only be worn outside of the parish provided the formal invitation permits or allows it or it is worn when attending an event to honour a Mayor or Chairman of a neighbouring town/parish for example at a funeral.

## 9.0 PRECEDENCE AND PROTOCOL

### Town Mayor

The style of address is that of a Town Mayor and not a Lord Mayor. The Town Mayor should be addressed as 'Mr or Madam 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.

The Town Clerk will be able to offer further advice and assistance on these matters.

## 10.0. RECEIPT OF GIFTS

In the course of the duty of being Mayor, often gifts will be offered to the Mayor. 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 Torpoint Town Council Code of Conduct requires members, including Mayors, to register any gifts or hospitality worth £50 or over that are received in connection with their official duties as a member, and the source of the gift or hospitality.

You must register the gift or hospitality and its source within 28 days of receiving it.

Be aware that this will now be a non-registerable interest. If a matter under consideration is likely to affect a person who gave you a gift or hospitality that is registered.

If in doubt, consult the Town Clerk.

## **11.0. 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, Mayor's Chaplain, Town Clerk and Town Council Support Officer at the beginning of each New Year to suit the Mayor's diary.

### **Civic Sunday Parade, Service and reception**

The Civic Sunday Parade, Service and Reception is held on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in July. The choice of church is at the discretion of the Mayor. Consultation for the date of the Service is carried out by a meeting with the Mayor's Chaplain or Minister of the church. Civic Dignitaries together with representatives from formally invited organisations, are invited to partake of refreshments at the conclusion of the service.

### **Annual Parish Meeting**

This is **not** the Annual Meeting of the Town Council. It is a legal requirement that all parishes in England hold a distinctive 'Annual Parish Meeting' to which all local electors are entitled to attend. The meeting is organised and chaired by the Town Mayor. It must be held between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June each year but is usually held in Torpoint on the same evening following the adjourned annual meeting in May.

### **Remembrance Sunday**

Remembrance Sunday is held on the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of Armistice Day which is on November 11<sup>th</sup> at 11am. The parade and service is organised by the Torpoint Branch of the Royal British Legion on behalf of Torpoint Town Council. The Mayor will lay a wreath on behalf of the Council and residents of the town and will also appear alongside officials of the Royal British Legion to take the salute of the parade. The Deputy Mayor, deputising for Town Mayor, will lay a wreath at the Horson cemetery on behalf of the Council and residents and will, as deputising for the Town Mayor, wear the Chain of office.

### **Freedom of Torpoint**

This prestigious event is when HMS Raleigh exercise their Freedom to march through the town with "bayonets fixed, drums beating and flags flying" and is usually held every other year. Arrangements for the event is a "partnership arrangement" between HMS Raleigh and the Town Council. A date is formally agreed and a close liaison is established to agree and finalise the arrangements. The format of the day commences with the naval contingent marching through Torpoint to be met (usually at the Ferry Marshalling Lanes) by the Town Mayor and councillors of Torpoint for the ceremony. The parade will then march back through the town to receive the salute prior to reception hosted by the Town Council.

### **Miscellaneous Events within the Town**

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

- Various Wedding Anniversaries Presentation of Flowers
- Town Twinning events – Torpoint is twinned with the French town of Benodet Opening of Fayres / Garden Parties / Coffee Mornings
- Presenting Awards and Prizes to individuals and organisations
- Entertaining guests and visitors at the Town Council Offices
- Exhibitions and presentations at local schools, organisations and clubs
- 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

## **12.0. MAYOR'S END OF YEAR**

The outgoing Mayor needs to consider a number of matters:

- Resume and precis of the year in office
- 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 Chaplain
- Thanks to the Mayor's Cadet
- 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
- During the Mayoral Year, arrangements will be made for an official photograph.

## **13.0 HONORARY BURGESS**

### **OFFICE OF HONORARY BURGESS**

The following are the details of the scheme for the creation of Honorary Burgess of the town of Torpoint.

- Eligibility be limited to former members of the Town Council who have served as Town Mayor and been a member of the Town Council for a total period of 25 years, and who have not been admitted to the Honorary Freedom of the Town. Serving councillors cannot be considered.
- The Office to be relinquished by any holder returning as a member of the Town Council or being admitted to the Honorary Freedom of the Town;
- New Awards may considered every four years, immediately following local elections and to be presented at the next Civic Service.
- The current regalia is an additional bar which can be added to the former Mayor Medal and a suitably worded scroll is presented.
- The following privileges are available to holders of the Office:-
  - i) to enjoy the courtesy title of 'Burgess' and to be so addressed;
  - ii) to receive precedence in Civic processions immediately following Freeman, and between themselves, based on total years of service;
  - iii) to have a seat reserved at meetings of the Council;
  - iv) to be invited to those Civic functions to which all members of the Council are invited;
  - v) on death, to have the Union flag flown at half-mast;

## **14.0 HONORARY FREEMAN**

### **OFFICE OF HONORARY FREEMAN**

#### **A Short History**

Before the year 1835 Freeman existed in many cities as a constituent part of the corporation. Freeman enjoyed special rights, dependent on local customs, such as rights of pasturage on corporate land and exemptions from certain tolls and dues. Since the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, councils continued to

be given the power to appoint Freeman but the law gradually reduced the privileges associated with that Office. By Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Town Council was given power to admit 'persons of distinction and persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Town as Honorary Freeman or in the case of HM Services Units, Freedom of the Town.

The following are the details of the scheme for the creation of Honorary Freeman of the Town of Torpoint.

- Nominations may be received from Councillors, Council Officers, MPs, outside organisations in the town and members of the public who are on the Electoral Register.
- Nominations must be submitted to the Town Council and must set out the reason why the Honour should be conferred. The nominations must show by example, that the nominee is a 'person of distinction and/or a person who has in the opinion of the nominee rendered eminent services to the town. Serving councillors cannot be considered for nomination.
- The overriding principle is that this award should be made on merit, for achievement and exceptional service.
- The Town Council makes the decision at a separate meeting specially convened for the purpose, to confer the Honorary Freedom of the Town, the decision must be unanimous. Should the decision not be unanimous the nomination can be represented to the council for consideration, after a period of six months, in accordance with Standing Orders.
- The current regalia is a bar and a suitably worded scroll is presented.
- The following privileges are available to holders of the Office:-
  - i) to enjoy the courtesy title of 'Honorary Freeman of Torpoint' and to be so addressed;
  - ii) to receive precedence in Civic processions immediately following the Town Mayor, and between themselves, based on total years of service;
  - iii) to have a seat reserved at meetings of the Council;
  - iv) to be invited to those Civic functions to which all members of the Council are invited;
  - v) on death, to have the Union flag flown at half-mast;