

TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL



Mayor's Handbook

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a) Introduction

The aim of this Handbook is to give the incoming Mayor and Deputy Mayor an outline of the role and set out expectations.

The contents present several aspects of the Mayoral year, for example, general notes on the Mayor's role, fundraising and annual events. There are notes on etiquette and the financial arrangements, including available staff resources to assist with Mayoral engagements.

Whilst the portfolio 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. The Handbook will be subject to periodic updating.

b) The Mayor's Role

Telscombe Town Council's Chair is entitled to the title of Mayor of Telscombe. The Mayor is the public face and Chair of the Council and as such is the First Citizen of the Town of Telscombe. The Mayor is the ambassador of the Town 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.

This is a *non-political* role and the Mayor has no more power than any other Councillor, except that of a casting vote, and has no power to make decisions without a resolution of the Council.

The Mayor and, in his/her absence, the Deputy Mayor will have the following responsibilities:

- To Chair Council meetings, ensuring that effective and lawful decisions are taken and, with the assistance of Officers, guide activities by managing the meetings of the Council giving all Councillors the opportunity to speak.
- Use a casting vote in the event of a tied vote.
- To attend internal meetings with Council representatives & officers.
- To focus his/her activities on the communities of the Town and, by focusing on the Council's priorities, strengthen its links between those communities and the Council.
- To promote the Town at official functions, and at such functions represent views of the Council and not personal views.
- If necessary, call an extraordinary meeting of the Council subject to provisions in the Council's Standing Orders.
- Attend and represent the Council at Telscombe Town Council events.
- To lead on fundraising activities for the Mayor's chosen charity/charities.

The Mayor and Deputy will undertake chairmanship as soon as elected into office. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be full voting ex-officio members of all Committees and Sub-Committees.

c) Election of Mayor

Sections 15 & 34 of Local Government Act 1972 require local Councils to elect a Mayor (from members of the Council) as the first business to be transacted at the Annual Council meeting. 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.

In addition to the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as a Councillor of Telscombe Town Council, at the meeting at which the Mayor is elected he/she must sign a Declaration of Acceptance to the Office of Mayor of Telscombe.

The term of office will be for 1 year only, subject to approval by Full Council. However, a Mayor can choose to re-stand as the Mayor the following year if they so wish. 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. The outgoing Mayor will, if present, preside at the meeting to elect his/her successor. If the outgoing Mayor is not present, the Deputy Mayor shall preside at the meeting to elect the successor. If neither the outgoing Mayor or Deputy Mayor are present, the members present shall elect another member of the Council to preside.

The Mayor may appoint support such as a Mayor's Consort(s) to accompany and assist at engagements.

d) Deputy Mayor

The Deputy Mayor will be elected at the Annual Council meeting held in May. This position is only activated when the Mayor is unavailable and it is the Mayor's decision whether an engagement should be offered to the Deputy Mayor.

On the rare occasions 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 informally to the Mayor for agreement, in order that there is no misunderstanding.

The Deputy Mayor does not wear his/her chain of office when the Mayor is attending the same function.

e) Chain of Office

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 where an official invitation has been received for events within the Town where the Mayor and Town Council office considers that those present would consider it appropriate to mark the occasion.

When attending an event within another Mayor's boundary, that Mayor's permission must be given for the wearing of the Chain and worn when invited to do so. If this permission is not forthcoming, the Chain of Office cannot be worn, nor badge of office.

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 and should only be worn for official duties organised by the Council office.

Outgoing Mayors will be presented with a 'Past Mayors Badge' on completion of a full term of office, unless they are re-elected as Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor will wear his/her Chain of Office whilst deputising for the Mayor.

f) Dress Code

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should look smart and well-groomed at all engagements.

g) Political Activities

The Mayor's role is apolitical; political points should not be made. The Mayor should not attend any political gatherings in his/her capacity as Mayor and no reference to politics should be made during conversation or during a speech.

The Mayor is not permitted to canvas, leaflet or conduct electioneering during their entire term of office.

h) Promotion of the Council

The office of Mayor is a valuable avenue through which to improve ties with the local community and 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; leading in the organisation of and hosting events that fundraise, 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.

It is expected that the Mayor will lead in the organisation of fundraising events for their nominated charities. The Admin Assistant will assist in such events by issuing press releases and promotion, however it should be noted that this is a part-time staff resource which is limited.

i) Managing External Engagements

The Admin Assistant is responsible for the Mayor's diary. When the Mayor is elected in May, there will be a meeting arranged to discuss preferred communication about appointments. All invitations should come through the Admin Assistant; this ensures that the diary can be kept up to date. The Mayor should notify the Admin Assistant of any invitations received and/or respond to directly. There is a specific Mayoral Engagements Form which will be used, this helps to collect all information needed for the Mayor's attendance.

j) Website / Social Media

The office admin staff will update the website regarding Mayor's items and also post on the Facebook page. Posting should be non-political. Posts should highlight the Mayoral Engagements hosted and attended, and the Mayoral Charity/Charities.

k) Mayor's Allowance

Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 enables a Town Council to pay its Mayor "for the purpose of enabling him/her to meet the expenses of his/her office such allowance as the Council think reasonable." The Mayoral Allowance is expected to defray the cost associated with the office of Town Mayor such as printing, travel and refreshments, etc.

Telscombe Town Council recognises the need for a Mayor's allowance to deal with the expectations of the office and have set a sum of £1,500 in the budget. Such expenditure is recorded and payments managed by the RFO. It is important that the purpose to which the allowance is put can withstand public scrutiny.

l) Gifts

When the Mayor attends an event to which he/she has been invited he/she may be presented with a token of appreciation. It is important to remember that, under the Code of Conduct, any such gifts over a value of £25 must be reported to the Town Council Office in writing, within 28 days of receipt.

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 budget.

m) Mayor's Charities

If the Mayor decides they wish to support a charity and/or local projects during their term of office, they should ensure that the charity is non-political and non-discriminatory and should benefit residents of the Town. Monies must not be donated to profit making businesses established for that purpose.

n) Mayor's Christmas Card

The Admin Assistant will liaise with the Mayor in the production and distribution of the Mayor's Christmas card.

o) 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.

p) Expected Events

Civic Service

It is usual for the Mayors to have a Civic Service around the start of their Mayoral year. This service is usually held at a local church of the Mayor's choice.

***Note:** As this is technically a religious event, a Mayor of non-Christian faith or that follows no religion may not wish to arrange this service. If this is the case an alternative event can be arranged as an opportunity for the public to meet their new Mayor. Options will be discussed with the Mayor.*

Bingo Sessions

The bingo sessions which raise money for the Mayor's charity fund are held on the last Friday of each month at Telscombe Civic Centre. The Mayor will be required to attend as many of these sessions as possible.

Armed Forces Day

The Council holds a flag raising event at the Telscombe Civic Centre followed by tea and biscuits.

Merchant Navy Day

The Council holds a flag raising event at the Telscombe Civic Centre followed by tea and biscuits.

Remembrance Sunday

Events are held locally and the Mayor normally lays a wreath following a parade and service held at the Peacehaven and Telscombe War Memorial on the Sunday nearest the 11th November.

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