

# **TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL**



## **Mayor's Handbook**

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## **a) Introduction**

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide the incoming Mayor and Deputy Mayor with an overview of their roles and to outline key expectations. It covers various aspects of the Mayoral year, including general guidance on the Mayor's duties, fundraising activities, and annual events. The document also includes information on protocol, financial arrangements, and the staff resources available to support Mayoral engagements.

While it does not aim to be exhaustive, the Handbook is intended to serve as a practical and informative reference throughout the Mayor's term of office. It will be reviewed and updated periodically.

## **b) The Mayor's Role**

The Chair of Telscombe Town Council holds the title of Mayor of Telscombe. In this role, the Mayor serves as both the public representative and Chair of the Council, and is recognised as the First Citizen of the Town. Acting as an ambassador, the Mayor supports and promotes the Council's objectives within the local community. In return, residents place a high level of trust and respect in the Mayor, expecting them to carry out a wide range of duties on behalf of the Town.

The position is non-political, and the Mayor holds no greater authority than any other Councillor, aside from a casting vote when required. The Mayor cannot make decisions independently and must act in accordance with resolutions of the Council.

The Mayor, or in their 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 their 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**

Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local Councils to select a Mayor from elected members of the Council (not a co-opted member) 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 they 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 they have resigned or been disqualified, the outgoing Mayor continues in the post until their successor has been chosen and made a valid declaration of office. The outgoing Mayor will, if present, preside at the meeting to elect their 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 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 their 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 their 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 carrying out official duties in their role as Mayor. It may also be worn at events within the Town where a formal invitation has been received and the Mayor and Town Council consider it appropriate, based on the nature of the occasion and the expectations of those attending.

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.

The Mayor is responsible for the Chain during their 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 maintain a consistently professional and well-presented appearance at all engagements.

**g) Political Activities**

The role of Mayor is strictly non-political, and the office must remain impartial at all times. The Mayor should not make political statements, attend political events in an official capacity, or refer to political matters in conversation or speeches.

Throughout their term of office, the Mayor must not undertake canvassing, distribute leaflets, or participate in any form of electioneering.

**h) Promotion of the Council**

The office of Mayor provides an important opportunity to strengthen relationships within the local community. The Mayor serves as an ambassador for the Town, promoting it to the wider community. This role may be fulfilled in a variety of ways, including attending events organised by external bodies as the Council's official representative, and leading the organisation and hosting of events that raise funds, recognise community achievement or service, and foster stronger relationships and understanding among local organisations.

The Mayor is expected to take a leading role in organising fundraising events for their nominated charities or fundraising focus. The Administrative Assistant will provide support, including issuing press releases and promotional materials, however, this support is limited due to the part-time nature of the role.

**i) Managing External Engagements**

The Admin Assistant is responsible for managing the Mayor's diary. Following the Mayor's election in May, a meeting will be arranged to agree preferred methods of communication regarding appointments.

All invitations should be directed through the Admin Assistant to ensure the diary is maintained accurately. The Mayor should also inform the Admin Assistant of any invitations received or responded to directly.

A standard Mayoral Engagements Form will be used to gather all necessary information in relation to the Mayor's attendance at events.

#### **j) Website / Social Media**

Administrative staff will be responsible for updating the Council website with relevant Mayoral information and for publishing posts on the Council's Facebook page. All content must remain non-political and reflect the civic nature of the Mayoral role.

Posts should focus on the Mayor's official engagements, including events hosted and attended, as well as the Mayor's nominated charity or charities. Content should be presented in a professional, informative, and consistent manner, reflecting the dignity of the office.

#### **k) Mayor's Allowance**

Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 permits a Town Council to provide the Mayor with an allowance "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 intended to cover costs associated with the office of Town Mayor, including printing, travel, refreshments, and similar expenses.

Telscombe Town Council recognises the importance of providing a Mayor's Allowance to support the expectations of the office and has allocated £1,500 within the annual budget for this purpose. All expenditure is recorded and administered by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). Approved expenditure is set out in the Mayor's Policy. It is essential that the use of the allowance is appropriate and capable of withstanding public scrutiny.

#### **l) Gifts**

When the Mayor attends an event to which they have been invited, they may receive a token of appreciation. It should be noted that, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, any gift exceeding a value of £25 must be declared in writing to the Town Council Office within 28 days of receipt.

On occasion, the Mayor may also be required to present civic gifts. Any such expenditure will be met from 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 and full details are contained in the Mayor's Policy.

#### **n) Mayor's Christmas Card**

The Administrative Assistant will liaise with the Mayor regarding the preparation and distribution of the Mayor's Christmas card. In the interests of the environment, the Mayor may choose to send electronic cards (e-cards) instead of printed cards.

## **o) Conduct**

When carrying out official duties, the Mayor serves as the public face of the Council. While it is appropriate to be warm and approachable, the dignity of the office must be upheld at all times and behaviour that could undermine the role or give rise to criticism should be avoided.

## **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 traditionally a religious event, a Mayor who does not follow the Christian faith, or who has no religious affiliation, may choose not to hold this service. In such circumstances, an alternative event may be arranged to provide an opportunity for the public to meet the new Mayor. Suitable options will be discussed and agreed 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 11<sup>th</sup> November.

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<b>Policy</b>	Mayor's Handbook
<b>Review Cycle</b>	Every 3 years, or earlier in the event of legislative changes
<b>Date Last Adopted</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
<b>Previous Adoption Dates</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
<b>Responsibility</b>	Policy & Resources Committee and then adoption by Full Council