



Downham Market Town Council

Role of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Policy

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Date of Review: March 2028

1. Introduction

The role of the Mayor of Downham Market Town Council (DMTC) is a wide ranging and important one, as it carries the responsibility of ensuring an effective, open and legal administration of the town's affairs and governance. It encompasses both civic and procedural responsibilities and includes fostering a full and open involvement with the community and achieves this by working closely and in collaboration with the Town Clerk, council officers and fellow councillors. The Mayor represents the town in an official capacity and most importantly acts as a link between the council and its residents, and looks to achieve this by exploring ways of fostering open dialogue on local issues and encouraging community involvement in council plans and initiatives.

The definition of policy, in the context of this document, is a tool to clearly define the range of responsibilities and activities associated with the positions within the Civic Office of the Town Council. The aim of this policy 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, enabling fundraising and annual civic events. There are notes on etiquette and the financial arrangements, including staff resources to assist with Mayoral engagements. All statutory requirements are highlighted in bold.

Whilst the policy is not comprehensive on all matters, it will hopefully prove to be a useful source of general information during the Mayor's term of office. The policy should be subject to periodic updating.

It is important that this policy offers guidelines and the status of the guidance in the document remains flexible enough to cater for the change in Mayor and therefore the change in personalities, aims, behaviours, approaches to situations and personal wishes etc. It is important that civic protocols and traditions be upheld. If there is any doubt as to what this refers the Town Clerk should be contacted for confirmation.

Requirements within this policy that are enshrined in legislation are highlighted in **bold** for clear identification (excluding headings in bold).

2. The Mayor's Role

As a Town Council, DMTC's Chair is entitled to the title of Mayor Downham Market.

The Mayor is the public face and Chair of the Council and as such is the first Citizen of the Town of Downham Market. 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 position of Mayor will often be held in the highest regards within the town and see the Mayor invited to carry out a full range of duties on their behalf and throughout the town.

As Chair of the Council the Mayor seeks to enable and encourage Councillors to discharge their elected roles to the best of their ability. Co-operation and collaboration in the Council Chamber enables good decision making on policy and strategy for DMTC and enhances the reputation of the Council and its elected representatives in the town.

The Mayor should have served as a Councillor for a minimum of 2 years prior to applying for the position of Mayor, unless a new Council has been formed following election.

Any applicant for the position of Mayor should have an 80% attendance record for all summoned meetings and have attended at least one Councillor Surgery a year.

The applicant must have signed the Councillor Expectations Policy.

A new Mayor should be expected to attend Chair Training.

Mayor of DMTC – Guidance on Roles & Responsibilities

2.1 Role

- a) The Chair of the Council as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s15, known at Downham Market Town Council as Downham Market Town Mayor.
- b) To be the 'face' of the Town Council, acting as the Town Council's figurehead.
- c) To undertake ceremonial functions on behalf of the Council.
- d) To represent the Town Council at community and civic engagements, outside organisations, events and meetings.
- e) To chair Full Council meetings and the Annual Town Meeting.
- f) The Mayor should have no HR function: i.e. not approving the Town Clerk's additional hours, appraising the Town Clerk etc.

2.2 Responsibilities

2.2.1 Meetings:

- a) To convene Extraordinary Meetings of the Town Council, as necessary.
- b) To manage Full Council Meetings including public participation, ensuring discussion and any decisions are relevant to specified items on the published agenda.
- c) To ensure Full Council Meetings are introduced to attendees.
- d) In the event of a guest speaker(s) attending a Full Council meeting or the Annual Town Meeting, to make the speaker(s) feel welcome and to facilitate questions.
- e) To move meetings through the agenda, complying with standing orders.
- f) To use the casting vote, in the event of a tied vote. **This becomes a statutory requirement if the tied vote is on the election of a new Mayor.**
- g) To agree draft minutes of Full Council Meetings prior to them being published.
- h) To communicate regularly with the Town Clerk to discuss Full Council meeting agendas to support meeting preparation.

2.3 Members & Officers

- a) To be a source of support and encouragement to the Town Clerk in their duties and responsibilities and to cooperate with the Town Clerk in representing the Town Council to the town and its organisations.
- b) To work with Town Council Officers cooperatively and professionally on procedural and legal matters that may arise, including seeking officer advice on Town Council Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other adopted policy.
- c) To receive a councillor's resignation and notify the Town Clerk.
- d) To work closely with the Deputy Mayor to ensure the Deputy Mayor is engaged and kept informed of civic activity, and so to ensure continuity should it be necessary for the Deputy Mayor to deputise in the Mayor's absence.
- e) With Chair of HR, take on the required day-to-day line management tasks of the Town Clerk.
- f) To act as point of contact for the Town Clerk to discuss unexpected circumstances within the Town Council and the options/approach to be taken.
- g) To act as a conduit between councillors and officers in order to encourage and facilitate an effective and positive working environment.
- h) To encourage councillors to work in friendly and cooperative ways for the good of the town and to enhance the reputation of the Town Council.
- i) To be consulted and be involved where necessary, on any matters regarding member conduct.

2.4 Specified with Town Council Policy:

- a) To familiarise themselves with the Mayor's policy and the traditions within, such as allowing other Mayors to wear their chains within the Town, nominating a charitable cause to support, attending Town Council events to carry out key functions and civic events to be held during their year of office.
- b) To be aware of and observe the Town Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- c) To manage public participation at Full Council meetings, in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders.
- d) In the event of a grievance being raised by the Town Clerk about the Chair of HR, to handle this grievance in accordance with the Town Council's Grievance Policy.
- e) To be involved in the Town Council's tender selection process, if required, in accordance with the Town Council's Financial Regulations.

2.5 General

- a) To assist officers with the Town Council's website page and to keep abreast of its contents.
- b) To be available to the Town Clerk, Senior Officers and Councillors for discussions and meetings during the year (unless prevented by illness or similar unexpected factors).
- c) To 'Lead by example' as a councillor by complying within the Code of Conduct, to assist with the promotion of best practice and engage and encourage and support fellow councillors in doing the same.
- d) To understand and respect that the position of Mayor has no delegated powers to act on or make decisions on behalf of the Town Council.

2.6 Duties

- a) To sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office immediately after election as Mayor Local Government Act 1972 s831.
- b) To use the casting vote, in addition to the vote given, in the event of a tied vote when the Town Council is electing the Mayor of Downham Market (Local Government Act 1972 s15 (3)).
- c) If Chair of particular Full Council meeting where AGAR is considered) to sign the Town Council's Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015).

2.7 Office support for Mayor

The Town Clerk and officers will assist the Mayor with –

- a) Dealing with function invites for the Mayor (or Deputy in their absence) and preparations for functions being attended, ensuring the Mayor's diary is kept up to date.
 - b) Organising Mayoral events throughout the Municipal Year that the Mayor wishes to hold in their year of office.
 - c) Assisting the Mayor with preparations for attendance at other Town Council events such as Remembrance Day and the annual Horse Fair event. Also helping with speeches or special arrangements when required.
 - d) Enabling Civic Protocol to be met and upheld.
 - e) Liaising with the Mayor's chosen charity.
- Mayors will be encouraged to give thought early in their term of office as to whether they may wish to hold additional events throughout the year and discuss this with the Town Clerk and officers, so as to enable them to assess officer capacity to support the event and to be able to feed into the event at an early stage. This includes when the Mayor is working with an external partner to organise an event, as officers will need to

be able to assess the level of officer involvement (and capacity to do so) as well as any health & safety, financial or liability implications this may have for the Town Council.

The Mayor and Deputy will undertake chairpersonship as soon as elected to office. It should be noted that if the Mayor/Deputy were to attend any committee of the Council, they do so in an ex-officio capacity or where they are appointed to a committee, they are appointed as a Councillor not as Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor/Deputy Mayor will have the right to attend a meeting of any Committee (apart from Human Resources committee) in accordance with Standing Orders.

3. Election of Mayor & Deputy 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.

Within Downham Market Town Council it has been agreed that to be eligible to stand for the election of Mayor, the member of the Council is required to have at least two year's experience of being a Council member, except for in the unusual event that at an election all 20 members of the Council are new. Full Council may however of course overturn this requirement if it deems appropriate to do so.

The Mayor will provide the names of two nominees to the Town Clerk at least 2 weeks prior to the vote taking place. The nominees must be prepared to speak in support of the proposed Mayor at the Annual Council meeting unless Council decide to waive this requirement.

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 a new Mayor.

In addition to the Declaration of Acceptance to Office as a Councillor of Downham Market 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 Downham Market**, and sign for the care of the Mayoral Chains.

The term of office will be set at one year only, unless Full Council approves otherwise. However, a Mayor can choose to re-stand as the Mayor the following Municipal Year if they so wish.

Unless the Mayor 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 Mayoress/Mayor's Consort to accompany and assist at engagements. In the event of the Mayoress/Consort being unable to attend an engagement with the Mayor, the Mayor may choose an Escort to accompany them. It is important that the Town Clerk is informed of the Escorts planned attendance so that the organisers can be informed in advance.

The Mayor may also wish to appoint a Chaplain or other religious support, to support them at civic events as appropriate.

4. Deputy Mayor

The role of deputy Mayor will often vary depending on the holder of office and the preferences of the Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor may act specifically as an alternative to the Mayor i.e. only usually performing their role when standing in for the Mayor in their absence, whether this be chairing meetings or attending engagements.

Alternatively, the Deputy Mayor may take on a more proactive and involved role, which sees more of a civic partnership with the Mayor. This may involve attending engagements together and supporting the Mayor in the day-to-day activities they undertake. A Deputy Mayor of this nature would not normally negate the need for a Mayoress or Mayor's Consort, unless the Mayor and Deputy Mayor agreed this to be the case. It is important for the Mayor to check whether an invite is specifically for the Mayor and their Mayoress/Consort and excludes the Deputy Mayor. The Town Clerk/Officers will be able to advise on situations where guidance is required as to correct civic protocol.

DEPUTY MAYOR OF DOWNHAM MARKET – guidance on Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Role

- a) To deputise the Mayor of Downham Market's Role.

4.2 Responsibilities

- a) To chair Full Council meetings in the absence of the Mayor of Downham Market, encompassing the Mayor of Downham Market's responsibilities as listed.
- b) To familiarise themselves with the Mayor's Policy in order to deputise for the Mayor of Downham Market at civic engagements and Town Council events as and when required.
- c) To work closely with the Mayor of Downham Market to be informed of civic activity, and to ensure continuity should it be necessary for the Deputy Mayor to deputise in the Mayor's absence.

4.3 Duties

- a) To sign a declaration of Acceptance of Office immediately after election as Deputy Mayor Local Government Act 1972 s831.**
- b) If chairing the Annual Meeting of the Town Council in the Mayor of Downham Markets absence, to use the casting vote, in addition to the vote given, in the event of a tied vote when the Town Council is electing the Mayor of Downham Market Local Government Act 1972 s153.**
- c) (If Chair of particular Full Council meeting where AGAR is considered) to sign the Town Council's Annual Governance Return (Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015).**

5. Written and Verbal Protocol

The full title of the Mayor is – The Mayor of Downham Market.

Depending on the wishes of the individual Mayor, they may be addressed as: Dear Mr. Mayor or Dear Madam Mayor or Mayor. In the event of uncertainty, “Mayor’ can be used.

6. Chains of Office

There are three chains of office under the Council's ownership:

- Mayor's chain of office
- Mayoress/Mayor's Consort's Chain of Office
- Deputy Mayor's Chain of Office

The Mayor's Chain of Office is referred to as the Badge of office.

The chains (or Badge) of office should only be worn when the above individuals are undertaking official duties in their official capacity.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should be able to both wear their chains of office at the same function.

An Escort cannot wear the Mayoresses/Mayor's Consort's Chain of Office, an Escort will not have a chain or badge to wear.

The Chains (or Badge) of Office may be worn where an official invitation has been received for events within the Town where the Mayor and Town Council Office consider it appropriate to mark the occasion.

When attending an event within another Mayor's boundary, that other 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.

It is the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor's responsibility to safekeep and store of the Chains of Office for the duration of the Mayor's term.

7. Dress Code

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

8. 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.

9. Promotion of the Council

The Mayor cannot canvass, leaflet or conduct electioneering whilst in the capacity of Mayor, but may do so in their capacity as councillor.

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 an 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 organization of and hosting events that fundraise, recognize achievement and/or service by members of the community or to help in fostering a closer relationship or understanding with organisations in the town.

The Mayor is encouraged to enable fundraising for the Mayor's chosen charities and also lead in the organisation of appropriate fundraising events.

10. Managing External Engagements.

The Town Clerk/ Officers will assist with 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 council offices, this ensures that the diary is kept up to date and the officers informed of the Mayor's functions. The Mayor should notify the office of any invitations received so the office can respond directly.

At the start of their term of office, the Mayor and the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk will discuss their preferred working methods and approaches and where the officers are concerned about the availability for undertaking civic office tasks. This will help ensure clear expectations from the start of office and a mutually respectful approach to the year ahead.

11. Website/Social Media

The office should manage the Council's website, however, the Mayor should be allowed a quarterly newsletter should they wish.

12. Mayor's Allowance

Section 15(5) of LGA 1972 enables a Mayor to be granted an allowance to meet the expenses of his/her office. This is set by the Council when adopting the Council budget.

The Council recognises the need for a Mayor's allowance to deal with the expectations of the office in connection with printing, travel and refreshments. On occasion the Mayor may be invited to out of town engagements. The Mayor is entitled to claim expenses in line with the Council's Member Allowance Policy. Invites to events within Downham Market will usually have priority over out of town events.

Any underspend of the Mayor's allowance will go back into the Town Council's funds.

13. Gifts

When the Mayor or Deputy Mayor attends an event to which he/she has been invited they may find they are 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 over a value of twenty five pounds must be reported to the Town Council Office in writing, within 28 days.

The Mayor/Deputy Mayor should familiarize themselves with the Council's Gifts & Hospitality Policy which provides useful examples of the sort of gifts that are considered to be under the value of twenty five pounds.

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

14. 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.

All monies raised or donated will be banked by Downham Town Council and coded to the Mayor's Charity, being presented to the charity at the end of the Municipal Year. A Mayor may choose more than one charity to raise funds for concurrently; in this instance both/all charities must be aware of this fact.

Before confirming their chosen charity/project, the Mayor must have had a discussion with the Town Council's civic officers about their preferences and agree a process for establishing representation.

The Mayor will also be encouraged to work alongside local charities to help boost their own fundraising efforts or support their priorities for example recruiting volunteers.

15. Mayor's Festive Cards

It is usual practice for the Mayor to issue festive cards each year. Many Mayors will choose to send Christmas cards, although individual Mayors may decide whether to send cards relating to another festival in addition or instead of Christmas.

A festive card should only be electronic and should show a picture of the Mayor at the Christmas Lights Switch-On and give a list of the Council's achievements within the Mayor's first 6 months in office.

Officers will liaise with the Mayor regarding any production and distribution of any Mayor's festive cards. This is sent to the selected individuals on the civic list and others as agreed by the Mayor.

There will be a budget set by Full Council for the festive cards. The Mayor should discuss with Town Council civic officers early in the Mayoral term what festive cards they anticipate wanting to send, so officers can ensure to allocate the budget and advise accordingly.

16. Conduct

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

Misconduct by the Mayor or Deputy should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk who has responsibility to investigate. Concerns that can be handled informally can be raised with the Town Clerk but formal concerns regarding misconduct need to be raised with the Monitoring Officer at the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk in line with the Town Council's Complaints Policy.

17. Civic Events

The Mayor is expected to attend 80% of the Town Council's Civic Events, allowing for personal holidays. Currently this includes Remembrance Sunday, Pause and Remember, Mayor Making, Civic Service, Mayor's at Home and any other events at which the Mayor should attend in an official capacity to represent the Council.

END