

Civic Protocol

The Civic protocol is designed to help clarify the events and functions that the Charter Mayor and the Chairman of Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) Council will attend.

The Civic role of the Chairman of the SWT Council includes the following tasks:

- Prioritise and focus on promoting and enhancing strategic district - wide initiatives and promote public involvement in the Council's activities.
- Host high profile business and political visitors
- Attend events of regional, national or international significance
- Attend activities that enhance the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area.
- be the conscience of the Council

It is anticipated that both the Chair role and Charter Mayor Role will complement each other but it will be vital that there is close liaison between the relevant office and Office-holders to ensure each role is afforded appropriate respect. The protocol arrangements will, as a consequence, require refinement as the new arrangements are embedded and the roles defined. This protocol will be reviewed after the first year of operation.

Precedence

The Chairman of SWT Council takes precedence across the District whilst The Mayor is the first citizen of Taunton. The exception to this is where an event involves a member of the Royal Family, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant or High Sheriff within Taunton Town (the unparished area), then the Mayor would take precedence.

The Mayor

The central role of the Mayor is as a representative for the town, the community and local democracy. The Office of Mayor can be used to:-

- Champion causes/charities, raising their profile;
- Raise awareness of local democracy;
- Celebrate success;
- Be the face of the Town in times of sadness;
- Welcome visitors on behalf of the Town.

The Mayor is responsible for:

- Upholding and promoting the Town Charter and preserving the historic rights and privileges associated with the Town e.g. regalia. (Alongside the other Charter Trustee's).

- Presiding over meetings of the Charter Trustees of Taunton.
- Encouraging Citizenship and Participation in the life of the Town; and
- Promoting the Town at all functions attended.

The Deputy Mayor

Purpose of Post:

To assist the Mayor at Civic Functions and to represent the Mayor when he / she is unable to attend an engagement (by prior arrangement with the hosts)

Duties and Responsibilities

1. To deputise for the Mayor, when the Mayor is unable to fulfil the duties of his / her role, at the request of the Mayor or on the advice of the Civic Office.
2. To support the Mayor at annual civic events and other events hosted by the Council, at the request of the Mayor.
3. To carry out the duties of the post, fairly and without discrimination and in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Council.

The Functions of the Mayor of Taunton

Throughout the year the Mayor is required to perform two basic functions:-

(1) Chair of Meetings of the Charter Trustees

The Mayor is the Chair of meetings of the Charter Trustees which comprises all 16 Councillors who have been elected to represent Wards in the Unparished Area of Taunton. This is primarily a function of control and chairmanship at these meetings.

(2) Taunton Ambassador

This is a non-political role. The various engagements and events range from civic receptions to carol services. The Mayor is likely to undertake between 200 - 300 engagements each year, including:-

- **Charity and Voluntary Events**

The Mayor supports local charitable and voluntary organisations within the Unparished Area and is frequently asked to open an event or attend an anniversary.

As the President or Patron of a number of societies and other voluntary bodies, the Mayor is invited to attend several Annual General Meetings.

- **Civic Receptions**

On occasion, hospitality is likely to be given by the Council and the Mayor hosts these events. The Mayor would normally make a speech of welcome on behalf of the Council and the Citizens of Taunton. This is followed by a response by the leading guest.

- **Flag Raising Ceremonies and Tributes**

The Mayor attends the various flag raising ceremonies throughout the year. These include Armed Forces Day, Emergency Services (999) Day, Merchant Navy Day and Commonwealth Day. Tributes in the form of two minute silences have been held in the past as a mark of respect for those who have lost their lives following an act of terrorism or a natural disaster.

- **Civic Visits to and from Taunton's Twin Towns**

All the arrangements are made by the Civic and Engagement Specialist. This involves a complete programme for the visitors which is compiled in conjunction with the twinning associations and includes a welcoming reception and visits to centres of interest in the locality.

- **Church Services and Carols**

The Mayor invites the Members of the Council, Freeman, Past Mayors and Taunton's Member of Parliament, to join in religious services on different occasions throughout the year. The largest and most important of these are annual services held in St Mary Magdalene Church, namely the Civic Service and the Remembrance Service in November. Just before Christmas, the Mayor hosts a Carol Concert at the church and is usually asked to read one of the lessons. The Mayor also attends a large number of Carol Services held at various locations within the Unparished Area.

- **Other Events - Festival Launches, Sporting Events, School Visits, Multicultural and Religious Events**

The Mayor is often invited to attend large events staged in Taunton. The Mayor is invited annually to launch sporting events such as the Taunton Marathon, or to present the prizes. The Mayor is occasionally invited to attend matches in support of local clubs. The Mayor is often invited to visit schools and sometimes wears the full Mayoral robes and Chain of Office, so that the children can learn something of Taunton's Mayoralty. The Mayor also formally welcomes exchange students from Taunton, Massachusetts and Kitwe, Zambia who have strong affiliations with local schools.

Important Notes

- (i) Any Charter Trustee who wishes to be nominated as the Mayor must have served at least three years as a former Taunton Deane Borough Councillor or as a Somerset West and Taunton Councillor to be nominated as Mayor and two years as a former Taunton Deane Borough Councillor or as a Somerset West and Taunton Councillor to be nominated as Deputy Mayor.
- (ii) The Mayor will be expected to drive himself/herself (or arrange alternative modes of transport) to engagements within the Taunton Unparished Area. A mileage allowance of 45p per mile (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs non-taxable allowance) will be paid on submission by the Mayor of a monthly claim for reimbursement.
- (iii) It is traditional for the Mayor to nominate at least one Charity for their one year Term of Office. Any donations or proceeds from events such as the Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir or the Civic Carol Concert will be held for distribution to the Charity or Charities nominated by the Mayor at the end of the Mayoral Year.
- (iv) The Charter Trustees support the presumption that the person taking up the Mayor of Taunton role was presumed to serve in the role for two consecutive years, if so wished by that person, though still being selected on an Annual basis.
- (v) The Charter Trustees support the tradition as undertaken under the former Taunton Deane Borough Council Mayoralty that there was an expectation of the Deputy Mayor taking on the role of Mayor of Taunton upon completion of their term of service as Deputy, if so wished by that person.

Contact –

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