

## **Newport Town Council - Mayor Guidelines**

(Approved 9 Nov 2011 – Minute 171/11-12 refers. Revised 10 Nov 2014 – Minute 95/14-15 refers.)

References:

- A. LGA 1972 , ss 14 (1).
- B. LGA1972, s 245 (6).
- C. LGA 1972, Sch 12 para 11 (1)
- D. LGA 1972 ss 15 (5)
- E. Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, SI 2003/1021, reg 25 (10).

### **Introduction**

Under the local government reorganisation in 1972 Newport as an existing Urban District was given the option of becoming a successor Town Council with the office of Town Mayor of Newport. The option was exercised.

The Town Council must appoint a Chairman (**Reference A**). With Newport being a Town the Chairman of Newport Town Council may be referred to as the Town Mayor (**Reference B**).

The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are appointed at the Annual meeting of the Town Council (in May).

Following the custom of the Urban Unitary Authority no mayor has served in excess of three consecutive years. This is customary and does not preclude longer periods of office or assuming office for a further term.

The regalia is that of the former Urban District. The badge was presented to the Town by Audley Engineering Company in November 1954. The Chain was presented by Councillor Mrs S Sandiford in 1962. They were modified for the Town Council.

### **General Duties**

The roles of the Town Mayor are broadly 2-fold, the chairman of the Council (concerned with meetings) and the public face of the Council.

#### **Chairman of the Council**

- The Town Mayor is in a position of authority, responsible for ensuring that effective and lawful decisions are taken at council meetings.
- The Town Mayor will Chair meetings (**Reference C**) of the Full Town Council, wearing regalia. At such times they are bound to act according to the Standing Orders of the Town Council. When the Town Mayor sits as a committee chairman or ordinary councillor regalia is not to be worn

- The Town Mayor should be consulted on the content of the agenda (as the legal signatory, the clerk has the final say)
- The Town Mayor is to work in partnership with the Clerk to make sure that the Council is properly informed for making lawful decisions during meetings.
- The Town Mayor is responsible for involving all councillors in discussion and ensuring that councillors keep to the point. The Town Mayor summarises the debate and facilitates the resolving of clear decisions.
- The Town Mayor has a casting vote (in addition to their first vote if there is a tied vote).

### **Public Face of the Council**

- The Town Mayor will often be the public face of the Town Council.
- A Chairman's allowance is a useful sum of money in the budget to enable the Chairman to represent the Town Council in a civic capacity. The Town Mayor must keep an accurate record of what is spent under this allowance.
- The Town Mayor often speaks on behalf of the Town Council but must remember to express the views of the Town Council and not personal views. If in doubt the Town Mayor should refer to points agreed in the Town Council minutes.
- By law the Town Mayor cannot make a formal decision on behalf of the Town Council.

To assist the process of election of the Mayor, under normal circumstances it is expected that the Deputy Mayor will become Mayor. To that end, in the April meeting the council will resolve that a person 'xyz' is Deputy Mayor elect, and that another person 'abc' is Mayor elect. The election of the Deputy becomes the significant election at this point.' The May election is still sovereign, but the resolution would carry weight.

### **Duties continued**

It has been custom for the Town Mayor to host the annual Civic Sunday held in June at the commencement of the Mayoral Year, and the Civic Ball, held towards the end of the Mayoral year.

Civic Sunday is a free event to thank representatives of the local community for their contribution to the Town. A guest list will be compiled and vetted by the Town Mayor and will include civic leaders as considered appropriate. Other members may suggest additional names and appointments to the Town Mayor. The Town Council meets the cost of the function as laid down in the Annual Budget. In 2010/11 the Town Council included £500 to cover the cost of Civic Sunday.

The Civic Ball lies totally within the prerogative and discretion of the Town Mayor. It is the custom for the Town Mayor to organise, arrange and finance this function within the Mayor's allowance.

### **The Town Mayor's Allowance**

It has been custom for the Town Mayor to receive an allowance in accordance with **Reference D**, in addition to the annual councillor allowance (**Reference E**). The level of the allowance is set as part of the budgetary process and is paid in 2 distinct ways:

1. A quarterly allowance in advance equal to 1/8th of the annual allowance (less any PAYE and NI contributions). In setting the level of the un-receipted element of the allowance the Town Council acknowledge that there is likely to be an increase in expenditure in items that have a duality of purpose e.g:

- Increased telephone use.
- Increased dry-cleaning costs.
- Increased requirement for formal clothing.
- Increased requirement to entertain.
- Charitable donations.
- Child care
- Upgrades to IT
- Increased use of printer ink.

2. Reimbursement of reasonable receipted expenditure<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>incurred specifically as a result of the office of Town Mayor e.g.

- Cost of tickets to civic events within Telford & Wrekin and closely neighbouring local authorities.

- Reasonable travel expenses to civic events within Telford & Wrekin and closely neighbouring local authorities.

- Personalised stationary.

- Additional funding to enhance Newport Town Council co-ordinated civic events.

Where the Deputy Town Mayor represents the Town Council, in the absence of the Town Mayor, they may draw down funding from the receipted element of the Town Mayor's allowance.

Payment of claims should generally be transacted at the Monthly meetings of the Town Council.

Any unspent balances of the allowance at the end of the municipal year are to be returned to the Town Council balances and considered in year savings.

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<sup>1</sup> Expenditure below £5 does not necessarily require a receipt but where this is the case an explanation should be provided on the claim form.

<sup>2</sup> Where the expenditure is known in advance the Town Mayor can ask the Finance Officer to effect payment by providing reasonable notice.