



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Civic Handbook

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|-------------|----------------|---------------|--|-------------------|
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This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

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Introduction

Congratulations on your nomination as the Mayor Elect & your subsequent election as the Mayor of Weston-super-Mare. The Town Mayoralty is a position which gives the opportunity to promote and uphold the special character of Weston-super-Mare. It is important that you are as well prepared as possible for the ensuing year. We will do everything possible to support you in your term of office and make it a most enjoyable and a very memorable positive experience.

This Handbook has been produced to provide information and guidance in your new role. It is set out in 4 sections;

- 1. The Mayoral Candidate and preparing for the role**
- 2. The Office of Mayor**
- 3. Chairing meetings**
- 4. History of the Council and Mayoralty**

The Handbook is a working document that can be referred to during your preparation for the role of Mayor and also throughout your term of office.

Section 1 - Preparing for the role of Mayor

It is important that as a Councillor you are fully prepared for the personal effect the Mayoralty may have on your family, friends and political career. After all you did not come on to the Council for the main purpose of being Mayor.

The role of a modern Mayor can be regarded as;

- A symbol of authority
- A symbol of an open society
- An expression of social cohesion.

Initial Considerations

You may want to use the points listed below to consider how they can have a positive impact on the aspects of Mayoral life. It will help to dispel some of the concerns that you may have, by considering these points, in advance of your election as Mayor.

1. Consideration of how much time will need to be committed to the role.
2. The effect of becoming Mayor on your:
 - a. Yourself
 - b. Mayoral partner
 - c. Family and friends
 - d. Career or job
 - e. Political career
 - f. Personal and religious beliefs
 - g. Non-Council interests
 - h. Relationship with other Councillors
 - i. Relationship with your Parishioners

Initial actions for the Mayor

These actions should be completed before your election at the Annual Council meeting. The Civic Office will provide guidance and information to assist you. Addressing these matters early will help ensure the smooth running of your term in office.

1. **Select a Mayoress/Consort or Mayor's Consort - If required**
2. **Complete a thorough induction process.**
3. **Appoint a Chaplain and Deputy Chaplain, if desired.**

This should be considered before becoming Mayor Elect, allowing time to speak with your proposed Chaplain about the role's commitments and their willingness to undertake them.

It is customary for the Mayor to announce their Chaplain for the year ahead at the Annual Meeting of the Council. The Chaplain will assume responsibility for offering prayers of the Council at Civic Service, Remembrance Sunday and such like. The Chaplain will offer spiritual guidance to the Mayor as and when required and will assist in organising the Civic and Carol Services.

Upon your election, the Civic Office will issue letters offering roles for your term of office and inviting acceptance. The Civic Office will also provide role-holders with dates of events they will be expected to attend.

Before your election as Mayor Elect, you should:

1. **Appoint a Mayor's Cadet** (if desired). This can be done on a rotational basis, or you may choose a specific cadet force if you have a personal connection or alignment with it.
2. **Provide a biography** to the Mayor's Office. Guidance on possible content can be found on page 11.
3. **Decide whether to adopt a theme for your year** that supports or promotes an aspect of the Town Council Strategy. After your election as Mayor Elect in March, discuss with the Civic Office how activities throughout the year can be planned to promote this theme.
4. **Advise the Mayor's Office of the following:**
 - Important dates when you will be unavailable (e.g. holidays, medical appointments, personal anniversaries, North Somerset Council or other public commitments).
 - Any pre-existing medical conditions or disabilities that may affect your ability to carry out the role (shared at your discretion).
 - Dietary requirements (e.g. vegan, vegetarian, ethnic considerations, food allergies, intolerances) so the Civic Office can advise event organisers of any special requirements. The Protocol Form sent to organisers prior to the Mayor's attendance will cover these matters.
5. **Provide the Civic Office with a personal address list** for invitations to Civic events and Mayoral Christmas cards. This should be planned in advance to ensure timely distribution and may differ between events.
6. **Select a charity or charities** to support during your term-If you so wish
These administrative matters will greatly assist with the smooth running of your Mayoral year.

In addition, you may wish to reflect on questions that will help shape the culture and style of your Mayoralty:

- Who are you?
- What kind of Mayor do you want to be?
- What is your Council like?
- How does the role work in practice?

Planning:

- What do you want to achieve during your Mayoralty?
- How can you realise everything you want to do during your Mayoralty?

Vision:

- What changes do you want to see when you have finished?
- What can you achieve?
- How do you set ambitious and realistic objectives?

Support:

- Where do you need help?
- Who can help you?

Position:

- How can you make sure that everyone from the council supports you?
- Where does the modern Mayor fit in the community?

Further reading

Civic and Ceremonial: A Handbook, History and Guide for Mayors, Councillors and Officers by *Paul Millward*

More than a Chain: How to be a twenty-first century Mayor, Lord Mayor or Council Chair by *Duncan Bhaskaran Brown*

Section 2 - The Office of Mayor

The two distinct parts to the Office of Mayor are; Civic and Constitutional.

Civic - The Mayor is the First Citizen of the Town.

Constitutional - The Mayor is Chair of Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

It is important that the Mayor fully understands the role and the duties they will undertake during their year in office. The Deputy Mayor's role is that of a substitute, not an additional civic representative, and is therefore to deputise for the Mayor when the Mayor is unable to fulfil their duties, as requested.

Mayoress/Consort

There is no legal obligation to appoint a Mayoress or Consort. However, the role can significantly contribute to the success of the Mayoralty by providing support throughout the year. The considerations outlined in the following points apply equally to partners.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor must conduct themselves appropriately at all times and avoid any actions that could bring the Council into disrepute.

They should not:

- Attend any function or event that supports an organisation or individual whose objectives are contrary to law and/or Council policy.
- Solicit engagements, visits, or otherwise seek favours by virtue of their office.

1. Roles and responsibilities of the Mayor

The role of the Mayor is to:

1. **Chair meetings of the Council** and ensure that its business is conducted in an orderly and proper manner, in accordance with statutory obligations and the Council's Constitution.
2. **Preside as the ceremonial head of the Council** at civic functions and social occasions.
3. **Act as signatory** to the Council's official seal on documents on behalf of the Council.
4. **Host events** and receive and welcome members of the Royal Family, dignitaries, and visitors.
5. **Attend functions** as a representative of the Council.
6. **Make speeches**, most often expressions of thanks or welcome. If required to speak on the work of the Council, remarks should be factual and align with the strategic aims of the Council.
7. **Promote, raise the profile, and gain publicity** for projects and events that benefit the citizens of the Town - predominantly by attending events (by invitation) to attract publicity for the cause.

8. **Encourage citizenship** and participation in the life of the Town.
9. **Celebrate success** both within the Council and across the Town.

Responsibilities

Specific matters relating to the role of the Mayor are included in the Civic Protocol (see Appendix 1; to be developed by the Civic Officer).

Key Points

1. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected Members of the Council and are Town Councillors.
2. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor have no additional powers beyond those of a Councillor.
3. The Mayor will normally hold office from the Mayor Making Ceremony for one municipal year.
4. The Mayor will preside over Full Council meetings.
5. The Mayor will meet with the Town Clerk and Leader prior to Full Council meetings.
6. The Mayor must observe the strictest neutrality and impartiality at all times.
7. The Mayor may designate a Mayoress, Consort, or Consorts as appropriate.
8. Irrespective of gender, the Mayor will be known as the Mayor of Weston-super-Mare, addressed as “Mr. Mayor” or “Madame Mayor” and have their name preceded by “Councillor.”
9. The Mayor shall be regarded as the First Citizen of the Town.

Election

The Town Mayor is elected each year, for a term of one municipal year, by Town Councillors. Confirmation of the **Mayor Elect** by the full Council takes place at the Town Council meeting in March, allowing the incoming Mayor to prepare for formal election at the Mayor Making in May. The Deputy Mayor is also confirmed in March and formally elected to office in May.

Nature of the Role

For the mayoral year, the role is strictly non-political and representative of every section of the community, with a focus on cultivating a positive image of the Town and enhancing the well-being of its citizens. The Council Leader is responsible for the political leadership of the Council.

The Mayor’s role is largely ceremonial. As First Citizen, the Mayor acts as the voice of the Town:

- **In times of celebration** – greeting members of the Royal Family, dignitaries, and distinguished guests.
- **In times of sorrow or crisis** – speaking on behalf of the Town during natural or man-made disasters and major incidents.

The Mayor also lays the wreath on behalf of the Town at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

2. Mayoress/Consort or Consort

The Role of the Mayoress/Consort

The Mayoress/Consort will not normally attend functions in their own right without the presence of the Mayor. They will wear the appropriate pendant or Chains of Office¹.

As previously stated, these roles are not recognised by law. If the Mayor chooses to appoint a Mayoress/Consort, the role may be undertaken by a spouse, partner, friend, or relative of any gender. The role is given precedence alongside the Mayor and typically includes:

1. Providing personal support to the Mayor.
2. Accompanying the Mayor on engagements.
3. Observing civic protocol.

When carrying out their roles, the Mayoress/Consort, Deputy Mayoress or Consort should remember the public nature of their position in supporting the Mayor. Their behaviour and manner must be appropriate at all times and must not bring the Council into disrepute. Advice and guidance are available from the Civic Office.

If the Mayoress/Consort is unable to escort the Mayor to an engagement, the Mayor may either:

- Attend alone, or
- Choose another person to act as escort.

If another escort is chosen, they must not wear the Chain of Office. The Civic Officer should be given advance notice of the person attending so they can inform the individual or organisation hosting the event.

3. Deputy Mayor

Duties and Responsibilities

1. **Deputise for the Mayor** when the Mayor is unable to fulfil the duties of the post, at the request of the Mayor.
2. **Support the Mayor** at annual civic events and other events hosted by the Council, as requested by the Mayor.
3. **Carry out the duties** of the post fairly and without discrimination, in line with the aims and objectives of the Council.

4. Induction and Training

If you have served a term as Deputy Mayor prior to your Mayoral election, you will already have begun the induction process with the Civic Office and been issued with

¹ The Civic Office will provide advice on correct wearing.

this Handbook. If you have been elected directly to the office of Mayor, your induction process will begin imminently.

It is recommended that the Mayor attends Civic Heads training, ideally prior to taking office. Where possible, this will be arranged during the previous year while serving as Deputy Mayor. If this is not possible - such as in cases where you have not served as Deputy Mayor - it will be provided at the earliest opportunity during your Mayoralty.

Civic Heads training is arranged by the Democratic Services Manager, who is responsible for the provision of civic development. Detailed arrangements will be made on your behalf by the Civic Office.

Other training may also be required, such as:

- Chaining meetings
- Dealing with the media
- Public speaking

Please discuss any development needs you may have with the Civic Officer.

5. Precedence

The legal position of the Mayor in relation to precedence is set out in Section 3(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, which states:

“The Chair of a District Council shall have precedence in the District but not so as prejudicially to affect His Majesty’s royal prerogative.”

If both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are present at an engagement, the Mayor takes precedence and should wear the Chain of Office. Unless the civic event² is arranged by Weston-super-Mare Town Council, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should not both be present in civic insignia.

The Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, the High Sheriff of Somerset, or the Chair of North Somerset Council - when attending a function or event in an official capacity representing Somerset or North Somerset - take precedence over the Mayor.

A Town Mayor does not have precedence over the Chair of the District Council or the Chair of the County Council. This means that, provided a Member of the Royal Family is not present and attended by the Lord Lieutenant, Deputy Lieutenant, or High Sheriff in their official capacity, the Chair of the District Council will take precedence.

² A civic event is defined by the Town Council Civic Matters Consultative Group as “an event or function organised by Weston-super-Mare Town Council and hosted by the Mayor.” This definition excludes events such as charity fundraising functions.

However, at functions hosted by the Town Mayor within the boundaries of the Town Council, to which the Chair of the District Council is invited, it is customary for the Chair of the District Council to relinquish precedence in favour of the Town Mayor. This is also usually the case at other local civic events organised by the Town Council.

This custom is specifically observed at the Remembrance Sunday Service held at the War Memorial in Grove Park.

6. Mayor's Engagements

The Mayor will have use of a laptop during their term of office. The Outlook calendar is linked to the Civic Officer, who will electronically notify the Mayor of any invitations to attend an event or function. The Civic Officer will maintain the Mayor's diary of official engagements on the Outlook calendar.

Once an invitation is accepted, the Civic Office will send briefing and protocol forms to the event organiser, electronically wherever possible. The *Mayor's Briefing Form* (see Appendix 2) is completed by the event organiser after the Mayor accepts the invitation. This form provides all necessary information for the Mayor's attendance.

The Civic Officer will meet with the Mayor at an agreed frequency - determined by the Mayor - to discuss engagements, speeches, transport arrangements, events, and other related matters.

Key Points for Managing Civic Engagements

1. All invitations to engagements, whether received verbally or in writing, should be referred to the Civic Office.
2. The Mayor should not receive any official mail at their home address.
3. The Mayor is expected to send personal notes of thanks for engagements attended. Official stationery is provided for this purpose.
4. The Mayor should not normally accept engagements outside Weston-super-Mare unless they are civic in nature. (*See Appendix 3 – Engagement Scoring Form to assist in evaluating invitations.*)
5. The Chains of Office should only be worn when undertaking official duties. The rules for wearing the Chains of Office and guidance on their security can be found in the Civic Protocol (see Appendix 1).
6. The Chains of Office may not be worn at an engagement outside Weston-super-Mare without the express permission of the Chair of that Parish, Town, or District.
7. If the Mayor cannot attend an engagement, they may request that the Deputy Mayor or the Leader of the Town Council attend on their behalf.
8. The Civic Officer will provide a list of all official engagements at each Full Town Council meeting.

7. Biography

There are occasions when outside organisations request information about the Mayor, for example, to assist those hosting the Mayor, preparing speeches, or briefing officials.

The Mayor is therefore asked to provide a biography to the Civic Office. This may include:

- Birthplace and schooling
- Employment history
- Community involvement
- Council elected member roles
- Committee roles to date
- Other roles (e.g. governorships)
- Personal interests
- Personal details

8. Clothing

It is advisable to consider the clothing you will require as Mayor and to invest in these items. The Chair's Allowance includes a sum for purchasing clothing for the Mayoral year, if not already available in your wardrobe.

For the Mayor, this may include:

- Lounge suits or dinner suits
- Day and evening dresses, suits, and jackets (for female Mayors)

On some occasions - such as civic functions - it may be considered appropriate for a female Mayor or Mayoress/Consort to wear headgear.

It has become increasingly acceptable for Mayors to adopt a less formal, business-style appearance, for example, without a tie. While the choice of attire is at the Mayor's discretion, it is important to remember that organisers and attendees will have certain expectations about the Mayor's presentation. Some invitations will specify a dress code (e.g. *Charity Ball, Church Service, Legal Service*).

The *Mayor's Briefing Form* - completed by the event organiser - usually specifies the attire expected for both the Mayor and Mayoress/Consort.

In line with the Town Council's environmental commitment, the Mayor's calendar and briefing forms are fully electronic.

Practical Considerations When Purchasing Clothing

- The Chains of Office will be worn for many engagements. These are pinned or supported by a fabric loop on the shoulders, so shoulder pads may provide additional comfort and style.

- This is particularly relevant when selecting evening wear that is “off the shoulder” in style.
- A female Mayor should also consider the use of jewellery, as certain pieces may clash or interfere with the Chains of Office.

Wardrobe Suggestions

| |
|------------------------|
| Smart/Casual |
| Formal |
| Cocktail Attire |

Overcoats are recommended for inclement weather. They additionally provide cover and security for when wearing the chains of office to events.

9. Chains of Office, Badges and Robes

Occasions when the Chains of Office are normally worn:

- Full Town Council meetings
- Weston-super-Mare Town Council civic events
- Mayor’s Charity Ball
- Functions and engagements to which the Mayor has been invited, unless the organiser has specifically requested they **not** be worn
- Civic events in other towns, where appropriate and permitted

10. Mayor’s Robes

Robes are worn at civic events, including:

- Mayor Making
- Civic Church Service
- Armistice Day Service
- Remembrance Sunday Service
- Town Christmas Lights Switch-On
- Mayor’s Charity Ball Reception

When the Mayor is wearing robes, the Mace and Mace Bearer will also be in attendance.

11. Protocols whilst wearing robes and hats

- When acknowledging salutes
- When the National Anthem is being played
- In the presence of a member of the Royal Family

Further guidance can be found in the Civic section of the Weston Town Council Protocol for the Mayor & Deputy Mayor.

12. The Civic Calendar

These are key events the Mayor is expected to attend, though they do not represent the full calendar of engagements.

May

- Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Making Ceremony

June

- Armed Forces Day

July

- Annual Civic Church Service

November

- Armistice Day Short Service
- Remembrance Sunday Service
- Town Christmas Lights Switch-On

December

- Mayor's Annual Carol Service

March / April

- Mayor's Charity Ball
- High Sheriff of Somerset Legal Service
- Annual Town Council Meeting

Additional Engagements

Visit to Hildesheim

Arranged by the Civic Office following an official invitation from the Lord Mayor of Hildesheim. Traditionally, the civic budget covers the cost of transport to and from the airport and the airfare for the Mayor and Mayoress/Consort only, or alternatively, the airfare may be funded from the Chair's Allowance.

Mayor's Receptions

The Mayor may wish to include receptions as part of their civic events calendar during their year of Office, which will normally be held in the Chamber at 32, Waterloo Street, the Museum or Blakehay Theatre.

13. Other considerations

Policy & Finance Committee Resolution – 20 February 2017

At the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held at Grove House on Monday 20 February 2017, it was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations of both the Civic Consultation Group and the Events Working Party be approved, as follows:

1. The main role of the Mayor is to act as First Citizen and to promote the Town.
2. The civic expectation is that the Mayor need only preside at or attend - rather than organise - fundraising events. The Mayor may, however, choose to raise funds for charitable causes if they so wish.
3. The priority of the Civic Officer and other staff will not be to attend or organise fundraising events, except for the Mayor's Charity Ball.
4. From 2017, the practice of sending Service of Remembrance invitations to other Councils' Mayors and Chairs will cease, with the exception of the Chair of North Somerset Council.
5. It is recognised that the Mayor may host receptions during their term, and that these should be proportionate throughout the year.

14. Civic Support Staff

The Mayor's Office is staffed by the Civic Officer and the PA to the CEO/Town Clerk, who works a 37-hour week - 18.5 hours dedicated to civic work and 18.5 hours dedicated to PA duties for the CEO/Town Clerk - plus additional overtime where required.

The Civic Officer is responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the Mayoralty. This role requires flexibility, and the Civic Officer will make arrangements to meet the Mayor's wishes and the requirements of the role.

The Civic Officer's work is managed and supported by the Democratic Services Manager, who will assist and advise the Mayor in the Civic Officer's absence.

In addition to the Civic team, the CEO/Town Clerk is also available, when necessary, to assist and advise the Mayor.

To maintain a professional relationship between the Civic Officer and the Mayoralty, the following forms of address are always used:

Mayor – "Mr. Mayor"

Mayoress/Consort – "Mayoress" or "Consort"

Deputy Mayor – "Deputy Mayor"

Deputy Mayoress/Consort – "Deputy Mayoress" or "Deputy Consort"

15. Civic Budget

The civic budget is agreed annually by the Town Council in January. When preparing the budget, consideration should be given to the cost of any one-off events (e.g. national celebrations or jubilees). The **2025/26 civic budget**, excluding recharge items, is shown in *Table 1*.

The civic budget is managed by the **Civic Officer** and monitored by the **Policy and Finance Committee** to ensure appropriate and timely spending throughout the year. A significant proportion of the budget relates to **recharge costs**, which cover the use of premises, staff, and facilities in delivering the Mayoralty.

Table 1

| Civic Budget Item | Amount |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Catering | £3000 |
| Civic Insignia | £4000 |
| Chair's Allowance | £4751 |
| Miscellaneous | £1000 |
| Printing | £500 |
| Hildesheim | £4000 |
| Civic Events | £5800 |
| Travel | £3000 |
| Total | £26,051 |

16. Chair's Allowance

The Mayor may use the Chair's Allowance to pay for certain gifts, presentations, or donations. More formal presentations - such as Town crest plaques presented to visiting organisations or dignitaries - are provided by the Civic Office. Examples are shown in *Table 2*. This list is indicative rather than exhaustive and should be used as a guide.

The legal reference to the Chair's Allowance is contained in the *Local Government Act 1972*, which gives the Town Council the authority to make this award. The Mayor receives a Chair's Allowance for their term of office; for **2025/26**, this is **£4,751**, paid in four equal instalments.

The allowance must be paid via the PAYE system in compliance with HMRC regulations. Mayors are advised to declare the allowance as income, but any taxation implications are a matter for the individual and HMRC.

Table 2

| Chair's Allowance | Civic Budget |
|--|---|
| Personal bouquets of flowers e.g. 100 th Birthday Party | Mileage & car parking charges incurred when using own vehicle. (Please note that this does not include personal or ward business). |
| Raffle tickets at events | Business Cards |
| Church Service collections | Catering at Civic events and receptions |
| Prizes for raffles to support chosen charities | Mayor's Christmas Cards |
| Clothing for civic events | Mayoral stationery |
| Charity event costs | Mayor's Wreath for Remembrance Sunday |

| | |
|--|---|
| | Service |
| Purchase of drinks for self & others while at events | Mayors portrait photograph at end of term in office. |
| Donations to organisations visited during term of office | Plaques, Mayors Awards, presentation items at formal visits to Town Council |

17. Transport

Transport Options

Under the Civic Support Budget, the Council provides three optional modes of transport to enable the Mayor to attend functions:

1. Chauffeured Car

- Arranged by the Civic Officer upon the Mayor's request.
- All costs are paid from the **Travel** heading of the Civic Support Budget.

2. Taxi

- The Council holds an account with **Sinclairs Taxis**.
- Bookings are normally made by the Civic Office when finalising arrangements for an event.
- In exceptional cases outside office hours, the Mayor may arrange a taxi by calling **07854 346292**.
- When booking, clearly state that it is **for the Mayor** and should be charged to the "MAYOR 1" account.
- The Civic Officer checks the monthly account.
- Taxis must only be used for **official engagements**.
 - *An official engagement is one arranged by the Town Council, or for which an official invitation and details have been received by the Civic Office.*

3. Mayor's Private Vehicle

- The Mayor may choose to use their own vehicle to attend an event.
- Mileage can be claimed monthly at the agreed Council mileage rate.
- All claims must be submitted on the official **Mileage Claim Form** (see Appendix 4).

Note: All modes of transport are funded from the **Travel** heading of the Civic Support Budget.

Environmental Commitment

In line with the Council's commitment to environmental responsibility, car sharing will be considered - via the engagement scoring matrix - when attending events outside the area. Where practical, car sharing and public transport will be used.

18. Speeches

Speeches

The Mayor's Office does not write speeches for the Mayor. However, the Civic Officer can provide assistance when necessary, such as research or background information.

At many engagements, the Town Mayor will be invited to say “a few words.” This may range from proposing a toast to delivering a full speech. Event organisers may send anything from a full draft speech to brief notes with key points of thanks. This information is intended to help in preparing your remarks, not to replace your own words.

The Civic Officer will normally advise the Mayor in advance if they will be expected to speak, although this may not always be possible. There will be occasions when you are asked to speak with little or no notice.

Practical Tips

- Keep a short speech in mind - or in your pocket - for unexpected speaking requests.
- A small card with generic bullet points (“The Magic Minute”) can serve as a prompt to ensure essential thanks, acknowledgements, and key messages are included.

Events Requiring a Formal Speech

The following civic occasions typically require the Mayor to prepare and deliver a formal speech:

- Acceptance speech on appointment
- Celebration Dinner speech
- End of term speech at Mayor Making
- Mayor’s Receptions
- Mayor’s Award Ceremonies

19. Weston-super-Mare Town Council Strategy 2020-2030

The Mayor can contribute to the delivery of the Council Strategic Plan, maintaining a non-party role.

This can be done by:

- Considering the types of event that would promote the priorities
- When planning civic events, consider using locations that would support the Council aims
- Advocating the priorities when making speeches, when appropriate
- Engaging with organisations during your term of office that can support these strategic aims. Further information can be found in appendix 1.

20. Gifts and Hospitality

Gifts and Hospitality

During their year in office, the Mayor may receive gifts. These may be:

- **Personal** – such as flowers or hospitality
- **Ceremonial** – accepted on behalf of the Council

Further guidance can be found in **Section 39 of the Civic Protocol**.

Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality

For transparency, all gifts and hospitality should be declared. The **Hospitality Book** is maintained by the Town Clerk's PA at 32 Waterloo Street. Advice on receiving and giving gifts is available from the **Civic Office** and the **Town Clerk**.

Town Clerk's Guidance

- Gifts or hospitality valued at **over £25** offered to staff should **generally be declined**.
- If you exceptionally wish to accept anything above this value, inform the **Town Clerk** (or, in their absence, the **Deputy Town Clerk**).
- For items below £25, please use your judgment, but remember - we are a body that raises and spends public money and must maintain high standards of probity so the public can be confident we are not improperly influenced in our actions.

Recording Requirements

- All gifts and hospitality - other than items of trivial value (e.g. office calendars) - must be recorded in the Hospitality Book, whether **accepted or declined**.
- Please complete the entry in person rather than sending an email.
- If a gift is given to the Mayor's charity or donated for hampers, there is no element of personal gain.
- If in doubt, contact the **Town Clerk** or the **Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)** for guidance.

21. Mayoral Awards

During their year in office, the Mayor has the honour of recognising citizens of Weston-super-Mare who have made significant contributions to the Town. The Mayor will determine which awards are presented at the end of their term, as well as the format of the Award Ceremony.

Mayor's Awards

The Mayor's Award was first proposed in 1997 by Charter Trustee Mayor, Councillor Mrs Valerie McGann. She suggested introducing an award that could be presented to local people, organisations, and/or schools in recognition of their achievements in the Town of Weston-super-Mare.

The Award is presented annually, either to a single recipient or to multiple recipients, at a ceremony incorporated into the Mayor Making Ceremony or the Annual Town Meeting. The presentation is made by the outgoing Mayor at the end of their term of office.

This Award helps ensure that contributions to the Town do not go unrecognised, particularly given the restrictions of the Borough Shield, which may be presented to only

one person or organisation each year. Throughout their term, the Town Mayor meets many individuals and groups, from which they can identify suitable recipients.

The Mayor's Award is given to those who make an outstanding contribution through inspirational and dedicated work to the local community, significantly enhancing the quality of life for others. The Award formally acknowledges the positive difference made by those who live or work in the Town.

The number of recipients each year is determined by the Mayor. Recipients' names are also recorded on the Town Mayor's Roll of Honour Board at 32 Waterloo Street.

Borough Shield

The Borough Shield is awarded annually to a recipient selected by the Mayor for their charitable work within the Town.

The recipient (individual or organisation) holds the large shield for one year.

A small engraved Town Crest shield is then presented as a permanent memento of the Award.

22. Charities

Supporting a charity is **not** a responsibility of the Mayoralty. It is entirely the Mayor's decision whether to select a charity (or charities) to support during their term of office.

The demands in time and resources placed on both the Town Mayor and Council Officers must be balanced carefully. Priority should always be given to:

- The business of the Council
- Civic engagements and events
- Representing the Council and the Town as First Citizen, particularly in times of celebration or sorrow

These duties should not be underestimated or given second place to charity fundraising. Civic staff will not be able to undertake charity work in its entirety due to the demands of their role.

Alternative Ways to Support Good Causes

Even without formal fundraising, the Mayor can still benefit voluntary organisations, good causes, and charities by **raising their profile** through appearances, speeches, and publicity. This aligns with some of the objectives in the Town Council Strategy.

Organising Fundraising Events

If fundraising is chosen, the Mayor should consider the additional assistance that may be required to organise events.

Policy & Finance Committee resolution:

The priority of the Civic Officer and other staff will not be to attend or organise fundraising events, except the Mayor's Charity Ball.

Charity Information

Details of the Mayor's chosen charity(ies) will be included on:

- Event briefing forms
- The Mayor's Charity information sheet
- The Mayor's page on the Council website

These details should include a description of the organisation, its main activities, and how donations can be made.

Finance and Donations

If the Mayor supports a charity:

- All monies raised will be paid into the **Mayor's Charity Account**, managed by the Finance Office.
- Donations may be received throughout the year, at events or directly into the Mayor's Office.
- The Mayor decides the final apportionment of funds between charities.

When selecting charities, it is advisable to contact them to establish what assistance they can offer - such as administration, volunteers, publicity, or fundraising equipment.

Receiving Donations at Events

- Donations offered during engagements can be accepted at the time.
- For larger donations, the Mayor may wish to invite the donor to 32 Waterloo Street for a formal presentation.
- If requested, the Civic Officer will arrange for a letter of thanks and receipt to be sent to the donor. Alternatively, the Mayor may send a personal letter or note of thanks.

The total amount raised will be presented to the chosen charity(ies) at the end of the Mayoralty.

23. Charity Ball

The Charity Ball can raise funds either for the Mayor's chosen charity or for other worthy local organisations, charities, and voluntary groups. The decision on who will benefit from the proceeds rests with the Mayor. In recent years, the Ball has solely supported the Mayor's chosen charity.

If local organisations are to benefit from the Ball's proceeds:

- A media release will be issued after the event inviting organisations to apply for grants.
- The Civic Officer and Finance Team will advise the Mayor on relevant considerations, such as:

- Previous recipients of funding
- Organisations that have already received grants via the Grants and Governance Sub-Committee

If the Mayor wishes to **formally present the grants**, the Civic Officer will arrange both a presentation event and a media release.

Section 3 - Chairing Meetings

24. Town Council Meetings

The Mayor also serves as Chair of Weston Town Council and presides over the bi-monthly **Full Town Council meetings**, held in:

- January
- March
- May (*Annual General Meeting & Mayor Making Ceremony*)
- July
- September
- November

Preparation for Meetings

Before each Full Town Council meeting, the Mayor will meet with the **Town Clerk** and **Democratic Services Manager** to:

- Review the agenda
- Discuss the Mayor's announcements

The Civic Office will also provide details of the number of Mayoral engagements to date for inclusion in the meeting.

Guidance for Chairing Meetings

The **Weston-super-Mare Town Council Standing Orders** provide detailed guidance for the Chair when presiding over meetings. These rules can be complex, so it is advisable to familiarise yourself with them before taking the Chair.

A Chair who demonstrates a working knowledge of these procedures - and remains calm and in control - will inspire confidence and demonstrate effective leadership. The **Town Clerk** will always be present to provide advice during meetings.

Key Areas to Understand

To chair effectively, the Mayor should be familiar with:

- Public participation
- Chairship of the meeting
- Managing the agenda
- Rules of debate
- The role of the Town Clerk and Proper Officer
- Quorum for Council meetings
- Voting procedures and the use of a casting vote

A copy of the Standing Orders can be found in **Appendix 5** or online at: <https://wsm-tc.gov.uk/your-council/policies/#34-34-policies-p4>

25. Annual Town Meeting

The Town Council is also required to arrange an Annual Town Meeting each year, where the Mayor will chair the meeting.

26. Civic Consultation Group Matters Sub Committee

During your year as Mayor you will also chair the Civic Matters Sub Committee meetings. These are held at 32, Waterloo Street approximately 3 times a year. The Group reports to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Group members consist of the Mayor & Deputy Mayor, Council Leader, Political Group Leaders, Town Clerk, Democratic Services Manager and the Civic Officer. The Group exists to deal with new civic matters that arise throughout the year and to review how civic events are both managed and resourced.

Section 4 - History of the Council and Mayoralty

27. Development of the Town & Councils

1348 Records show Weston-super-Mare, as a settlement in the west on the hill above the sea, although it could be at least 800 years old, and been here when William the Conqueror commissioned the Domesday Book in 1066. Over the centuries the village would have been ruled by a Lord of the Manor and the Rector. Most people however think of it as a Victorian seaside town which grew as a result of the railways. There were no Mayors or Councillors in those days.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 1842 | A Town Council voted into office, using the Town Hall when it was opened in 1859. |
| 1894 | Town Council became an Urban District Council and took on many more powers. |
| 1937 | Weston-super-Mare granted a Charter and became a Borough Council. |
| 1974 | Avon and Woodspring Councils were created Town Charter Trustees formed |
| 1996 | North Somerset Council replaced them both, as a unitary authority. Weston-super-Mare now has two local councils. North Somerset Council which is neither a Town Council and does not have Borough status, and therefore has a Chair. Weston-super-Mare Town Council, which, in law is a Parish Council, has a Mayor who also serves as Chair |
| 2000 | Weston-super-Mare Town Council formed |

28. History of the Mayoralty

In 1937, the King granted Weston-super-Mare a Charter and established a Borough Council. The Council Chair became the Mayor and civic head of the town's elected representatives. Local philanthropist and businessman Henry Butt was the first Mayor and received the Charter.

The Local Government Acts of 1972 and 2000 defined who can become a Mayor. Since 1937, Weston-super-Mare has had three distinct types of Mayors:

- 1937–1973/74: Mayor of the Borough of Weston-super-Mare
- 1974–1999/2000: Charter Trustee Mayor
- 2000/2001 – present: Weston Town Council Mayor

Coat of Arms

The Borough's original Arms were officially granted in 1928, with the crest and supporters added in 1937. The current Arms were officially granted on 15 January 1960 to the Borough of Weston-super-Mare. Since 2000, the Arms have been used by Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

A full explanation of the Coat of Arms can be found in Appendix 6

Mayoral Robes

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor traditionally wear red robes on ceremonial occasions. The blue robes, worn by Town Councillors, were presented to the Council by Councillor Brenner in 1953 and 2002.

Historically, Aldermen wore burgundy robes. Following the abolition of the Alderman role in 1974, the burgundy robes are now worn by serving Town Councillors who are Past Mayors.

29. Civic Insignia

To ensure the preservation of Weston-super-Mare's historic civic items, the use of the Town Council's Civic Insignia must always follow correct **storage, security, and insurance procedures**. Where necessary, specialist advice should be sought.

Chains of Office

Weston-super-Mare has had three Chains of Office. The current chain, introduced in **1960**, displays the Town's coat of arms and the names of all preceding Town Mayors.

Mayor's Chain

- Gold with an enamelled Badge of Office pendant.
- Chain: 9 ct gold, 18½ oz, hallmarked Birmingham 1960.
- Badge of Office: 3½ oz, hallmarked Birmingham 1959.
- Links engraved with the names of previous Mayors.
- Presented in 1960 to coincide with the grant of the new Borough Arms.
- Carried in a protective case.

Mayoress/Consort's Chain

- Gold, 3½ oz, hallmarked Birmingham 1960.
- Badge of Office: 2 oz, hallmarked Birmingham 1963.
- Manufactured by Deakin & Francis.
- Links engraved with the names of previous Mayoresses/Consorts.

The Mace

Symbolism and Origins

The Mace is one of the oldest forms of civic insignia and represents the Mayor's authority.

- Originally a weapon of war, evolving from wood to metal by the 12th century.
- Later used by Royal bodyguards, often engraved with the Royal Arms.
- Over time, its role changed from weapon to ceremonial symbol of authority.
- In formal processions, the Mayor is preceded by the Mace, carried by the Mace Bearer.
- Like the Mace in Parliament, it symbolises the Crown, and the Crown represents the Law.

The Weston-super-Mare Mace

- Length: 3 ft 1 in
- Weight: 103 oz
- Material: Silver with enamelled Arms of Weston-super-Mare
- Maker: Messrs Walker & Hall Ltd, Sheffield & London
- Supplier: The House of Dossor, 73 High Street, Weston-super-Mare
- Presented by Councillor Leonard Guy on **28 June 1937** to commemorate the granting of Borough status.

Design Details

- **Top:** Maltese Cross and Orb, part of the Imperial State Crown, with alternating Maltese Crosses and Fleurs-de-Lys at the base.
- **Vase:** Displays the former Arms of Weston-super-Mare, surmounted by a King George VI five-shilling coin commemorating his Coronation.
- **Base of Vase:** Decorated with imbricated fish scales and four finely modelled seahorses.
- **Shaft:** Features meandering lines enclosing seaweed, chased in low relief.
- **Knop:** Bold design with double heraldic roses and fish scales, bordered by shell friezes and rope mouldings.
- Presented with a mahogany stand and engraved silver plate.

The Mayor's Parlour

The Mayor's formal office is located at the Council's head office, **32 Waterloo Street**, within the Civic Suite on the first floor of the oldest part of this Grade II listed building.

The Civic Suite includes:

- The Mayor's Parlour (office)
- The CEO/Town Clerk's formal office
- The Staircase Gallery, displaying portraits of all past Mayors

The rooms are furnished with historic furniture, paintings, and artefacts - many linked to the Town's twinning with Hildesheim - reflecting the Council's heritage. They are used for hosting guests and holding formal meetings.

Note: To maintain their formal and historic character, these rooms must remain free of personal items at all times.

Mayor's Parlour History

The Arthur and Winter families were of Lords of the Manor of Weston-super-Mare.

| Date | Event |
|-------------|---|
| 1696 | Ownership passed to the Pigotts of Brockley |
| 1780 | Painting of Grove House shows 17th century house with a tiled roof. The 18th century Grove House was used as a holiday cottage for the Manorial family. |
| 1790 | The family's second son, the Rev Wadham Pigott, curate-in-charge of Weston-super-Mare, made Grove House his home. |
| 1805 | improvements included the building of new garden walls. |
| 1815 | Wadham's niece, Ann Provis, moved to The Grove, married John Hugh Smyth of Ashton Court and established a Smyth-Pigott line. |
| 1823 | Wadham died and Ann and John occupy Grove House. Their ten children necessitated an extension to the house, in 1835 at the back, 1840s towards the east. |
| 1824 | Parish Church of St John Baptist built which replaced a much older (13th century) smaller Church. The adjacent 17 th century Glebe House served as the Rectory until 1889. |
| 1853 | John died. His son John Hugh Wadham Smyth-Pigott inherited the estate. |
| 1893 | The House moves into public ownership and the grounds converted a public park. Covenant stipulated that both should remain in use for the sole benefit of Weston-super-Mare residents. became the town's first Free Library until 1900. It has also been a cafe, a private dwelling and the official residence of the Town Clerk. |
| 1941 | House damaged by incendiary bombs |
| 1952 | The shell of the House that remained was demolished by the Borough Council |
| 1958 | A bungalow was added to what remained of the 1884 nursery (built by Hans Fowler Price) and occupied by the Parks Superintendent. |
| 1974 | Woodspring District Council converted the whole building into the Mayor's Parlour and Council Chamber for Weston-super-Mare Charter Trustees. |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 2000 | Owned by North Somerset Council and occupied, on its inception, by the new Weston-super-Mare Town Council. |
| 2024 | 32 Waterloo Street formerly The Mercury offices was purchased by Weston-super-Mare Town Council and becomes their new office and Mayor's Parlour. |