INFORMATION FOR THE MAYOR

GREAT AYCLIFFE

TOWN COUNCIL

MAY 2019

INFORMATION FOR THE MAYOR

INTRODUCTION

The Information for the Mayor booklet has been provided to assist Mayors and Deputies to understand their roles and responsibilities and provide some useful information, which may be of assistance when undertaking the civic role.

The Civic Protocol is also included, which assists Mayors and Council staff to apply a consistent approach when dealing with issues connected to the civic function.

The object of the information is to try and ensure that your civic year runs as smoothly as possible.

Not all eventualities will be covered by this booklet but remember that assistance is always available at the Council Offices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Town Council Officers would like to acknowledge the use of extracts from I&DeA Publication “Joining the Chain Gang” – Preparing for the role of Civic Mayor.

Along with the various Mayor’s who made contributions to that publication.

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1. BACKGROUND

Town Mayor

Section 245 (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 gave Parish Councils the power by resolution to give themselves the title of Town Council and the Chairman of a Town Council is entitled to the style of 'Town Mayor'.

NB - A Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as a local Council Chairman.

The Councillor becoming Mayor

Being the Mayor is different from being a Councillor. A Mayor, by virtue of the Office, can use his/her decision to stimulate community pride, encourage business, promote the voluntary sector, mould social cohesion etc. A Mayor may also have many meetings with dignitaries, endless engagements, late nights, early mornings and is in the public eye for virtually the whole year.

For those chosen, or who are thinking of putting themselves forward for selection, one thing is clear - being Mayor is most different from being a Councillor, as it has different roles, different working hours, different restraints etc. However, it is also most probably a hugely enjoyable and rewarding job if entered into in the right spirit.

The Mayor is elected by the full Council at the Annual General meeting in May. A new Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting. The new Mayor makes the following declaration when accepting the term of office at the Annual General Meeting:

"I……..having been elected to the Office of Chairman (Mayor) for the Town of Great Aycliffe, hereby declare that I take the said Office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties thereof according to the best of my knowledge and ability. "

The Mayor's term in office is for one year and during this time the Mayor continues to be a Member of the Council and presides over the meetings of the Council.

2. ROLE OF THE MAYOR

During the Civic year, the Mayor supports a wide variety of events throughout the area. The Mayor receives invitations to all kinds of events and every invitation is considered equally. If the Mayor can not attend a function, the Deputy Mayor may be asked to attend on his/her behalf.

Duties which the Mayor may carry out include:

- Organising events to raise funds for the Mayor's chosen charities
- Acting as host on behalf of the Council at functions organised by the Council
- Attending functions within Aycliffe and County Durham as a ceremonial representative of the Council
- Undertaking official openings or presentations at places through Aycliffe and County Durham on behalf of the Town Council
- Representing the Council during royal visits to the town

The Mayor will choose their partner to attend specific events and that person will be permitted to wear the official Mayoress / Consort Chain of Office.

When representing the Town Council, the Mayor and consort will normally wear the official Chains of Office. The Chains of Office will normally be worn at all official functions within the Town. They are also usually worn at functions outside of the town when invited in an official capacity, although there are some exceptions to this which are usually specified in the official invitation.

Role Profile – the key skills of a Mayor

<u>Leadership</u>

- Advanced ambassadorial skills to be able to represent the council in a variety of settings.
- Mentoring to the Deputy Mayor.
- Ability to lead civic ceremonies, promote the civic role and encourage community participation.
- Ability to carry out the role with dignity and gravitas, affording the office of Mayor respect.

<u>Chairing</u>

- Advanced chairing skills, in order to manage the business of full council meetings.
- Organisational skills.
- Ability to plan and prioritise meetings / events and entrust engagements to the Deputy Mayor.

Team Working and Relationship Building

- Ability to build strong, effective relationships between the council, its partners and communities.

- Ability to act with political neutrality.

- Tact, diplomacy and the ability to mediate and broker agreement across political groups.

Communication

- Ability to communicate the council's messages and themes out into the community and to work towards achieving the council's social, economic and environmental aims.

- Advanced listening and public speaking skills and basic speech-writing skills.

Knowledge

- Advanced knowledge of the civic role and responsibilities and the council's Code of Conduct and constitutional arrangements.

- Advanced knowledge and understanding of the customs and beliefs of different cultural groups which make up the diverse community of the council area.

Adapted from Kirklees MBCs role profile for a Mayor / Deputy Mayor.
Extract adapted from 'Joining the Chain Gang' IDEA.

Preparing for the Role: Hints and Tips	
Be Committed	There can be a heavy time commitment. In effect you are giving up a year of your life to council duties. Belief and self-motivation are essential.
Get your family behind you	Recognise the likely impact on those close to you, especially your partner and/or any family member you have chosen as your Mayoress / Consort.
Get advice	Talk to the out-going Mayor and previous incumbents about anything and everything to do with the role. They will each have their own tips for survival.
Check and practice your skills	The role requires a different mix of skills from those of a general councillor – particularly in terms of self-presentation and public speaking. Recognise your shortcomings and get some practical training if you think you need it.
Talk to your officers	They are there to help you and can advise you on most aspects of the role. Invest some time early on in building good working relationships with the Mayoral support staff in particular. They will be crucial to your success.
Read the Handbook	Most Councils have one. It will contain detailed guidance on the role, protocols, clothing / dress, giving and receiving gifts etc. This is essential preparation.
Check your wardrobe	Ensure that you have sufficient clothes of the right kind, including comfortable footwear, for all occasions. Recognise that you may need to budget for these yourself.
Stay healthy	Watch what you eat and drink – the hospitality at civic events and functions can have an adverse impact on your diet and health. Try to pace yourself and plan some time out for leisure and exercise.
Start distancing yourself from controversial matters	Once you are Mayor you will need to be outside of party politics and non-partisan when chairing meetings. Don't take on the role if you are not prepared to be apolitical for a year.

3. CHAIRING COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Basics

Legally, the primary duty as Town Mayor is to act as Chairman in presiding over meetings of the Full Council. In this role, you must ensure the proper conduct of meetings in compliance with both the law and the council's own Standing Orders and procedural rules. You are also required to:

- Determine whether or not to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council; and

- Exercise, if you wish to, a second or 'casting' vote at council in the event of an equal vote on any issues. In the role, you will be advised by the council's Monitoring Officer and Town Clerk.

During your term of office, you are expected to remain politically impartial, particularly in relation to sensitive political issues. Your political colleagues should support you in this and respect your neutrality, enabling the office of Mayor to be seen as 'above politics'.

Effective Chairing

Council meetings are a mainstay of the political management process and it is your job to ensure that the business of the council is conducted effectively in the council chamber.

There are no hard and fast rules about how you chair a council meeting. The approach you take and the style you adopt will depend largely on the nature of the meetings, the people involved and your own personality.

One of the key tasks, however, will be to encourage participation and prompt discussion. This is primarily about creating the best conditions for others to engage in debate. Only through dialogue can you understand what people think and where they stand on any given subject.

Chairing council meetings can sometimes be a demanding process because of the personalities involved. People respond in different, sometimes unpredictable, ways when trying to convince others of their point of view – particularly when this is overlaid with the essential politics of local government. Arguments are common and conflict is not unusual. This is true enough in one to one situations, but is particularly so in meetings.

Recognising that people often behave differently in committees can help you, tactically, to be more effective in chairing meetings. Much of this is about watching and listening to group behaviour and exercising your own judgement about when to intervene and when to sit back as discussions unfold and people exchange views or come into conflict. For example:

- Who is contributing the most and least to the council's debates – are they aware of it and could you challenge them?

- Who are the silent members – is their silence about dissent or fear and could your intervention encourage them to be more vocal?

- What is the atmosphere in the council chamber – could you mediate to create more congenial conditions?

- Have the discussions reached a sticking point – could you broker some negotiation or compromise to move things forward?

As well as dealing with the inevitable political wrangling, you must remain impartial in dealing with the personalities involved. By being seen to be firm but even-handed in your chairing role, you should be able to articulate the areas of common ground that can help in building consensus on the contentious issues.

Chairing Council Meetings: Hints and Tips	
BE SEEN AS APOLITICAL	BE FIRM, BUT FAIR – WITH ALL SIDES. LOOK IN ALL DIRECTIONS WHEN INVITING CONTRIBUTIONS AND NOTE WHO IS WAITING TO SPEAK.
Know your Standing Orders	**Without having to look them up – particularly those related to the rules of debate, motions, seconders, amendments, voting, points of order and personal explanations.**
Keep to time	Be punctual, stick to the agenda and don't let individual members 'highjack' the debate.
Be attentive to the subject under discussion	Prepare well and read the agenda papers thoroughly. Know what the 'hot topics' are and the points of likely contention.
Have pre-meetings with officers	Get to know what is really going on behind the scenes so that you can distance yourself from the contentious issues.
Be human	Keep calm, remain tolerant and be polite. Remember that a sense of humour can help in the right situations. Facilitate don't dominate.
Use the support available	Ask for the advice of your officers if you feel exposed.
Start distancing yourself from controversial matters	Once you are Mayor you will need to be outside of party politics and non-partisan when chairing meetings. Don't take on the role if you are not prepared to be apolitical for a year.

4. MAYOR'S SECRETARY

The Mayor is supported in his/her office by the Mayor's Secretary. The Mayor's Secretary is an employee of the Town Council who, as well as carrying out other duties for the Council, assists the Mayor with organising their term in office. This position involves arranging a meeting with the new Mayor once elected at the Annual Meeting to arrange the Civic Year, ie dates and venues of functions. Once the Civic Year is arranged, the Chairmen/Mayors of other local authorities are notified of the dates to ensure that no other events take place on the same dates.

The Mayor's Secretary receives invitations for the Mayor and liaises with the Mayor before accepting/declining invitations. A diary is kept in the Town Council Offices of all events the Mayor is attending and the Mayor will always receive a copy of the invitation for information.

If the Mayor is unsure of anything or requires some guidance, then this should first be raised with the Mayor's Secretary, who will provide the necessary information, occasionally this may also require the assistance of the Town Clerk.

Transport

The Mayor's Secretary is responsible, where necessary, for arranging transport to the events.

Taxis will be used for civic events and up to two charity events for each Council as indicated on the Civic Dignitary invitation list (Appendix 'E').

It is normal practice for the Mayor to use their own transport (if available) for appointments within the Parish, alternatively transport can be arranged vis. The Mayor's Secretary using the Civic Car.

5. MAYOR'S CHARITY

The Mayor's Charity traditionally raises funds for local charities. It is advisable to choose the charity or charities to be supported at an early stage. The Mayor may decide on either one main charity to support or two or three local charities or good causes.

It is common to announce the chosen charity at the Annual General Meeting when the Mayor is elected.

The main contribution you can often make as Mayor is to raise the Charity's profile rather than actually raising money.

Support will be given by the Council's Administration Section. However, it is essential that a separate support mechanism is set up amongst colleagues, both inside and outside the Council. This may be a separate formal charity committee or informal group of helpers.

The chosen charity will then be notified and all funds raised at the events to be held by the Mayor will be donated to the chosen charity at a presentation to be held at the end of the Mayor's year in office.

Funds raised for the Mayor's charities cannot be used for any other purpose other than as a donation to the charity identified when the funds were raised, save for to cover all reasonable costs to raise the funds.

Charity events vary with individual Mayors but **may** consist of:

- Charity golf competition and dinner
- Civic Ball – Raffle / Tombola
- Two Charity Nights
- Charity Stall

Other events may be organised by local organisations, clubs or institutions, with proceeds given to the Mayor's Charity. If the Mayor wishes to hold his/her own charity night, then he/she must discuss the proposal with the Council Leader and Town Clerk to be clear as to the full implications of so doing.

Donations

To enable the Mayor to raise funds for local charities, the Council relies on local businesses donating prizes to be used on raffles and tombolas.

Although many businesses do support the Mayor's Charity, there are still those who will not donate prizes. This is understandable given the number of requests that are received by companies. It may be necessary for the Mayor to visit local shops, pubs and businesses around the town to ask for prizes as sometimes the local shop owners/businesses prefer a more personal approach and have in the past been more likely to support the charity.

Cheque Presentation

The Mayor announces the total amount raised for his/her charity at the evening of the Annual General Meeting and presents the cheques to the charities nominated to receive the funds raised throughout the year. Local press are invited to attend but, if absent, photographs are taken and press releases sent to local newspapers for their use.

6. MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE

The Local Government Act 1972, Section 15(5) provides for the Chairman of the Council or Mayor to be paid a 'reasonable' allowance 'for the purpose of enabling him or her to meet the expenses of his / her office'.

The Local Government Act does not stipulate the type or category of expenditure for which the Mayor may use the Chairman's Allowance. However, it is commonly described as recompense for the expenses of maintaining the dignity of the office which could include:-

- Clothing
- Partner's clothing
- Donations to charities
- Collections
- Purchase of raffle tickets
- Personal hospitality (including lunches and dinners)
- One-off events held by the Mayor

With regard to the taxation of Mayors' Allowances, HMRC Guidance on the Tax Treatment of Local Government Councillors and Civic Dignitaries' states that only those expenses incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of civic duties are exempt from income tax.

Expenses incurred 'in connection with the duties of office' rather than actually 'in the performance of the civic duties', or in circumstances where the Mayor is 'expected' or 'required' to incur an expense, but not 'necessarily obliged', would *not* be eligible for a taxable deduction.

Therefore, if the Mayor has freedom to spend the allowance largely as he or she sees fit, as is the case at Great Aycliffe Town Council, then it is extremely unlikely that any such expenditure would be 'necessarily' incurred.

This being the case, the vast majority of expenditure funded by the Mayor's Allowance, would be subject to income tax deductions. This would include expenditure on clothing such as suits and dresses, food and drink, and charitable donations.

However, payments made for tickets to civic functions that the Council requires the Mayor to attend and which are made on the Mayor's behalf by the Council, would not be subject to income tax.

The Council therefore splits the £3,000 Mayors Allowance.

£1,000 is retained by the Council and used to purchase tickets for civic functions.

The remaining £2,000 is paid to the Mayor via the Council's payroll and is subject to the relevant deduction of income tax.

The Mayor has a number of budget headings within the precept to cover the duties of the Mayor, these are currently:

- Mayor's Allowance
- Civic Ball
- Mayor's At Home
- Civic Service
- Carol Service

It is important for the Mayor to plan the use of the allowance over the year.

Once the budget level has been reached, no payments can be made or further orders placed by Council staff.

7. SUPPORT BY DEPUTY MAYOR

The Member elected as Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year by representing the Council when the Mayor is unable to.

If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting, the Deputy Mayor must preside.

Some confusion has arisen in the past over the status of the Deputy Mayor. In effect, the Deputy Mayor has no standing as Deputy Mayor when the Mayor is present but assumes the precedence and standing of the Mayor when he/she is deputising for the Mayor rather than acting as Deputy.

The Deputy Mayor should not wear their Chain of Office in the presence of the Mayor of Great Aycliffe. (see Civic Protocol - Appendix 'A')

Invitations to the Deputy Mayor should be dealt with as follows:

- Invitations to functions should not be sent to (or solicited by) a Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor should not attend functions in his/her own right but only when deputising for the Mayor
- All invitations should be sent for consideration to the Mayor as First Citizen and, if the Mayor cannot attend, it may be appropriate to 'pass down' an invitation. However, this should be by no means automatic or desirable
- On the rare occasion when the Deputy Mayor is invited to a function in his/her own right, there should be a clear procedure whereby the invitation is shown formally by the Mayor's Secretary to the Mayor, in order that there is no misunderstanding

8. CIVIC INSIGNIA

The Mayor's robes, chain and badge of office are the outward signs of the civic office held, ie its insignia.

The Mayor wears the robe of office at ceremonial occasions, such as the Civic Service, Remembrance Sunday, Freedom of the Town Events and Royal Visits (not always worn – See Legal Topic LTN10(7) at Appendix F)

The robes of office consist of a red robe, trimmed with fur, a black cocked hat and a lace stock worn around the neck.

NB - the hat is rarely worn by Mayors.

The chain and badge are worn with the robes but are often also worn without.

The Council has no formal protocol regarding the wearing of robes. However it is important to maintain the dignity of the office and that any use of the robe is not overdone or misused.

The Mayor should not wear the civic insignia in another area without express permission from that Council.

Civic chains should never be worn with a military uniform. However, a Mayor who is a member of the clergy may wear full canonicals with the chain over the gown. Similarly, the chain may be worn over academic dress.

Rules on wearing and removing the hat are somewhat irrelevant, as the hat is not often worn. However, guidance can be given by the Town Clerk if necessary on this matter.

Safety of the Chain – a separate protocol will be issued to the Mayor upon taking up their year of Office.

9. PRECEDENCE AND PROTOCOL

Town Mayor

A formal distinction has to be made between the style of address of a Mayor and that of a Town Mayor. It is suggested that, at least in the presence of the Borough Mayor, Town Mayor's should be addressed as 'Mr/Madam Town Mayor'.

NB - a female Mayor is not a Mayoress.

Precedence and protocol for visits and events is often set by custom and practice, with the exception of royal visits.
LTN10 has been attached to this section for information. However, the Mayor's Secretary or Town Clerk will be able to offer advice and assistance on these matters.

10. RECEIPT OF GIFTS

In the course of the duty of being Mayor, often gifts will be offered to the Mayor. It is suggested that all Members should treat with extreme caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally.

The Code of Conduct requires Members, including Mayors, to register any gifts or hospitality worth £50 or over that are received in connection with their official duties as a Member, and the source of the gift or hospitality.

You are personally responsible for all decisions connected with the acceptance or offer of gifts or hospitality and for avoiding the risk of damage to public confidence in local government.

You must register the gift or hospitality and its source within 28 days of receiving it.

The register to record such gifts will be kept by the Town Council and Durham County Council council's Monitoring Officer, but it is your duty to complete the declaration.

Be aware that this will now be a personal interest. If a matter under consideration is likely to affect a person who gave you a gift or hospitality that is registered.

If in doubt, consult the Town Clerk.

11. THE CIVIC YEAR - EVENTS

Below is a list of typical events which are organised during the Mayor's Year in Office. These dates are discussed and arranged during a meeting with the Mayor, Town Clerk / Leader and the Mayor's Secretary at the beginning of each new year to suit the Mayor's diary.

Civic Service

The Civic Service is held in one of the town churches according to the Mayor's denomination. Consultation for the date of the Service is carried out by a meeting with the Vicar / Father of the church.

The Civic Service is usually the first event in the Mayor's calendar, held traditionally in late June / early July.

Civic Dignitaries from our designated list together with colleagues, friends and family are invited and partake of refreshments at the conclusion of the service.

The Civic Robes are worn on this occasion.

Mayor / Mayoress "At Home"

This event has normally taken place prior to the summer holiday period usually around mid July time.

It takes the form of a reception / drinks in the grounds of the Council Offices (weather permitting) to be followed by suitable refreshments in the Council Chamber.

Town and Community Carol Service

This event is organised by the Newton Aycliffe Rotary Club and is held at a venue in the Town on a date to be arranged by the Rotary Club.

The Mayor is expected to attend and give a Christmas greeting at the close of the event to the audience.

Civic Carol Service

This is usually combined with the annual Carol Service at the Church of the Mayor's choice. Civic dignitaries and guests are invited to join the Mayor to celebrate Christmas.

Following the service refreshments are provided in a separate venue for everyone who has attended the event.

Civic Ball

The Civic Ball is the highlight of the Mayor's year and is held at an appropriate venue of the Mayor's choice and is attended by Civic Dignitaries, Councillors and Supporters.

The date of the Ball has usually been in February of each year.

Charity Events

Other events which have been organised in the Mayor's year are:

Annual Mayor's Golf Tournament

Charity Evenings (Usually 2 over the year)

Charity Stall

Miscellaneous Events within the Town

Various miscellaneous events are attended by the Mayor, examples of which are listed below:

50th / 60th / 65th Wedding Anniversaries	Presentation of Flowers and Card
100th Birthdays	Presentation of Flowers and Card

Opening of a Fayre / Garden Party / Coffee Morning

Presenting Awards and Prizes to individuals and organisations

Presenting Medals to Children who attend the Sports Skills at the Oakleaf
(This also includes the overall prize of a Bicycle)

Entertaining guests and visitors at the Council Offices

Art Exhibitions and presentations at local schools

Firework Display and Poster Competition awards

Attending and meeting Royal Visitors to the Town, where appropriate.

Miscellaneous Events outside of the Town

The Mayor is invited to a number of events organised by Civic Dignitaries from the surrounding areas (see Appendix 'E') ie:

Events such as -

Civic Services
Civic Carol Services
Civic Dinners
Charity Evenings (Concerts, Ceilidh, Cabaret Nights)

12. DEALING WITH PRESS AND MEDIA

The Council has indicated in Standing Order 29 how relations with the media should be conducted:

Standing Order No. 29

(a) All requests from the press or other media for an oral or written statement or comment from the Council shall be cleared by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the Council or the Chairman of the relevant Committee.

(b) Press reports from the Council, its Committees, or Working Groups should be from the Town Clerk or an authorised officer or via. the reporters own attendance at a meeting.

(c) Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the Council to speak to the media on a particular issue, Councillors who are asked for a comment by the press should make it clear that it is a personal view and indicate that it be clearly reported as their personal view.

If the Mayor wishes to make a statement to the media it should be cleared by the Town Clerk.

Handling the Media – Hints and Tips
Don't respond to press calls out of the blue – ask for background and the deadline – then respond. Identify key messages and good, punchy, quotations that can be presented to the media. Don't point the finger, complain or consistently say 'no comment' – you may get a bad reputation. Build a long-term relationship with the media, e.g. write features and suggest news stories. Don't use jargon, council-speak or inflammatory words – these might come back to haunt you. Act quickly and have a consistent approach to media handling – be honest, concise and helpful.

13. MAYOR'S END OF YEAR

The outgoing Mayor needs to consider a number of matters:

- Thanks to office and support staff is always welcome
- Thanks to the Mayor's personal support people - partner, family, friends, etc
- Thanks to the Deputy Mayor for support and assistance
- Thanks to the Mayor's Charity supports, those Councillors who have helped - and anyone else
- Talking to the successor, when announced, giving advice and information

The Mayor will also be given a selection of photographs which have recorded the Mayor's activities over the preceding year, in a folder.

14. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – CHAIRMAN'S INFORMATION

Statement to Start the Meeting

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting.

I, as Mayor of the Town Council, preside at this meeting as Chairman.

Public Notice of the meeting has been given as required.

May I remind you it is not a meeting of the Town Council but a meeting of electors registered in the Parish.

Only electors of the Parish are entitled to speak and vote at this meeting.

Electors should all have signed in and given their address.

Parish Meeting resolutions are not binding to the Town Council save in very limited circumstances where statute requires.

Parish Meeting and resolutions will be persuasive only and the Town Council will need to decide how it wishes to deal with them.

The Parish Meeting may also discuss / Parish / Town affairs extending to public activities or policies in the parish or any other local authority public body, government department of public service provided that they affect the parish specifically.

The Meeting is now called to order and will proceed as indicated on the agenda.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Admission of the public and press will be the same as admission to a normal meeting of the Council.

Parish Meeting

The Parish Annual Meeting must take place between the 1st March and 1st June (both inclusive) in each year.

The Parish (Town) Meeting consists of local government electors registered for the area for which it is held i.e. Great Aycliffe area.

(Note: The Parish Annual Meeting is **not** the Town Council's A.G.M.

The two meetings are held on different occasions to avoid confusion.

All parish electors are entitled to attend the Parish Meeting and **vote.**

The quorum is two.

The press may attend.

The Mayor of the Council (Chair) must preside if present or if not present the Deputy Mayor (Vice Chair). If neither are present the meeting may appoint a Chair for the meeting.

Electors can set the agenda by submitting questions or items for discussion.

The right of the Parish Meeting to discuss parish affairs extends to any public matter of a parochial nature and is not confined to the exercise of the statutory functions of a Parish or Town Council. The Parish Meeting may accordingly pass resolutions on the public activities or policies in the parish of any other local authority, public body, government department or public service **provided that they affect the parish specifically** and are not such as are calculated to affect the whole country or **all** parishes equally.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARISH MEETING AND THE TOWN COUNCIL

A Parish Meeting may discuss parish affairs **but** its resolutions differ considerably in their legal consequences. Only in a few cases are a Parish Meetings resolutions binding. In **all** others a resolution is persuasive only; the Town Council may **legally** disregard it.

DECISIONS

Decisions are taken in the first instance by a majority of those present and voting. The Chairman has an original and a casting vote as well.

Unless a **Poll** is demanded before the end of the meeting, the Chairman's declaration of the result is final.

VOTING

Unlike the Town Council, a Parish Meeting is not required to vote in any particular way, and so the Chairman may ascertain the effect of the voting from any evidence which may lead to an accurate result.

When opposing opinions are evident with approximate equality a count will be taken.

Electors of the parish will be issued with a voting card to identify for and against and to segregate public that are present who are not residents and therefore unable to vote.

EXPENSES

The cost of the Parish Meeting is met by the Town Council.

POLLS

A poll may be demanded not later than the end of the meeting on any question arising at it. Such a poll must be held only if ten (10) or one-third of the electors present (whichever is the less) **insist** or if the person presiding at the meeting consents.

A poll can only be demanded on a question which has been the subject of a vote at a Parish Meeting.

(See Appendix 'I' - NALC L18-07 Legal Briefing Notes)

It is essential that the wording of any question to be answered in the poll be settled before the end of the meeting.

Wording should be such that a simple "yes" or "no" is conclusive.

A poll cannot be demanded if the subject matter has not been discussed at the Parish Meeting, or was discussed, but no vote took place.

If a poll is demanded on a matter that constitutes a parish affair a poll is permitted, however, the Chairman (Mayor) should remind local electors attending the meeting that the cost of funding a Parish Poll will be borne by the Town Council and ultimately by the local government electors as a Council tax funded by the Town Council's Precept.

The estimated cost of a Parish Poll will be circa. £10,000 - £11,000.

The Chairman (Mayor) should also remind the meeting that **the outcome of a poll is not binding** and in any event is unlikely to have significant impact or influence.

Therefore, the call for a Parish Poll should be not undertaken lightly given the financial consequences to the Town Council and consequently local council tax payers.

APPENDIX 'A'

PROTOCOL

MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

1. **General**

(a) All invitations should be sent to the Mayor at the Council Offices.

(b) If the Mayor can not attend then he/she will decide whether the Deputy Mayor should be asked to deputise.

(c) For events off the town, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should not attend different functions on behalf of the Council. If the Mayor has accepted an invitation to a particular event on a particular day, then all other invitations off the town on that day should be declined.

(d) For events on the town, it is envisaged that there may be occasions when the Mayor is attending one function and the Deputy Mayor could attend another. The Mayor will be consulted on all such matters and will decide whether the Deputy Mayor should attend a function on the town in such circumstances.

(e) If an invitation to any function, on or off the town, is sent directly to the Deputy Mayor then he/she should consult the Mayor and seek his/her views.

(f) When deputising for the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor will have the use of the civic car as if he/she were the Mayor.

(g) In the event that the Deputy Mayor deputises at an event where an official collection is taken, the Town Clerk is authorised to make available a reasonable amount from the civic budget to the Deputy Mayor for the collection.

2. **Specific Events**

As a general rule, the Deputy Mayor will not attend as Deputy at functions at which the Mayor is present, save for those occasions when the Deputy Mayor has a civic role to play. The proposals are set out specifically below:

(a) Council Meetings

For all meetings of Council, save for the Annual General Meeting, the Deputy Mayor may sit beside the Mayor but shall not wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.

In the event that the Deputy Mayor deputises for the Mayor in chairing a meeting of the Council, the Deputy Mayor shall wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Council, the Deputy Mayor shall sit next to the Mayor, and shall wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.

(b) Remembrance Sunday

The Deputy Mayor will attend as an ordinary Councillor.

(c) Civic Ball

Depending on the venue chosen to hold the Civic Ball, the Deputy Mayor may have a role in welcoming guests to the function room when the Mayor is with the civic guests.

In such circumstances, the Deputy Mayor will attend formally as the Deputy Mayor, with chain, and will be seated with the other civic guests.

(d) Civic Service

The Deputy Mayor will attend as an ordinary Councillor

(e) Ad Hoc Events

The Deputy Mayor would not attend as the Deputy Mayor. Whether Deputy Mayor is invited as an ordinary Councillor would depend on the circumstances.

f) Royal Visits

The invitations will only go to the Mayor. If the Mayor is unable to attend then the Town Clerk will check with the Lord Lieutenant's office whether the Deputy Mayor can deputise. If the Deputy Mayor is able to deputise, then he/she will wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.

(g) Mayor / Mayoress At Home

The Deputy Mayor will not attend as the Deputy Mayor.

The invitation of civic guests will be at the discretion of the Mayor.

(h) Charity Nights

If the Mayor wishes to hold his/her own charity night then he/she must discuss the proposal with the Leader and the Town Clerk to be clear as to the full implications of so doing.

APPENDIX 'B'

ARMORIAL BEARINGS

"Not the least, but the greatest, we seek"

The Heraldic Shield has a background of red surrounded by a border in "or" representing the boundaries of the designated site of the new town of Newton Aycliffe. The Chevron across the shield is in "argent" and is an allusion to the bridge over St. Cuthbert's Way, linking the town with Aycliffe Industrial Park. The sheaves of corn forming the garbs in the shield are taken from the Arms of the Eden Family, of whose estate the site of the new town formed a part, and the hand grenade on the chevron represents the Royal Ordnance Factory out of which the Industrial Park was converted.

The supporters in "argent" are the Lions Rampant in the Arms of the See of Durham, differenced with mail gauntlets in allusion to the military activities of the Bishops of Durham and holding Crosses Pattonce in allusion to the old form of the Arms of the See.

The Crest consists of an oak tree on a limestone cliff surmounting a helm. The oak tree is a reference to the forests which formerly covered this part of the country, from which was taken the Saxon name "acle" meaning "oak leaf", from which the name of Aycliffe was derived. One of the branches of the oak tree is broken and bent down to indicate the disappearance from the area of its oak forests and with a lesser branch the letter "A", thus forming a rebus on Aycliffe.

The grant of Arms to the Aycliffe Development Corporation was made by the College of Heralds in October, 1956, and transferred to the Town Council.

APPENDIX 'C'

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GREAT AYCLIFFE

Great Aycliffe comprises the town of Newton Aycliffe and the villages of Aycliffe and School Aycliffe. It is part of the Sedgefield local authority area, in County Durham. The population of Great Aycliffe is currently around 26,000.

The relatively large size of the Great Aycliffe area is a recent phenomenon. The settlement has been in existence from early Saxon times, and was originally Acley, a Saxon term thought to mean 'a clearing in the oaks'. Middridge was originally the settlement on the ridge between School Aycliffe and the village of Eldon.

The Saxon settlers were not allowed to live in peace in their clearings and ridges, however, as the south of Durham was an area of intensive Viking incursion throughout the tenth century. The legacy of these raiders is reflected in the name of School Aycliffe, which was land given to Scula, a general who served the Viking King Ragnald.

Life changed radically for the inhabitants of Acley in 1069. The Norman conquest of England, which had begun three years earlier, eventually reached the northern shires, as the well-equipped invasion force marched relentlessly northwards. The Saxon way of life was all but destroyed in the 'Harrying of the North'. Odereic Vitalis, a monk who chronicled the event, claimed that the lives of almost 100,000 men, women and children were taken in the winter of 1069/70.

Aycliffe became part of the great See of the Bishop of Durham and the peasants lived a feudal life as serfs, working on the land as little more than slaves. The distance from the capital in London and the dominance of the church combined to reinforce the sense of alienation felt by many of the region's families. In 1569, 28 inhabitants of Middridge and Aycliffe joined the rebellion of the North, as Catholic families sought to replace the Protestant sovereign Elizabeth I with Mary Queen of Scots. The rebellion failed and five local rebels who had joined the uprising were executed.

The rebellious North supported the Jacobite cause in 1689, 1715 and again in 1745, and there is no reason to suppose that the populace of Aycliffe were any less rebellious than their countrymen and women.

However, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was a new direction for the spirit of revolution. The great Stockton to Darlington railway was built by George Stephenson in 1821, ushering in the industrial age, and with it Aycliffe's first rail line at Simpasture.

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the mining industry dominated Durham, although by 1938 the mine at Middridge was abandoned. During World War II, the Government established an Ordnance factory near to Aycliffe Village, to supply munitions to the services. The workforce, mainly women, became known as the 'Aycliffe Angels' or the 'canaries' so called because the chemicals used in shells turned their hands and skin yellow.

After the war, Aycliffe became the site of a new town, planned to provide good quality homes near to the Aycliffe Industrial Estate. Under the guidance and control of the Aycliffe Development Corporation, the town flourished and has grown to be part of the Great Aycliffe settlement, which is now one of the foremost employment centres in the north east.

SOME USEFUL FACTS

- The population of Great Aycliffe is circa 29,000, with approximately 11,000 households (2003 ONS)
- Great Aycliffe encompasses Aycliffe Village, School Aycliffe and Newton Aycliffe
- The industrial estate was converted from the former Royal Ordnance Factory. The ROF site was chosen as the fog from the marshy land made ideal cover from searching Luftwaffe. It is now the largest industrial site in County Durham
- Aycliffe was the first New Town in the north of England, designated in 1947, later to be renamed Newton Aycliffe
- Workers at the ROF were commonly known as Aycliffe Angels
- The Mayor's robes were presented to the Town Council by HMS Eskimo, officers and men, to mark the occasion of HMS Eskimo receiving Freedom of the Town in 1979

APPENDIX 'D'

EFFECTIVE SPEECHMAKING

Getting your point across

As Mayor you are often called upon to make speeches when attending engagements – mostly welcoming or congratulatory in nature. There may be occasions when, despite having received previous assurances that there will be no talks, you may be called upon to give an impromptu speech. As such, you should always be prepared to say a few words at an engagement – reinforcing the need to do your research on the people you are visiting beforehand and to read thoroughly any briefing papers you have been given prior to the event. This will help you to say something relevant and to the point.

For some individuals, public speaking holds no fears, while for others, it is considered a difficult and onerous task – in practice it becomes easier the more you become accustomed to the role.

As with all of the other aspects of your communications, effective speechmaking can help you to get your message across.

Effective Speechmaking – Hints and Tips
Adjust your style to suit the audience – from formal to informal.
Don't rush – very easy to do when you are nervous.
Break the ice with a simple, topical joke about being Mayor.
Speak loudly and clearly – but don't shout.
Look at your audience – not the floor.
Smile – but don't be over familiar.
Practice beforehand and check your timing.
Be prepared for an impromptu speech – retain cards of key notes in your pocket that can be held discreetly during your speech.

APPENDIX 'E' **USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS**

Sharna Stretch	Mayor's Secretary	Tel No	01325 300700
Mr A Bailey	Town Clerk	Mobile No	07970926843

The Standard Civic Dignitary list is as indicated below:

CIVIC DIGNITARY 2019/2020 - INVITATION LIST

Seaham Town Council Town Hall, Stockton Road Seaham Co. Durham SR7 0HP	Mayor Consort Tel: 0191 581 8034
Shildon Town Council Council Offices Civic Hall Square Shildon Co. Durham DL4 1AH	Mayor Tel: 01388 772563
Spennymoor Town Council Town Hall Spennymoor Co. Durham DL16 6DG	Mayor Mayoress Tel: 01388 815276
Durham City Charter Trust Town Hall Durham DH1 3NJ	Chairman Consort Tel: 03000 267202 (**Same as DCC) only one invite to send to Durham County**
Durham County Council County Hall Durham DH1 6UL	Chairman Lady Tel: 0191 3833000
Peterlee Town Council Shotton Hall Peterlee Co. Durham SR8 2PH	Mayor Tel: 0191 5862491

Chilton Town Council Hutton House Durham Road Chilton DL17 0EX	Mayor Consort Tel: 01388 721788
Sedgefield Town Council Council Offices Advice & Information Centre Sedgefield Co. Durham DL17 3AT	Mayor Tel: 01740 621273
Ferryhill Town Council Town Hall Ferryhill Co. Durham DL17 8JL	Mayor Tel: 01740 652157
Bishop Auckland Town Council 154a Newgate Street, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham DL14 7EH	Mayor Consort Tel: 01388 609852
Darlington Borough Council Town Hall Darlington, Co Durham DL1 5QT	Mayor Consort Tel: 01325 405996

NOTE:
The Mayor may choose up to two other appropriate Councils, and these will be appended to the list once the Mayor has indicated the chosen Councils.

Current Mayor's choice is:-

Barnard Castle Town Council Woodleigh Flatts Road Barnard Castle DL12 8AA	Mayor Consort Tel: 01833 690970
Brandon and Byshottles Parish Council 6 Goatbeck Terrace Langley Moor Durham DH7 8JJ	Chairman Consort Tel: 0191 378 9947