



# LUDLOW TOWN COUNCIL

## CIVIC HANDBOOK

*February 2016*

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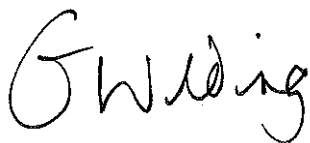
## Introduction

This handbook is to briefly explain the civic role of the Mayor during the Mayoral role, from their appointment to, expectations, roles and responsibilities.

## Foreword

Congratulations on your election as Mayor of Ludlow. We hope that you enjoy your role as an ambassador for the town and for the Council, remembering that it can help in the promotion of the Council's objectives in the local community. We will do our best to ensure that your year of office is an enjoyable one and will do everything possible to support you. Never hesitate to ask if you are unsure about any of the processes or your duties as Mayor.

This booklet is produced to offer some details and insights into the operations of the mayoralty, and is intended as a helpful guide. Whilst some local aspects are based upon custom and practice, which can often be unique to an individual parish, there is much that is founded on "best practice" guidance from the National Association of Civic Officers, or is directed by legal requirements or nationally-accepted conventions and protocols.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Wilding'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gina Wilding  
Town Clerk

## Mayors – how are they appointed and what do they do?

Councillors must, by law, elect one of their number as Chairman as the first item of business at the annual meeting of the Council.

Ancient/traditional civic parishes such as Ludlow often call their annual meeting “Mayor-making” and pre-select the Chairman/Deputy nominees at an earlier meeting, to allow for a ceremonial context to Mayor-making. This is also a courtesy to those elected: as the roles place significant demands upon their time, advance notice is helpful in clearing family/social/business diaries.

Election to the roles is to be done at a Council meeting, with voting in the normal way – by the simple majority of those present and voting.

Any elected Councillor is eligible for nomination. The role is not open to direct election by the public, although there are current proposals that the largest cities may be offered this option, following the London model.

The Chairman of a parish may be called “Mayor” if the parished area is generally known as a Town. There is no requirement for a Deputy, although one may be elected in the same way. The Deputy, if one is elected, exists solely to deputise in the Mayor’s absence.

The Mayor, if present, must preside at meetings of the Council and has responsibility to promote full participation in debate, and ensure adequate consideration of issues and clear decision making; including use of a statutory casting vote. This should be used to break deadlock, and there is case law precedent on acceptable/unacceptable use of the vote.

The Mayor, if present, must preside at the statutory Annual Parish (*electors*) Meeting.

A Mayor is the civic ambassador for the town and has a role in representing it at / hosting appropriate events.

The Mayor officially receives resignations from Councillors or the Clerk.

A Mayor continues in that role until formally succeeded by another. If, in an election year, they have not retained their seat in public elections – they retain only a casting vote. They preside at the opening of the following annual Council meeting, and if necessary use the casting vote to decide the election of their successor. If there is a Deputy, they remain in office until the election of a succeeding Mayor (in case they are needed to preside at that election).

A Mayor has no more powers to act individually, or to speak for the Council, than any other councillor. In common with all Councillors, the Mayor is prohibited from acting individually, but is likely to be the Councillor who is most-often delegated to work closely with the Clerk.

A separate allowance, agreed with HMRC, may be paid to a Mayor to offset additional costs of the civic role.

A Council may authorise a budget for expenditure on civic / ceremonial activities, and may allow some discretion on the part of the Mayor in that expenditure, but this must comply with all other financial regulations, operating in consultation with the Responsible Finance Officer and including appropriate *de minimis* thresholds.

A female Mayor is styled “Mayor”– the title “Mayoress” is reserved for the wife of a male Mayor. The male partner of a female Mayor, or a female partner other than a wife is “Consort”. The correct form of address for the Mayor of Ludlow is Mayor” (NB not “Worshipful”, or any alternative/additional honorific).

## Choosing to stand as Mayor

If you are choosing to stand as Mayor you will already be aware that it can be a hugely enjoyable and rewarding job if entered into in the right spirit. You should however consider the following factors which you may face during your year of office:

- The effect on your family and friends as your family and social life will be seriously disrupted.
- The effect on your career if you have to balance the two in time and energy.
- The effect on your political career as this will have to be put on hold for your year of office.
- The effect on your personal and religious beliefs as you will be unable to deliberately avoid invitations to particular places merely because of your political and religious views.
- The effect on non-Council interests as you may not find time to keep your outside interests and hobbies during the term of office.

The pomp, circumstance and protocols of the Office of Mayor, especially as Ludlow is the ancient Market Town of Ludlow, are very traditional, and at times very formal, and you will have to operate within these constraints whilst adding your own personality and flair to the proceedings.

You should ensure that you are in a position to accept the majority of all engagements, and the Deputy Mayor to be involved only in the case of unforeseen illness, annual holiday or double booking. In the case of a mayor in employment or self-employment, the Council may approve alternative arrangements for other councillors to attend engagements. These arrangements should be formally considered by full council, and the decision minuted.

The effect on your Mayoral partner as he/she will be expected to play a full part in your Mayoral world although many Mayoral partners enjoy the privileges of office without the need to chair the Council meetings.

Last, but by no means least, is the effect on the prospective Mayor themselves. Having considered the effect of being Mayor on others it is important that you do not forget your own needs and feelings.

## What is expected of the Mayor

Throughout your term of office, you will be required to undertake the following:

- Carry out your Civic duties in a politically impartial way.
- Chair and preside over Council meetings positively and assertively with guidance from the Town Clerk.
- Promote the town on a local, national and international level
- Take an active interest in all aspects of the local community and related issues.
- Have the ability to network and socialise without prejudice with all members of the local community .
- As first citizen, act as an Ambassador for Ludlow Town Council and welcome visitors, including dignitaries and in some cases members of the Royal Family.
- Attend an annual programme of civic events as detailed under 'Engagements'.
- Attend funerals and memorial services as a representative of the Council.
- Officiate at opening ceremonies and be prepared to make a speech.
- Attend local events of all kinds.
- Make speeches of welcome to visitors.
- Speak to the media.
- Host receptions.
- Make official visits, for example to our twin towns.

## Roles and Responsibility

The Mayor is Chairman of Ludlow Town Council and First Citizen of the town of Ludlow.

The Mayor is responsible for:

- Upholding and promoting the purposes of the Council's constitution, the interests of the wider Council and the public.
- Presiding over meetings of the Council.
- Encouraging citizenship and participation in the life of the town.
- Promoting the Council at all functions attended.

The Mayor must not solicit engagements or visits or otherwise procure favours by virtue of office.

The Mayor has no more powers to act individually, or to speak for the Council, than any other councillor. In common with all councillors, the Mayor is prohibited from acting individually, but is likely to be the councillor who is most often delegated to work closely with the Clerk.

## Political Neutrality

The Mayor is expected to be politically neutral and traditionally steps back from politics for the term of office. This may involve putting your political career on ice, but as a good Mayor you will gain widespread political and community respect which can only be of benefit to a councillor's ambitions in the long term.

## Initial actions for the Mayor

The Mayor needs to plan most of these actions before their election at the Annual Meeting of the Council (the Town Clerk will be very happy to advise):

- Choose a Mayoress or Mayor's Consort.
- Meet with the Councils' Chaplain.
- Choose a charity or charities to support during the mayoral year.
- Provide biography notes for various uses but particularly for Council publicity.
- Possibly plan a theme for the year taking into account the needs of Ludlow as well as your own personal interests.
- Advise the Town Clerk of any important dates where you will not be available during your term of office.
- Advise the Town Clerk of any pre-existing medical conditions or disabilities that may affect your ability to carry out the role.
- Advise the Town Clerk of any special dietary requirements.
- Provide the Town Clerk/or relevant member of staff with a personal address list for invitations to the Annual Meeting of the Council and Ceremony of Mayor Making and following reception.

## “Mayoral” and “Civic” Budgets

When the Council agrees its budgets each year, you will see a budget is set aside as the Mayor’s Allowance. This budget is for expenditure on things that every Mayor is expected to do. Examples include:-

- travel and subsistence to civic events outside Ludlow (to be used by the Deputy Mayor/Mayoress/Consort if attending in place of the Mayor)
- clothing allowance (to include the Mayoress/Consort)
- Entertainment for the senior’s Christmas party
- Consort badges (presented at the end of office)

The budget can also be used for functions that the Mayor puts their individual style to in their year in office. This is to be used to pay for any specially-themed receptions that you may decide to host, or to cover the costs of any unique events. These costs will be discussed with the Town Clerk or relevant members of staff in relation to expenditure during the year.

In recent years, the events have been as follows: **“CIVIC”** (*expected of every Mayor*)

<b>Event</b>	<b>Description</b>
Mayor Making	Inauguration of the Mayor Elect
Mayors Sunday (incorporating Armed Forces Day)	Service at St Laurence Church
Remembrance Sunday	Held on the closest Sunday to 11 <sup>th</sup> November.
Christmas Lights Switch-on	Held on the last Saturday in November
Mayfair	Mayfair Dodgem Service held on the 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in May
Senior’s Christmas Party	1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday in December

