

Draft Civic and Ceremonial Protocol

1. Purpose

This protocol sets out Welshpool Town Council's normal arrangements for civic and ceremonial matters.

The purpose of the protocol is to preserve the dignity of civic office, provide consistency, and ensure that future mayors, deputy mayors, councillors and officers have clear guidance on established practice.

This protocol is intended to reflect broad civic traditions in Wales and England while recognising Welshpool's local circumstances.

2. Civic Regalia

The mayoral regalia of Welshpool Town Council comprises the chain of office, scarlet robes, white lace jabot, white gloves and hat, together with such other ceremonial items as the Council may maintain. The deputy mayoral regalia consists of the chain of office, navy blue robes and hat. The mayoral regalia also includes the mayor's consort chain of office.

The mace is a separate ceremonial item and shall be carried by the appointed mace bearer where required.

3. Civic Representation at Funerals

Welshpool Town Council should ordinarily be officially represented at the funerals of serving:

- Town Councillor
- Powys County Councillor representing a ward which falls within the boundary of Welshpool
- Senedd Member representing the constituency in which Welshpool lies
- Member of Parliament representing the constituency in which Welshpool lies

Official representation should normally be one of the following, in order of priority:

- The Mayor
- The Deputy Mayor
- The Town Clerk
- Or, another councillor nominated or agreed for that purpose.

For other funerals of local significance, attendance may take place at the discretion of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Town Clerk or individual councillors, and one attendee may be asked to represent the Council where appropriate. Councillors may attend such occasions in a

personal capacity where appropriate. Chains of office shall not normally be worn at funerals unless specifically requested or judged appropriate in the circumstances.

4. Annual Meeting and Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor

The Annual Meeting of the Council shall be held in May in accordance with legal requirements.

The ceremony for the appointment of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor shall normally proceed as follows:

- All present stand
- The chain is transferred from the outgoing office holder to the new office holder where there is a change of person - where the same person is re-elected, no transfer is required
- The newly elected Mayor or Deputy Mayor reads the declaration of acceptance of office
- Those present applaud to welcome the office holder.

The same courtesy shall be afforded, where appropriate, to the election of Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs.

5. Mayor's Charities

The Mayor may choose to support one or more local charities, community projects or good causes during their year of office.

It is common practice for the Mayor to announce the chosen charity or charities at the Annual Meeting of the Council when the Mayor is elected.

The chosen charity will then be notified and funds raised through mayoral events or activities during the civic year will normally be donated to the chosen charity. A presentation of the funds raised is often made at the end of the Mayor's year of office.

Funds raised for the Mayor's Charity shall not be used for any purpose other than donation to the charity identified when the funds were raised, except for the reasonable costs incurred in raising those funds.

Funds raised will be held by the Town Council and paid out using the Council's powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, subject to the Council's normal financial approval procedures.

6. Notice of Mayoral Intentions

Any councillor who is considering standing for the office of Mayor or Deputy Mayor is requested to notify the Town Clerk of any proposed arrangements for their civic year at least one month before the Annual Meeting.

This notice is a matter of good practice and forward planning rather than a mandatory precondition of candidature as it allows for early planning for the Welshpool Civic Service.

7. Welshpool Civic Service

The annual civic service shall be known as the Welshpool Civic Service (previously called Mayor's Sunday). The normal venue for the Welshpool Civic Service shall be St Mary's Church, Welshpool.

A different venue may be used only where the Mayor wishes to propose a variation and that variation is achievable within the available timescales and resources.

The Council shall normally invite:

- Neighbouring town and community council representatives
- The Lord-Lieutenant of Powys
- The High Sheriff of Powys
- Senedd Members representing the constituency in which Welshpool lies
- Member of Parliament representing the constituency in which Welshpool lies

Following the service, a Community Awards event or civic reception may be held at the Town Hall or other approved venue.

Procession

The normal practice shall be for the civic party and officers to gather near the Inglenook area before proceeding to St Mary's Church – the route shall be up the cobbled steps to the building entrance.

Where the normal venue is used, this shall be the standard starting arrangement unless otherwise agreed.

During the procession, the Mayor shall ordinarily walk behind the civic party. On arrival at the venue, the civic party shall part so that the Mayor may proceed forward in a formal manner. Members carrying rods of office shall carry them in the right hand.

8. Robes and Chains

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor must wear robes and chains at the Welshpool Civic Service and Remembrance Sunday.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor may wear robes and chains at other appropriate civic and ceremonial occasions such as royal visits, freedom of the town events, civic receptions, school or educational visits or other public occasions. The decision to wear robes rests primarily with the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

At other meetings and public appearances, chains only will normally be worn. Chains should ordinarily be worn:

- When chairing council meetings

- At official civic engagements
- When publicly representing the Council

Chains should not ordinarily be worn at private social events, at informal meetings or for personal or party-political purposes. Civic chains should not be worn with military uniform. However, a mayor who is a member of the clergy may wear full canonicals with the chain worn over the gown. Similarly, the chain may be worn over academic dress.

The Mayor's Consort Chain of Office shall be worn when the consort accompanies the Mayor at civic or ceremonial occasions and other public appearances.

The decision whether to wear the Town Clerk's robes of office rests with the Town Clerk and is subject to availability of the robes.

Civic insignia should not ordinarily be worn outside the Council's area without the consent or courtesy of the host authority or civic body, where such protocol applies.

9. Etiquette

Civic regalia should be accompanied by appropriate formal dress. Casual dress should not be combined with civic regalia.

Hats, where worn, should be treated in accordance with normal civic etiquette and removed where required by custom or respect.

Where the wearing of robes would be unusual or potentially contentious, advice should be sought from the Town Clerk and, if necessary, from Full Council.

10. Mace and Mace Bearer

A Mace Bearer shall be appointed annually at the Annual Meeting and shall serve at the pleasure of the Council.

The Mace Bearer shall serve at the Welshpool Civic Service and at such other ceremonial occasions as the Council may determine. Only one mace shall ordinarily be used for official proceedings unless Council specifically decides otherwise.

11. Flag Bearer

A Flag Bearer shall be appointed annually at the Annual Meeting and shall serve at the pleasure of the Council.

The Flag Bearer shall serve at the Welshpool Civic Service and Remembrance Sunday. Additional use of a flag bearer at other occasions may be approved as required.

12. Council Photographs

The Town Clerk shall arrange a photograph of the newly constituted Council following an ordinary election.

The Council may decide from time to time whether official portraits or member photographs are to be taken professionally or in-house.

13. Support for the Mayor

Day-to-day support for the Mayor is provided by an officer nominated by the Town Clerk.

The nominated officer will normally arrange a meeting with the newly elected Mayor to plan the civic year. This may include planning events the Mayor wishes to hold and identifying key civic engagements.

Once planned, event dates should be communicated to minimise clashes with other significant events in the town.

Where the Mayor requires advice or guidance on civic matters, this should normally be sought from the Town Clerk.

14. Precedence and Title

The Town Mayor is the First Citizen of Welshpool and enjoys precedence over all persons within the town except the Sovereign (or their representative, the Lord Lieutenant) and the Chairman of Powys County Council.

The Town Mayor should be addressed as “Mr Mayor” or “Madam Mayor” as appropriate. A female Mayor is not referred to as a Mayoress.

The Mayor may choose a Consort who may be a spouse or partner, fellow councillor, family member or friend. Where the Consort accompanies the Mayor on civic engagements, they should be afforded appropriate dignity and courtesy.

Precedence and protocol for visits or events may be determined by established custom and practice, except in the case of Royal Visits where formal national protocol applies. The Town Clerk can provide guidance where required.

15. Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day

Arrangements for Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day are governed by separate Council arrangements and are not included within this protocol.

16. Interpretation

In the event of uncertainty, this protocol shall be interpreted by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor, subject always to any decision of Full Council.