

**Huntingdon Town Council**



**MAYORAL HANDBOOK**

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## **1. The Office of Town Mayor**

Paul Millward, author of “Civic Ceremonial” identifies three main important roles for the Town Mayor of today, who is a representative of the Council and the Community. These are:

### **1.1 A Symbol of the Authority**

The insignia of the mace, robes, chains of office etc clearly identify the Town Mayor as a symbol of the Town Council and its community. The own Mayor connects the present day with history and acts as a symbol of continuity. The pre 1974 term “Corporation” implies that the people are considered part of the Council and the position of the Town Mayor as First Citizen as a spokesperson giving the town its identity is therefore an extremely important one for the people of the town.

### **1.2 A Symbol of an Open Society**

Historically a position of privilege, today’s Town Mayors can come from any class, gender or ethnic background. This reflects the more open and diverse society that we now live in. The Town Mayor can therefore symbolise the open society that the Council wishes to promote in the area.

### **1.3 An Expression of Social Cohesion**

The Town Mayor’s attendance at local engagements affords him/her a linking role between the various organisations and allows her/him to feed back the views and concerns of the people to the political field. Similarly, the Town Mayor can take the Council’s message and themes out to the community and help towards achieving the Council’s social, community, educational and economic aims.

## **2. Mayor Making**

### **2.1 Election and Appointment of Town Mayor & Deputy Town Mayor**

The election of Town Mayor takes place as the first item of business at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May, the election being determined by a majority of Members present and voting at the meeting. The Town Mayor is elected for a term of one year. The outgoing Town Mayor continues in the post until their successor is elected and has made a valid Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Deputy Town Mayor is also appointed as the Council’s Vice Chairman from among the Council’s Members at Mayor Making. The office is held until immediately after the election of Town Mayor the following year. In Huntingdon, it is the tradition that the Deputy Town Mayor also signs a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

A good working relationship between Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor is in the best interest of the Council.

## **2.2 Inaugural Speech**

The Town Mayor may wish to give some thought to his/her Inaugural Speech. It is usual to announce the charity and therefore can be important to mention main themes that he/she would like to pursue during the term of office. The Town Mayor's Secretary or Town Clerk can assist by providing previous inaugural speeches or other assistance to the incoming Town Mayor and during the time of their office.

As Town Mayor, remember you don't need many words to say important things – the Lord's Prayer is only 70 words long whilst the E.C. Regulations on the production of cucumbers is several thousand.

## **3. The Town Mayor as Chairman of the Council**

### **3.1 The Presiding Role**

The Town Mayor acts as Chairman and must preside if present at full meetings of the Town Council. Robes and full civic insignia are worn at these meetings and the presence of the Mace indicates that the Town Mayor is present in her/his official capacity.

The Deputy Town Mayor may preside over meetings of the Council in the absence of the Town Mayor.

As Chairman, the Town Mayor has control of full council meeting procedures ensuring compliance with the law and good order. The Town Mayor must prevent decisions being taken on matters which are not on the agenda and is guided and supported by the Town Clerk when necessary. The Town Mayor is the person to whom a notice of resignation must be given by any Councillor. This may be given by e-mail initially, but always by signed letter.

### **3.2 Impartiality**

The Town Mayor should adopt an impartial role in discharging the duties of the office and be scrupulously fair in conducting business at formal meetings of the Council. The Town Mayor should seek to avoid taking a sectional view in any local controversy if this has the effect of impairing his ability to discharge the duties of the office in an impartial and objective manner.

The Town Mayor is traditionally non-political and should try and avoid political bias.

The Town Mayor will always do his/her best to apply the Standing Orders fairly so as to give all Members a fair hearing whatever their political persuasion.

It is not customary for the Town Mayor to vote, though he/she may do so if he/she so chooses. As Chairman of the Council, the Town Mayor may exercise a casting vote when required to reach a decision. This vote is in addition to the right to vote held by all Members of the Council.

### **3.3 Voting and attendance at sub committee meetings**

The Town Mayor & Deputy Town Mayor are ex officio members of all standing and sub committees of the Council, unless he/she writes to the Town Clerk stating that they do not wish to serve.

It is not usual for the Town Mayor to accept the position of Chairman for any committee or sub committee of the Council in view of the ex officio membership and the demands on the Town Mayor's time made by mayoral engagements. Ex officio membership gives a right to speak and vote at meetings, but there is no right to exercise a casting vote.

### **3.4 Appointments made by the Mayor**

The Town Mayor's Chaplain is nominated by the Town Mayor, and the appointment is announced formally at the Annual Meeting of the Council. It is the practice to announce the positions of Town Mayoress/Mayor's Escort and Deputy Town Mayoress/Mayor's Escort & Macebearer at this meeting also.

### **3.5 Allowance**

The Local Government Act 1972 allows for the Town Mayor to be paid an allowance to meet the expenses of his/her office. The amount is determined by the Council as part of its annual estimate of expenditure & income and is known as the "Town Mayor's Purse".

Travel, or other reasonable expenses incurred in meeting the duties of the office may be claimed by the Deputy Town Mayor, allocation for which is included in Council's approved "Civic Purse".

In October 2002, the council received confirmation from HMRC of dispensation in respect of the Town Mayor's allowance, on the grounds that it is intended to meet expenses necessarily incurred by the Town Mayor wholly and exclusively in the performance of his / her duties. A copy of the confirmation can be obtained from the Town Clerk's Office on request.

This means that the allowance is therefore not subject to taxation by the Council, but it is the responsibility of the Town Mayor to retain receipts and other evidence in verification of expenditure in accordance with the dispensation.

### **3.6 Annual Town Meeting**

As the Chairman of the Town Council, it is the Town Mayor that convenes this annual meeting of local government electors and who presides at the meeting as it's Chairman.

### **3.7 Town Mayor's Advisory Panel**

The Town Mayor's Advisory Panel is an informal meeting of serving Councillors who are former Town Mayors, convened by the Town Mayor in Office, who acts as Chairman. The Town Mayor's Advisory Panel may make recommendations to the Council's main Committees for consideration and ultimate approval by Council.

## **4. Civic Functions & Mayoral Engagements**

#### **4.1 Invitations to the Town Mayor**

The Town Mayor is the proper person to represent the town on ceremonial occasions locally and elsewhere.

Invitations to the Town Mayor to attend events should always be received in writing by the Town Mayor's Secretary. It is not usual for invitations to the Deputy Town Mayor to be accepted, since the role of Deputy Town Mayor is intended to exist only in the absence of the Town Mayor. If unable to attend an event, the Town Mayor may ask the Deputy Town Mayor to attend on his/her behalf, but is not under any obligation to do so.

#### **4.2 Protocol at events**

The Town Mayor should receive guests at formal civic functions, where appropriate, and, at other functions, should normally be placed at the table or on the platform on the right hand of the person presiding. If he/she is to speak, his Toast should appear early in the Toast list.

When inviting Civic Heads to attend Civic functions in the Town, the Town Mayor will specify on the invitation whether he/she desires Badges and/or Chains of Office (and, exceptionally, robes) to be worn.

#### **4.3 Events in other Towns & Parishes**

The Town Mayor should not accept an engagement outside his/her own area without the consent of the Town Mayor or Chairman of the Parish/Town Council of the area, although, in practice, the Town Mayor's Secretary will use his/her discretion and seek such consent routinely.

#### **4.4 Other Organisations**

During his/her term of office the Town Mayor should not accept, as Town Mayor, any post with a local organisation except as Chairman or President (unless he/she is already Vice-president or Vice-Chairman of a body, and is not described in that capacity during his year of office as 'The Town Mayor').

#### **4.5 The Town Mayor & Committee Chairmen**

The Town Mayor should take part in any official ceremony associated with the Council's own business – e.g. opening a new public facility. The Chairman of the relevant Committee will usually preside at such functions and, if no person has been specially invited to officiate at the ceremony, the Town Mayor will undertake this role. The detailed arrangements depend to an extent on the particular circumstances of each occasion.

The Town Mayor at appropriate functions, would usually be seated at the right hand of the chairman with the Town Mayoress seated to the immediate left of the Chairman.

#### **4.6 Public Speaking**

As a Councillor the Town Mayor should be well versed in the art of public speaking. At many engagements the Town Mayor will be requested to say something. This can range from proposing a toast to a full speech. Some

organisations will send information about what they would like you to say, some will not. Information sent can vary from a full speech to notes to be included in your own speech. The Town Mayor must realise that this information is only there to help prepare a speech. There will be occasions when the Town Mayor will be asked to say a few words with little or no notice at all. The Town Mayor's Secretary will try to ensure that the Town Mayor is aware prior to an engagement whether they will be asked to speak or not, although this may not always be possible.

#### **4.7 Announcing the Town Mayor**

There will, of course, be times when it is necessary for the Macebearer or Town Clerk to formally announce the Town Mayor. At some functions, announcement of the Town Mayor would be inappropriate, for example in church or at a gathering of people present who have paid to attend.

#### **4.8 Promotion of Mayoral Activity**

Details about the activities and events attended by the Town Mayor and about the Town Mayor's Charity fundraising activities can be found on the Mayoral pages of Huntingdon Town Council's website at [www.huntingdowntown.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdowntown.gov.uk).

### **5. Mayoral Charities**

It is customary for the Town Mayor to appoint a local charity or local charities which might benefit from donations collected by the Town Mayor during the year. Working in partnership with other organisations, it may be possible to raise funds by means of local community events.

It is worth bearing in mind, however, that demands in time and resources placed on both the Town Mayor and the Council Staff need to be balanced carefully. The business of the Council, Civic Events and representing the Council & the town as the First Citizen should take priority and the time required for these activities not underestimated or given second place to fundraising. The Town Mayor's Annual Civic Charity Ball provides a very good opportunity for fundraising and is usually held on the last Saturday in March.

### **6. Macebearer**

The role of the Macebearer is to attend the Town Mayor & Mayoress/Escort and/or Deputy Town Mayor and Mayoress/Escort at all full Council Meetings, local Civic Events and on Mayoral engagements when required outside the town.

The Macebearer carries the Mace at these events and is responsible for the safety of the civic insignia and ensuring that these and the robes of office are maintained in good order, arranging for cleaning and any necessary repairs.

### **7. History**

The position of Town Mayor is one traditionally maintained in Huntingdon originating from historic Royal Charter

#### **7.1 1205-1630**

Huntingdon was first incorporated in 1205, by Charter of King John. In 1484, during the reign of Richard III, a milestone in self governance is marked by Charter decreeing that “the bailiff and burgesses of Huntingdon should form one corporate body with specific rights and freedoms”. Substantial change occurred during the sixth year of the reign of Charles I (1600-1649). At that time Huntingdon was governed by an 'open' and (by the standards of the day) representative corporation consisting of the mayor, aldermen & burgesses, and there were elections to the ruling body every year.

In 1625 the death of a local businessman, Richard Fishborne, left a bequest of £2000 to the town and the question of how to spend this money best was said to have caused five years of fighting at elections. The 1630 Charter granted by King Charles I began with a proposal to replace the old 'open' corporation and replace it with a 'closed' one. Huntingdon was to be governed by a Mayor and a small clique of aldermen who would serve for life. And instead of being accountable to the townspeople, they would be accountable only to the Crown. It is said that Oliver Cromwell was so angered by the new anti-democratic charter that he soon left the town, selling up all his property in Huntingdon, and moving to St Ives in 1631. The fear was that the changed constitution threatened the rights of the inhabitants of the borough in the common and town lands.

The first Mayor under the 1630 Charter was Lionel Walden. It stated that the title of the corporation was “the mayor, aldermen and burgesses of Huntingdon” and allowed a body comprising “a mayor, high steward, recorder, twelve aldermen (drawn from 'the better burgesses,') and twelve burgesses, assisted by a town clerk, two serjeants at mace, and subordinate officers”. Rules were laid down for the annual election of the mayor from among the senior aldermen.

Under these arrangements, the mayor, recorder, and aldermen formed what was known as the common council. The mayor was also coroner and clerk of the market and assisted by a recorder, held quarterly courts of session for trials within the borough and a court of records for the recovery of debts, once every three weeks.

## **7.2 1630-1835**

Bye-laws made in 1680 supplemented and enforced the Charter. Under these, the aldermen could fine any alderman refusing to take on the office of mayor. Any alderman residing six months out of the borough was disqualified; they were to be fined for non-attendance at the council or for incivility to the mayor; and both they and the mayor were to provide themselves with gowns.

The 1630 charter stayed in force until 1835 (with a small break between 1660 and 1688). Then the closed corporation of Huntingdon and the borough of Godmanchester were drastically reformed following the Municipal Corporations Act of that year. The government of the towns was passed to a Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors, and the vote was given to the ratepayers. In 1832 the boroughs were united for Parliamentary purposes. The name of the corporation was changed to 'The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Huntingdon,' a title which remained unaltered until 1961.

## **7.3 1961 – Present**

On 1 April 1961, Huntingdon & Godmanchester Borough Council replaced the separate municipal boroughs of Godmanchester and Huntingdon. This title expired on 31 March 1974, with Huntingdonshire District Council as the successor authority. The old Borough therefore remains part of the District Council and the position of borough Mayor as set down by Charter belongs to that of the Chairman of the District Council. As such, the Chairman of the District Council enjoys precedence throughout the whole District.

The Local Government Act 1972 caused a complete re-organisation of local government in England & Wales. In 1974 it became compulsory for Mayors to be selected from Members of the Council. Local Councils were given the power by resolution to give themselves the title of Town Council and to confer upon the Council Chairman the title of Town Mayor. Godmanchester secured its own Town Council in 1982 and the area of authority of Huntingdon's local council re-verted to the same boundary as the pre-1961 borough under Huntingdon Town Council.

## **8. Precedence**

Section 3(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Mayor has precedence in the Borough, 'but not so as to prejudicially affect Her Majesty's Royal prerogative'. In Huntingdon, the Mayor in this capacity is the Chairman of the District Council. A Town Mayor is not enabled to claim precedence over the Chairman of the District or of the County Council.

This means that provided a Member of the Royal Family is not in the Borough and attended by the Lord Lieutenant, Deputy Lieutenant or High Sheriff in their official capacity, the Chairman of the District Council should enjoy precedence. This precedence is observed at Remembrance Sunday.

However, at functions hosted by the Town Mayor within the boundaries of the Town Council to which the Chairman of the District Council is invited, it is usual for the Chairman of the District Council to relinquish precedence in favour of the Town Mayor. This is usually the case at other local Civic Events.

## **9. Written and Verbal Protocol**

### **9.1 Protocol - Written and Verbal – Town Mayor**

The correct title of the Town Mayor is "The Town Mayor of Huntingdon, Councillor [name]"

Beginning of a letter:

Formal - Dear Mr/Madam Town Mayor

Social - Dear Mr/Madam Town Mayor

Envelope:

Formal and Social - The Town Mayor of Huntingdon. (If desired, the name, preceded by Councillor may follow the office).

Verbal address:

Mr/Madam Mayor

Presenting the Town Mayor:

The Town Mayor of Huntingdon, Councillor [name]

Town Mayor's Consort/Escort:

A lady Town Mayor's husband or partner is so styled as the Town Mayor's

Consort/Escort, but is addressed by his name.

It is suggested that in the presence of the District Council Chairman, the Town Mayor should be addressed as “Mr / Madam Town Mayor”

## **9.2 Protocol - Written and Verbal – Deputy Town Mayor**

Beginning of a letter:

Formal - Dear Mr/Madam Deputy  
Town Mayor

Social - Dear Mr/Madam Deputy  
Town Mayor

Envelope:

Formal and Social - The Deputy Town Mayor of Huntingdon, Councillor  
[name]

Verbal address:

Mr/Madam Deputy Town Mayor

End of a letter:

Formal - Yours faithfully

Social - Yours sincerely

Description on conversation:

The Deputy Town Mayor of  
Huntingdon

Presenting the Deputy Mayor:

The Deputy Town Mayor of Huntingdon, Councillor [name]

## **10 Insignia & Robes**

### **10.1 Mayoral Robes & Accessories**

The current Town Mayor's robe is relatively new and made of a lightweight modern material, edged with artificial fur. Traditionally, the cloth used in the making of the Mayoral robe was of the finest quality wool. The colour of the Town Mayor's robe is scarlet, which is the colour generally worn by Town Mayors. The Town Mayor also wears a hat (bi-corn for male Town Mayors and tri-corn for ladies); white gloves & a jabot, which is a lace cravat.

Mayoral robes are worn at full meetings of the Council, Civic Sunday, Remembrance Sunday & the Civic Carol Service. On these occasions, the presence of the Mace signifies that the Town Mayor is attending in her/his official capacity and on these occasions, the Deputy Town Mayor and Town Clerk, who wears a wig on such occasions, are also robed. The robe of the Deputy Town Mayor is similar to that of the Town Mayor, except that it is blue.

In the interest of the care of the Council's property, on receipt of all civic insignia, the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor will be asked to carry out a check on their condition, the result of which will be recorded. As a keyholder for the Town Hall and the Council's Offices, the Mayor will also be asked to accept responsibility for keys, access cards and codes necessary to the security of the Council's property.

### **10.2 The Mayor's Chain & Badge of Office**

The Mayoral Chain is worn solely by the Town Mayor. The Deputy Town Mayor is not entitled to wear either the Mayoral Robes or Chain of Office, neither is it correct for the Mace to be borne before the Deputy.

The Town Mayor's Chain and badge are of 18ct gold, and were made by Messrs. T. and J. Bragg. The chain consists of a series of large shield-

shaped links, for the arms or other devices of successive mayors. The central link is a representation of the Royal arms, etc., in enamel, with, on one side, the arms and coronet of the Duke of Bedford, Lord Lieutenant of the county, and on the other side those of the Earl of Sandwich, Lord High Steward. The badge bears the town arms and other devices, and is suspended from the central link of the chain. Tradition holds that Huntingdon is the only town in England with the right to display the Royal Coat of Arms on its Mayoral Chain. This right is said to have been conferred by Charles II on the restoration of the monarchy as a token of appreciation for the loyalty of the town during the English Civil War.

### **10.3 Town Mayoress's Chain/Escort's Badge**

A silver chain is worn by a Town Mayoress (the lady escort to a Town Mayor) at official events and when attending public functions with the Town Mayor. The Town Mayoress or Mayor's Escort once appointed by the Town Mayor is an honorary and unofficial office within the civic group. There is a different badge of office for a Town Mayor's Escort.

### **10.4 Deputy Town Mayor's Badge of Office**

This silver gilt badge was purchased by the Town Council in 1987 and a new chain was purchased for the Deputy Town Mayor in 2009.

This is worn on all appropriate occasions when he/she is officiating in that capacity. Traditionally in Huntingdon, when the Town Mayor attends either a Town Council Meeting, Civic Carols, the Civic Service & Remembrance Sunday in official capacity and in civic attire, the Deputy Town Mayor also wears insignia.

Unless expressly agreed by the Town Mayor, however, the Deputy Town Mayor will not wear insignia at any other event either in or outside the town and attended officially by the Town Mayor.

The badge of office is worn in the presence of the Town Mayor only at Town Council meetings, at local Civic Events. It is also worn when the Deputy Town Mayor attends an event on behalf of the Town Mayor.

### **10.5 Mayoral Headgear**

A robed female Town Mayor will usually wear her hat both in and outdoors, including attendance at Church Services. A male Town Mayor will wear his hat outdoors but remove it when indoors.

When laying a wreath on Remembrance Sunday and/or Battle of Britain Sunday, the Town Mayor is expected to show respect by removing his/her hat for a short time after laying, whilst facing the war memorial, before returning to his/her place.

The Town Mayor should remove his/her hat when:

- Acknowledging salutes
- During the playing of the National Anthem
- In the presence of a member of the Royal Family

During march pasts, the Town Mayor should remove and replace his/her hat:

- As each section passes the salute
- When the Colours pass; or
- on an inspection when the Town Mayor passes the Colours

## 10.6 Medals.

There are opposing points of views as to whether medals should be worn on the Mayoral gown. The most frequent compromise is that medals are not worn except when attending Remembrance Day or Battle of Britain Sunday Services, when full medals (not miniatures) should be worn on the left breast of the robe.

Miniature medals should only be worn on full evening dress or dinner jackets when the invitation states “decorations will be worn”.

## 10.7 The Mace

Historically the weapon of an armed bodyguard, whose role became messenger or legate to convey Royal orders to local authorities, the Mace inscribed with the Royal arms became an obvious and visible symbol of the Royal Authority. By the end of the Tudor period, the use of the ceremonial maces was well established.

The pattern of the Mace most commonly seen today was standardised by Royal decree of Charles I (parliament Order of 1649, Instructions for Cities and towns to obey Maundy’s “forme and patterne of Maces”) confirmed under the Commonwealth (but substituting an acorn for the orb and cross) and restored under Charles II.

The most curious and interesting point to note about the evolution of the Mace is that it was also a revolution; the hitting head has become the innocuous base and the handle knob has become the head, and so it is that today the Ceremonial Mace is carried, so to speak, upside down.

The Mace should precede the Town Mayor when entering and leaving the Council Chamber, and should always repose in front of the Town Mayor when the Council is sitting. When the Town Mayor is seated the Mace rests horizontally before him/her with the crown to his right hand or in the more important direction. Thus, should the Town Mayor occupy a stall in the choir of a church, the crown of the Mace should be towards the Altar. The Mace should always be reversed in the presence of the Sovereign.

The Mace usually incorporates a Royal crown or other Royal insignia, and as such is a token of Royal authority. Only those local authorities that are created Corporations by Royal Charter are entitled to such a Mace and in many of the ancient charters the right to carry a Mace (or Maces, as the case may be) before the Town Mayor is expressly granted to the Corporation.

Huntingdon’s silver gilt Mace, or emblem of authority, has a most intriguing history. According to the Borough accounts, it was originally purchased in 1688, but a cursory examination shows that only the beautiful stock is of that date, the massive head being of later and inferior workmanship.

Tradition, supported by various entries in the Borough accounts, asserts that the Corporation, being hard pressed for ready money, pledged the original head, which was of solid silver, for £100 to someone living in Leicester. This transaction took place apparently in 1759, but the head was never redeemed, and is believed to have been acquired later on by Leicester Corporation for their own use. It would seem that the substitution was the work of a few Aldermen in the know, who practised the deception on their brethren in the hope that the change would not be detected.

## **11. The Town Mayor's Parlour**

Located in the Town Hall and originally the Card Room (and the tables here are the originals) this is now a room in which the Mayor would "parlez" (as the French would say) and is used by the Town Mayor to welcome civic visitors to the town and in which to robe before civic events. Unlike some ancient Boroughs, Huntingdon does not possess large quantities of civic insignia or plate but most of those items in the Council's possession are displayed in this civic suite.

Displayed in the Mayor's Parlour is the "Hinchingsbrooke Casket" presented to the Earl of Sandwich in 1899 by the Aldermen, Councillors and Officers of the Huntingdon Borough Council to commemorate the Earl's Mayoralty over the previous three years. This Casket is believed to have been lost until the County Council took over Hinchingsbrooke House from the Montagu family (the Earl of Sandwich family name) for use as a school when the Casket was found in a blocked up fireplace!

The portrait over the fireplace is of Oliver Cromwell painted by Lely in 1653 and is a copy of the original hanging in the Pitti Palace in Florence, Italy, and was painted as the new official likeness after Cromwell's installation as Lord Protector.

The fine display cabinet which also stands in this room was presented by the Station Commander and personnel of R.A.F. Wyton on the occasion of that Station's commemoration in April 1993 of the conferment in 1955 of the Freedom of Entry into the town of Huntingdon on that famous air station.

## **12. Religion**

### **12.1 Attendance at Religious Services**

The Town Mayor will be invited to many religious services of different denominations during his/her year of office. Some of the customs may be different to those they are used to. The Town Mayor always respects the customs of any religion, for example, on entering a synagogue, they will be required to cover their head. A yarmulke is usually offered on these occasions. Attending a religious service of another faith is the Town Mayor's outward show that he/she is Town Mayor of all the people and of the right to worship freely.

### **12.2 Town Mayor's Chaplain**

The traditional role of the Chaplain is to offer spiritual guidance and / or moral support to the Town Mayor. Nowadays the Town Mayor's Chaplain helps organise the civic service, says grace at civic dinners and prayers at Council

meetings. As the First Citizen of the town, the Town Mayor looks to the Mayor's Chaplain as a focal point for religious groups locally and for advice on religious matters, regardless of the Town Mayor's own personal religious beliefs.

### **13. Civic Ceremonial Events**

#### **13.1 Annual Events**

The Council's annual Civic Events are traditionally held on the following days :

- Annual Meeting (Mayor Making), usually on the second Thursday in May, but in an election year, always within 14 days of the election and not later than the end of May in any election year.
- Civic Sunday, on the first Sunday in July.
- Remembrance Sunday, on the Sunday nearest to 11<sup>th</sup> November as well as a short ceremony in the Market Square at 11.00am on 11<sup>th</sup> November
- Annual Civic Carol Service, on the second Wednesday in December.

Civic ceremony is also observed at Full Town Council meetings and at the Town Mayor's Annual Civic Charity Ball.

#### **13.2 Robing**

In order to ensure sufficient time for robing, the Town Mayor & Deputy Town Mayor should ensure that they arrive at least twenty five minutes before commencement of the Civic Church Services and at least fifteen minutes before the commencement of business at Town Council meetings.

The Macebearer assists with robing, which takes place in the Minerva Room of the Commemoration Hall or the Town Mayor's Parlour in the Town Hall.

#### **13.3 Order & precedence at Civic Events**

The Town Clerk will be responsible for planning and organisation of the order and precedence at civic ceremonies and for communication of these to Members of the Council and Staff.

In procession, the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor will be followed by:

- Serving Councillors who are former Mayors, in chronological order by year of Office
- Main Committee Chairmen and Vice Chairmen
- Remaining Councillors in alphabetical order

### **14. Awards**

The role of the Town Mayor involves leadership, social cohesion and symbolising authority. Carefully selected awards can help the Town Mayor achieve all these elements, whilst also celebrating and promoting success.

#### **14.1 The Community Award**

This award recognises an individual who gives their time voluntarily to help improve the circumstance or quality of life of the residents of Huntingdon.

Nominations are put to the Town Clerk's office and the recipient of the award is decided by the public vote, who is presented the award by the Town Mayor at the reception following the Annual Civic Carol Service.

#### **14.2 Freedom of Huntingdon**

Historically, we know that Viscount Hinchinbrooke (the Earl of Sandwich) was awarded the freedom of Huntingdon.

It is the Council that may grant Freedom by resolution and is empowered to do so under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. The right of Freedom of Entry to the Town of Huntingdon is a significant tribute demonstrating trust, loyalty and a sense of community between the Town and a unit of Her Majesty's Forces.

The "Freedom" allows the nominated service to march through the street with "bayonets fixed, drums beating and Colours flying"

The Freedom of Entry was granted by Huntingdon Borough Council to RAF Wyton in 1955 (extended to RAF Brampton in 1995) and to the Royal Anglian Regiment in 2010. Exercise is usually practiced every five years, though two Freedom marches in one year are to be avoided.

#### **14.3 Officers of Dignity**

Prior to local government reorganisation in 1974 a number of cities and boroughs exercised by, charter, custom or by statute, powers of appointment of local officers of dignity. Among the honorary appointments so made were those of sheriffs, high stewards, honorary recorders, honorary freemen and honorary aldermen. As a result of local government reorganisation in 1974, when the area of an existing city or borough became a parish, any powers to appoint local officers of dignity became exercisable by the parish council. (Section 246(3) of the Local Government Act 1972).

#### **14.4 Honorary titles (honorary freemen and freewomen)**

The earliest known awards of Freedom of the Borough were made in the 1700s. Admiral Sir George Rodney was awarded the honour after defeating the Spanish at the Battle of Cape St Vincent in 1780. Borough records of December 1782 refer to the purchase of parchment, fees on swearing him a Burgess, a banquet at the fountain and a coach and pair to parade the Admiral.

Captain Sir Henry Trollope, who first sailed under Captain William Montagu and went on to command HMS Glatton, drove a French Squadron into Flushing Harbour on 14th July 1796, and held them away from Britain's shipping lines. For this he was presented with a piece of plate by the City of London, with another by the Russia company and with the freedoms of Yarmouth and Huntingdon.

The Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 amended provisions in the 1972 Local Government Act to enable all local councils to confer honorary titles. By virtue of section 249(5) and (6) of the 1972 Act as amended, all local councils may exercise powers to confer the title of "honorary freeman" or "honorary freewoman" to persons of distinction

and those who, in the council's opinion, have rendered eminent services to the council's area. The law further prescribes that the admission of an honorary freeman or honorary freewoman must be by resolution made at a meeting of the full council, specially convened for such purpose, for which proper notice has been given and passed by no than less two-thirds of the members of the council. Section 249 (9) of the 1972 Act as amended provides that a local council may spend a reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person on whom it has conferred the title of honorary freeman or honorary freewoman.

## **15 Sources**

Manual of the Mace, The Official Handbook of the Guild of Macebearers

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