

PEACEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL



MAYORS' HANDBOOK

May 2025 - 2026

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The Mayor's Handbook is designed and compiled to assist the Mayor & Deputy Mayor with their civic duties. It does not supersede or take preference over Peacehaven Town Council's standing orders.

1 Introduction

Section 245 of the Local Government Act 1972 gave Parish Councils the power by resolution to give themselves the title of Town Council. The Chair of a Town Council is entitled to the title of Town Mayor. Peacehaven Parish Council made such a resolution and from 1979 has been a Town and the Chair has been Mayor.

Sections 15 & 34 of the Local Government Act 1972 require local councils to appoint a Mayor as the first business to be transacted at the Annual Council meeting. At the meeting at which the Mayor is elected (or before or at a later meeting, if so permitted by the council) they must sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and agreement to be guided by the Code of Conduct in the performance of their duties. The Mayor guides activities by managing the meetings of the council, ensuring that all Councillors have the opportunity to speak and that they keep to the point. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the Mayor when chairing a meeting.

Other than in regard to the casting vote, a Mayor has no more power than any other Councillor and has no power to make decisions without a resolution of the council.

The Mayor is the public face of the council and may be invited to official functions, where they must represent views of the council and not personal views. Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 enables a Mayor to be paid an allowance to meet the expenses of their office – see page 4 Mayor's Allowance.

The Mayor is the Chair of the Council and as such is the First Citizen of the Town of Peacehaven. The Mayor is the ambassador of the town and can help in the promotion of the council's objectives in the local community. In turn, the people of the town will have the highest regard for their Mayor, and they will expect the Mayor to carry out a full range of duties on their behalf and throughout the town.

2 Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor must be members of the council.

The election of Mayor is the first item of business at the annual council meeting with the election being decided by a majority of members present and voting on the matter at the meeting (Section 15, Local Government Act 1972).

Unless they have resigned or been disqualified, the outgoing Mayor continues in the post until their successor has been chosen and made a valid declaration of office.

The outgoing Mayor will, if present, preside at the Annual Council Meeting to elect his/her successor. If the outgoing Mayor is not present, the Deputy Mayor shall preside at the meeting to elect the successor. If neither the outgoing Mayor nor Deputy Mayor is present, the members present shall elect another member of the council to preside.

The person presiding at the annual council meeting must give a casting vote in the event of any equality of votes for the election of the new Mayor.

3 Mayor's Role

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be elected by the council annually. The Mayor shall be available for an official photograph within 2 weeks of being elected.

The Mayor and, in their absence, the Deputy Mayor will have the following responsibilities:

- To chair council meetings.
- To focus his/her activities on the communities of the town and, by focusing on the council's priorities, strengthen its links between those local communities and the council.
- To act as an enabler and ambassador by arranging meetings between the council and other parties for the benefit of the town, coordinated for them by the Civic Officer.

The Mayor may call an extraordinary meeting of the council, subject to provisions in the council's standing orders. If the Mayor fails or refuses to call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days after a request signed by 2 members of the Council, those 2 members may call an extraordinary meeting.

The Mayor's **Consort** must be over 18 years of age.

The Mayor/Deputy Mayor is required to attend events organised by Peacehaven Town Council.

When the Mayor attends an event to which they have been invited they may be presented with a token of appreciation – often in the form of a bouquet of flowers. It is important to remember that, under the Members' Code of Conduct, any such gifts must be reported to the Civic Officer in writing, within 28 days of receipt.

There may be occasions when the Mayor will need to present a civic gift. Any such gifts will be paid for out of the civic budget.

The Mayor will undertake an accredited chairmanship course as soon as possible after being elected to office.

Outgoing Mayors will be presented with a Past Mayors Badge, and Deputy Mayors will be presented with a gift as a token of appreciation on completion of a full term of office.

4 Deputy Mayor's Role

The Deputy Mayor only has a civic and legal status in the absence of the Mayor. It follows that invitations to a function should not be sent to (or solicited by) a Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor should not attend functions in their own right but only when deputising for the Mayor. The Deputy Mayor does not wear their chain of office when the Mayor is attending the same function.

All invitations should be sent for consideration to the Mayor as First Citizen (via the Civic Officer). If the Mayor cannot attend, it may be appropriate to pass on the invitation to the Deputy Mayor, at the discretion of the Civic Officer.

On the rare occasions when the Deputy Mayor is invited to a function in their own right there should be a clear procedure whereby the invitation is shown informally to the Mayor for agreement, in order that there is no misunderstanding.

The Deputy Mayor will undertake an accredited chairmanship course as soon as possible after being elected to office.

5 Written and Verbal Protocol

The full title of the Mayor is **The Worshipful the Mayor of Peacehaven or the Mayor of Peacehaven.**

The Mayor shall be addressed as: **Dear Mr Mayor or Dear Madam Mayor**

6 Chain of Office

The chain of office was designed and made by a local company Studio Crafts in 2003, which is no longer trading, however the jeweller remains local. Each of the links has an image of the Meridian Monument (also on the Town's logo) engraved on it and, therefore, the chain of office is a unique piece of regalia.

Any alterations or additions will need to be ratified by Full Council.

The chain of office should only be worn when the Mayor is undertaking official duties in their capacity as Mayor.

The chain of office may be worn where an official invitation has been received for events within the town where the Mayor and Civic Officer considers that those present would consider it appropriate to mark the occasion.

When attending an event within another Mayor's boundary, that Mayor's permission must be given for the wearing of the chain, **and it shall be worn only when invited to do so.** If this permission is not forthcoming, the chain of office cannot be worn, nor badge of office.

The Mayor enjoys precedence in their own area – not that of their neighbours. Therefore, the Mayor should not accept an invitation to attend, in an official capacity, a function in another area without the express consent of that area.

The Mayor is responsible for the chain during their term of office. It is insured by the Town Council, but the Mayor must ensure that it is kept safely so that it does not get damaged and should only be worn for official duties organised by the Civic Officer.

The Deputy Mayor will wear their chain of office whilst deputising for the Mayor.

7 Individual Requirements

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should inform the Civic Officer and the Town Clerk of any health condition or disability at the start of their term, for which the Civic Officer will arrange any reasonable adjustments.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should inform the Civic Officer of any dietary requirements at the start of their term.

8 Dress Code

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should look smart and well-groomed at all engagements.

9 Social Media

The Civic Officer will manage the Mayor's twitter account and will promote Mayoral events on Peacehaven Town Council's website, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts, in co-ordination with the Communications Officer.

It would be advisable for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to discuss with their family and acquaintances for them to abide by similar recommendation with regard to suitable content on social media and appropriate behaviour.

10 Political Activities

The Mayor's role is **apolitical; political points should not be made**. The Mayor should not attend any political gatherings in their capacity as Mayor and no reference to politics should be made during conversation or during a speech.

The Mayor is not permitted to canvass, leaflet drop or conduct electioneering during their entire term of office.

11 Conduct

The Mayor, when performing official duties, is the visible presence of the council. It is important that while being seen as warm and friendly, the office of Mayor is upheld with dignity, avoiding demeaning the role or acting in a way that could be criticised. Any invitation where the Mayor's presence requires a consort should be discussed by the Civic Officer with the Mayor, to ensure the consort has adequate understanding of the conduct expected by the council.

In the event of misconduct by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, the Civic Officer or Town Clerk will seek advice from ESALC (East Sussex Association of Local Councils) and NACO (National Association of Civic Officers) and report to the relevant Committee.

Any misconduct by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor which constitutes a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct should also be reported to the Monitoring Officer at Lewes District Council.

12 Promotion of the Council

The Mayor has a key role in acting as ambassador, promoting the town to the wider community. This may take a number of forms, including attending events arranged by other organisations as the council's official representative, hosting events that recognise achievement and/or service by members of the community, promoting the town or their charity on social media (via the Civic Officer) by video or helping achieve a closer relationship or understanding with organisations in the town.

If two invitations are received at the same time and the dates coincide, then the one concerning Peacehaven should take precedence over any invitation coming from outside the town.

The office of Mayor is a valuable avenue through which to improve ties with the local community. All official visits outside of the county of Sussex are to be approved by the Mayor and Civic Officer, at the discretion of the Civic Officer.

All overseas visits are to be approved by Full Council.

13 Christmas Cards

The Mayor will need to select their Christmas card fairly early in the Mayoral year, to allow time for printing. The Civic Officer can supply the Mayor with a list of the previous year's recipients together with a local organisation list to help the Mayor to choose who they wish their cards to be sent to. The cards and postage will be paid for out of the Mayor's allowance, or as an alternative an e-card can be sent.

14 Mayor's Allowance

The council recognises the need for an allowance to deal with the expectations of the office in connection with wardrobe, contribution to raffles, fetes, attendance at charity events, sending flowers and payment of tickets for their consort. It is important that the purpose to which the allowance is put can withstand public scrutiny.

Much of it will be used for hospitality. The Mayor must keep a written record with receipts and produce a financial statement at the end of the term. Any surplus should be returned to the Finance Officer within 28 days.

15 Mayor's Charities

If the Mayor decides they wish to support a charity and/or local projects during their term of office, they should ensure that the charity is non-political, non-discriminatory and should benefit residents of the town. Monies must not be donated to profit making businesses established for that purpose.

16 Mayor's Charity Administrative Arrangements

To clarify the relationship between the Mayor's charity appeal and the council's accounts and to give Officers clear direction ~~as to~~ regarding their role, the following provisions are suggested.

The Mayoral charities each year should be either local groups or local branches of national or independent groups. This is important as funds are raised predominately from local people and they ought to be able to connect with the organisations being supported and see the relevance of their contribution to the community of Peacehaven.

A separate cost centre (on the integral RBS accounting system) will be used for the Mayor's Appeal, run by and overseen by the Finance Officer.

Where more than one charity is nominated it will be assumed that all monies received will be divided equally, unless specified by the current Mayor and confirmed by resolution of the Policy and Finance Committee.

Income generated will be assumed to be for the Mayor's Appeal as a whole and divided equally. If one of the nominated organisations puts on a specific event (publicised clearly for their benefit with the support of the Mayor) income received at that event may be allocated specifically to that particular charity. Such arrangements will be reported to the Policy and Finance Committee at the earliest opportunity.

The total income collected (and how it has been divided between the nominated charities) will be reported to the Policy and Finance Committee at the end of the Mayoral year. Cheques to the nominated charities will be presented to representatives at the Mayor's Reception. If the nominated charity is unable to send a representative to the Mayor's Reception, arrangements will be made to send the cheques by 31st May at the latest.

The council's internal auditor will be asked to include a review of management of the Mayor's charity and of the close accounts in their annual programme of work.

Charities wishing to accept the support and sponsorship of the Mayor will be required to confirm acceptance of these arrangements.

17 Engagements and Diary

On receipt of an invitation for the Mayor, the Civic Officer will forward the Mayor a copy at the earliest opportunity, including details of whether a speech is required. The Mayor must inform the Civic Officer of whether they wish to accept the invitation as soon as possible, and within 7 days at the latest.

The Mayor should keep a record of engagements and also inform the Civic Officer of dates and times that they are unavailable for Mayoral duties, to ensure the Deputy is available in their place.

The Mayor should make every effort to attend each engagement but if he/she is otherwise engaged the Deputy Mayor may attend, with mutual agreement. The Civic Officer will confirm the Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's attendance. If the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are unavailable, the invitation is to be declined. A

Mayoral engagement form for all events should be completed and sent to the Mayor with the invitations, along with the scoring Civic invitation form (see attached copies).

If the Civic Officer has confirmed acceptance and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor subsequently cannot attend, they must inform the Civic Officer to ensure an apology to be sent on the following working day. Following the attendance at any engagements, a 'thank you' email will be drafted by the Mayor and sent by the Civic Officer, on Mayoral headed paper.

18 Mayor's Events

The Civic and Mayor's events are organised by the Civic Officer with the help from other Council Officers. There are to be fixed Mayoral events during each year. Other events can be organised by the Civic and Community Events Task & Finish Group; The main fixed events are:

- Mayoral Reception – April (or March in a year of elections)
- Civic Service - prior to 1 July each year
- Remembrance Day - November
- Winter Event – December

At the beginning of the Mayor's term of office, the Mayor must nominate a team of up to 10 volunteers to help support the Town Council office staff with the preparation, running and clearing up at Mayoral events. This support will be co-ordinated with the Civic Officer 5 volunteers should attend each event.

Sponsorship for the events will be sought by the Mayor and Civic Officer in conjunction with their team of volunteers. These events are mandatory for the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to attend.

Participation in events within and beyond the town shall be co-ordinated by the Civic Officer on behalf of the Mayor.

To ensure that an imbalance is not created between attendees at events, the Civic Officer will manage the guest list, limiting dignitaries to adjoining towns only.

The Civic Officer will issue press releases relating to any events organised on behalf of the Mayor.

18.1 Mayoral Reception

The Mayor's Mayoral Reception shall be organised as a "thank you" to voluntary groups, individuals and businesses that support community life in the town. Appropriate food and drink shall be provided from the Mayor's reception budget. At an appropriate time during the event, the Mayor shall make a short speech to those present.

The event will be hosted by the outgoing Mayor towards the end of the Civic year, at a date to be agreed by the Mayor and Civic Officer. It will be held in the Main Hall of Community House.

Invitations to be sent to all Peacehaven Town Councillors, all Peacehaven Town Council staff, local dignitaries (i.e., local Mayors of Lewes, Seaford, Newhaven and Telscombe) local organisations,

individuals and local businesses that support community life in the town. Entertainment will be sourced, and a price negotiated by the Civic Officer.

Catering is to be organised and booked by the Civic Officer within the civic budget. All endeavours will be made to keep the cost to a minimum for both entertainment and refreshments, with the total cost to come from the Mayor's reception budget.

18.2 Civic Service

The Civic service is to be held before 1 July each year. The Civic Officer will organise the details. It will be held at a venue of the Mayor's choosing.

18.3 Remembrance Day

The Remembrance Day event will be held at the War Memorial in Meridian Park on the second Sunday of November each year. The Civic Officer will organise the details, working in association with local churches & schools and the Royal British Legion. Refreshments will be served afterwards in Community House.

The Mayor is expected to attend the Remembrance Day Parade & Service. The Deputy Mayor will be expected to attend if the Mayor is unavailable but can attend in the role of Councillor.

18.4 Winter Event

A winter event, such as a Carol concert, Christmas Market, Frost fair, or other winter time celebratory event is customary. The nature of the event should be discussed by the Civic and Community Events Task & Finish Group and agreed at Committee.

18.6 Other events

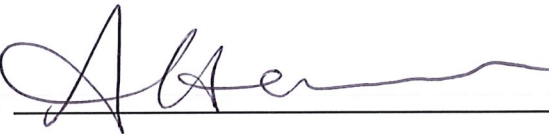
In addition to the fixed events detailed above the office will be able to support a maximum of three other events during the year. These events will be decided by the Mayor in discussion with the Civic Officer at a meeting each year before the end of June, to ensure that there is sufficient time to plan and organise the events.

19 Declaration

I Cllr Deborah Donovan as **Mayor** of Peacehaven Town Council confirm that I have read and will adhere to the procedures outlined in the Mayor's Handbook.

SIGNED:  DATED: 20/5/25

I Cllr Amiee Hane as **Deputy Mayor** of Peacehaven Town Council confirm that I have read and will adhere to the procedures outlined in the Mayor's Handbook.

SIGNED:  DATED: 20/5/25

Sources of Reference used: Civic Ceremonial – Paul Millward

