1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This handbook on Civic Protocol has been produced to assist the Town Mayor and their Deputy to understand their roles and responsibilities. Not all eventualities are covered.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Town Mayor

The Mayoralty is one of the most ancient offices in British history but has changed its role, importance and public perception over the centuries.

2.1 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 Chair of the Council to become the ‘Town Mayor’ together with the precedence accorded to the post.

2.2 The Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as a local council chairman.

2.3 Traditionally, the role is neutral and not party political. The public still see the role as ‘above politics’.

3.0 ON BECOMING MAYOR

3.1 Being the Mayor is different to being a Councillor. A Mayor, by virtue of the Office, he or she can stimulate community pride, promote the town, encourage business, support the voluntary sector, mould social cohesion etc.

3.2 A Mayor should anticipate meeting with other dignitaries and is expected to attend many engagements representing the Town.

3.3 The Mayor is in the public eye and therefore under increased scrutiny for. With this in mind the Mayor needs to exhibit a keen and genuine interest in those he/she meets, show enthusiasm and commitment to the role, ensure he/she is non-party political, speak up for the town’s interests and always be mindful of the dignity of the Office.

3.4 The Mayor is elected by the Full Council at the Annual Town Council Meeting in May. A Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting.
3.5 The new Mayor makes the following declaration of acceptance at the Annual Town Council Meeting:

“I……………..having been elected to the Office of Mayor for Raunds Town Council, 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.

I undertake to observe the Code of Conduct which is expected of Members of Raunds Town Council“

3.6 The Declaration of Acceptance of Office is signed by both the new Mayor and the Town Clerk (as the Chief Executive Officer of the Council). The new Deputy Mayor also makes a similar declaration.

3.7 The Mayor’s Term of 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 Full Council.

4.0 ROLE OF THE MAYOR

4.1 Standing Orders set out the duties when presiding at Council meetings or in conducting the Council’s business.

4.2 The Mayor's role is to achieve four key aims:

- **As a symbol of authority** – connecting history with present day and providing a symbol of continuity; a spokesperson for the Council particularly in time of emergency or national celebration.

- **A symbol of Open Society** – the modern office of Mayor symbolises an open society. A Mayor can come from any class, gender or ethnic background. The role also symbolises the transparency of the organisation it represents.

- **An expression of Social Cohesion** – the attendances of the Mayor to both civic and other engagements gives an expression of cohesion to the life of the town. The Mayor can create links between various bodies, organisations, businesses and even political mediation. In speaking at engagements, the Mayor can articulate the Council’s aims and objectives throughout the community.

- **Act as an ambassador for the Town** – the Mayor will attend many functions across the District and County and meet a wide range of people. The Mayor should seek to promote Raunds as great place to live, work and do business.

4.3 These key aims are of significant importance and should be borne in mind when the Mayor carries out their duties throughout the year and in deciding what initiatives they choose to undertake.
5.0 INVITATIONS TO EVENTS

5.1 During the Civic year, the Mayor will support a wide variety of events throughout the town.

5.2 All invitations must be sent for consideration of the Mayor (as First Citizen) and, if the Mayor cannot attend it is appropriate to “pass down” an invitation. There may be a small number of instances where it is not possible for an invitation to be passed down.

5.3 The Deputy should not attend functions in his/her own right but only when deputising for the Mayor.

5.4 The Deputy Mayor may wear their Chains of Office at the same time as the Mayor on occasions where the Mayor approves.

6.0 MAYOR’S CHARITIES

6.1 The Mayor traditionally raises funds for charities in the Raunds area or those which benefit the local area. Ideally, the Mayor will announce his or her chosen charities at the Annual Meeting or otherwise, at the next full Council meeting.

6.2 The Mayor’s Charity Account Protocol (Appendix 1) should be read in conjunction with this section of the handbook.

7.0 PRECEDENCE

7.1 The Chairman of a District Council takes precedence throughout the District but passes precedence down to the Town Mayor in their respective towns.

7.2 If the Mayor attends functions outside of their town they should only wear their chain of office if permitted by the Mayor/Chair of that town.

7.3 The Mayor will choose their own consort who can be either a spouse/partner, fellow Councillor, family member, or friend. The Mayor will announce their consort at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council, but this will not preclude them from taking another guest to functions to act as consort, if their nominated consort is unavailable at certain times. The consort should be given equivalent respect and dignity whenever he/she accompanies the Mayor on Civic engagements.

7.4 When representing Raunds Town Council, the Mayor will usually wear the official Chain of Office. The Chain will normally be worn at all official functions within Raunds and can also be worn at functions outside of the town, if agreed by the host Council.

7.5 Special arrangements apply when visits are made by the Lord Lieutenant or Royalty to the Town. The Town Clerk will provide advice on these occasions.

7.6 In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor is entitled to the Mayor’s right of precedence within the Town.
8.0 SUPPORT FOR THE MAYOR

8.1 The Town Clerk’s staff will keep the Mayor’s diary of engagements and provide such administrative services as needed.

8.2 The Council will allocate resources to support the Mayors civic events

9.0 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TOWN CLERK

9.1 The Mayor will work closely with the Clerk, who will support the Mayor during their term of office. The Mayor should respect the advice given by the Clerk as proper officer.

9.2 During their term of office, the Mayor will act as the Clerk’s line manager for administrative issues, such as annual leave and sickness arrangements.

10.0 CIVIC ALLOWANCE

10.1 There is a Civic Allowance to help the Mayor defray the cost of office. Legislation does not stipulate the type or category of expenditure for which the Mayor may use the Civic Allowance. However, it is commonly described as recompense for the expenses of maintaining the dignity of the Office.

10.2 General items include:

- Costs of purchasing tickets to civic events
- Poppy wreaths
- Collections
- Hospitality

10.3 The Mayor is likely to incur costs on travel to functions. These costs will be met through the Councils councillor expenses budget and will not be taken from the Mayor’s allowance.

11.0 SUPPORT BY DEPUTY MAYOR

11.1 The Member elected as Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year by representing the Council when the Mayor is absent and requests it.

11.2 If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting, the Deputy Mayor must preside.
12.0 CIVIC INSIGNIA AND REGALIA

12.1 The Mayor’s chain and badge of office are the outward signs of the Civic Office held and should be worn at all civic functions and events to which the Mayor (as the Mayor) has been invited. The public has an expectation to see the regalia being worn.

12.2 The Mayor or Deputy Mayor, when acting on behalf of the Mayor, should not wear the Civic insignia/regalia in another capacity or another area without express permission from the Council for that area.

12.3 Civic chains should never be worn with a military uniform.

12.4 A Mayor who is a member of the clergy may wear the chain over their gown. Similarly, the chain may be worn over academic dress.

12.5 The Chains of office are given to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to look after during the year. The Council’s insurance covers loss or theft of the Chains whilst in the UK. If travelling overseas on civic business, the Mayor should seek the advice of the Clerk regarding insurance of the Chains.

13.0 RECEIPT OF GIFTS

13.1 In the course of the duty of being Mayor, gifts will sometimes 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.

13.2 The Code of Conduct requires Members, including Mayors, to register any gifts or hospitality worth £25 or over that are received in connection with their official duties as a Member, and the source of the gift or hospitality. Gifts or hospitality should be registered, together with the source, within 28 days.

14.0 THE CIVIC YEAR - EVENTS

14.1 At the beginning of the Mayoral year it is useful to be able to produce an event list to enable members and the public to diarise events they wish to attend.

14.2 Each year the Mayor may wish to put on fundraising events. It is useful to plan these well in advance, if possible, at the start of the Mayoral year so that other Chains can be notified and plan their diaries.
Some of these events are a statutory obligation, others are at the Mayors discretion. The Clerk can advise as to events undertaken by past Mayors.

- **Civic Service**

The format of the day is entirely for the Mayor to decide but must be within budget and held within the town boundary. Civic dignitaries from other Council’s together with leaders of local community groups and organisations, colleagues, friends and family are usually invited.

- **Annual Town Meeting**

This is not the Annual Meeting of the Town Council. It is a legal requirement that all parishes in England hold an ‘Annual Town/Parish Meeting’ to which all local electors are entitled to attend. The meeting is called and chaired by the Mayor. All expenditure associated with the meeting must be approved by the Council, it is therefore prudent to have the support of council in the early stages of planning.

The meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June each year and the venue is normally the Saxon Hall.

- **Remembrance Sunday**

Remembrance Sunday is held on the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of Armistice Day which is on November 11th at 11am. The Mayor will lay a wreath on behalf of Raunds Town Council in memory of those men and women who gave their lives for their country.

- **Christmas Lights Switch-On**

This annual event draws large crowds and involves extensive organisation. Crowds of 2,000 can be expected. The Mayor normally opens this event and will switch-on the lights.

**15.0 MAYOR’S END OF YEAR**

15.1 The Annual Meeting of the Town Council Meeting notes the end of the outgoing Mayor’s Term of Office. He or she may make a short speech and needs to consider a few words of thanks for those who have supported the Mayoral Year and details of the amount raised for charity.

15.2 The new Mayor will present the previous Mayor with a Past Mayor’s badge.

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