



ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL CIVIC GUIDE

**ADOPTED: JULY 2025
UPDATED: JULY 2026
TO BE REVIEWED: JULY 2028**

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Civic Guide has been produced to assist the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, their escorts/consorts, Councillors and employees to understand the civic roles and responsibilities of the Mayoralty and provide useful information for when undertaking a Civic Role.

2 THE ROLE OF THE MAYOR

2.1 Background

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 and Vice Chair of the Town Council the titles of 'Town Mayor' and 'Deputy Town Mayor' respectively. The Mayor is elected by the Full Council at the Annual Town Council Meeting (Mayor Making) in May. A Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting. The new Mayor and Deputy Mayor each sign the following declaration when accepting the Term of Office and this is witnessed by the Town Clerk

"I,, having been elected to the Office of Mayor of Ilminster Town Council, declare that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgement and ability."

The Mayor (or Deputy Mayor or Past Mayor, if the Mayor is not available) is the representative of Ilminster Town Council and the Townspeople of Ilminster at Civic and other events to which they have been invited in their role as Mayor.

2.2 The Role of the Mayor as Chair of the Council

A Mayor has the same rights and duties as a local Council Chair. The Mayor is the Chair of the Town Council and is a member by virtue of being elected to the Office of Mayor (ex officio) of all Council Committees.

As Chair of the Town Council the Mayor may exercise a casting vote in addition to their ordinary vote in decision making by the Full Town Council but otherwise has no additional formal powers to those of other Councillors.

The Mayor and in their absence, the Deputy Mayor, will act as the principal ambassador for the Town.

The Mayor and in their absence the Deputy Mayor, may expect to be asked for public statements concerning Town Council policies and actions. Any statements given should reflect the agreed policy of the Town Council rather than individual or party-political views.

The Town Clerk is available for advice on any aspect of Town Council policy. On occasion, the Mayor may need to make it clear whether they are speaking as Mayor, as a Councillor or in a personal capacity to avoid confusion.

2.3 The Civic Role of the Mayor

The office of Mayor of Ilminster is respected and held in high regard by the community because of its service to the community and the dignified behaviour of the successive Mayors and Deputy Mayors. A Mayor, by virtue of the Office, can use their position to stimulate community pride, encourage business, promote the voluntary sector and mould social cohesion. The Mayoralty can also be a frontline focus for the expression of community concerns. The Town Clerk will support and advise the Mayor accordingly.

A Mayor will also have many meetings, some with dignitaries, numerous engagements and is in the public eye for virtually the whole year. With this in mind the Mayor needs to exhibit a keen and genuine interest in those they meet, show enthusiasm and commitment to the role, ensure they are non-political, speak up for the town's interests and always be mindful of the dignity of the Office.

For those chosen, or who are thinking about putting themselves forward for selection it is essential to discuss this with employers and family in advance of accepting the office.

3 INVITATIONS AND EVENTS

Invitations are received from a wide variety of organisations to meetings and events within the Town and outside.

Invitations are considered on their own merits and should be ranked in order of priority:

- State occasions
- Invitations and events within the Town
- Invitations and events within South Somerset
- Invitations within Somerset
- Other events

A member of office staff will advise where there is a clash of events or any other issue concerning engagements.

All engagements are arranged through the Town Council office. Where the Mayor is approached personally concerning an official Mayoral event, they must advise that contact through the Town Council must be made, either by telephoning, emailing or writing. Details of how to contact the Mayor can be found on the Ilminster Town Council website or by calling at the Town Council offices during working hours.

All engagements are reported to Town Council to ensure public accountability and openness.

Neither the Mayor nor Deputy Mayor or any other Councillor must solicit engagements or visits or otherwise obtain favours by virtue of office.

The Mayor should not accept engagements that coincide with Town Council meetings. These engagements should be offered to the Deputy Mayor. If neither the Mayor, nor the Deputy

Mayor is available, then the engagement should be offered to the Chair of Estates, if this is acceptable to the organisation issuing the invitation.

4 MAYOR/DEPUTY MAYOR'S ATTENDANCE PRO FORMA

A copy of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor's Attendance Pro Forma (Appendix A) is sent out to organisers that have invited the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to attend their function but may not have included enough information in the invitation. The necessary information to attend, includes function details, the dress code and whether a speech is required. If the pro forma is not completed, the Mayor's PA will contact the organisation to confirm.

5 MAYORESS AND CONSORT

The Mayoress or Consort maybe a spouse/partner, fellow Councillor, family member or friend. The Mayoress/Consort will accompany the Mayor on engagements but other than that has no other civic role and must not undertake engagements alone.

6 CIVIC REGALIA

Official chains and badges of office are normally worn for civic engagements within the Town. Invitations should specify the regalia to be worn. In any case of doubt, clarification on the most appropriate regalia must be sought with the event hosts.

The maintenance and security of the civic regalia is the responsibility of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor under the direction of the Town Clerk.

Guidance on wearing the chain and badge of office and other items of regalia is set out beneath:

Item of Regalia	Guidance on wearing them
Mayors Chain and Badge of Office	The Mayor can wear the chain and badge of office in both public and private places.
Mayoress'/Consort's Chain and Badge or ITC Tie	The Mayoress/Consort may only wear the chain and badge when accompanying the Mayor. An Ilminster Town Council Tie may only be worn by the consort when accompanying the Mayor (see below).
Deputy Mayors chain and Badge of Office	The Deputy Mayor can wear the badge of office in both public and private places.

Past Mayor's Badge	May be worn at civic events when the Mayor is present and at other occasions when clearly indicated on the invitation or notification.
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The Town Clerk may provide further guidance if required.

The Council provides insurance cover for the regalia. The chains and badges should be kept locked away between engagements and overnight in a secure cabinet or safe at the Town Council Offices unless other secure arrangements have been agreed with the Town Clerk. Where secure arrangements are situated in the individuals' home, it is the Mayor's and/or Deputy Mayor's responsibility to inform their insurance provider. During any holiday period or where it is likely that the Mayor or Deputy Mayor will be away from home for a long period of time, the chains should be returned to Town Council Offices and locked in the safe.

The Council will be responsible for the maintenance of the regalia, including any damage or wear and tear. However, any damage or loss should be reported to the Town Clerk as soon as possible.

Iminster Town Council Ties

Iminster Town Council Ties may be purchased by Iminster Town Councillors and worn by them at Iminster Town Council meetings and the Civic occasions listed below. For any other occasion, guidance must be sought from the Town Clerk in order to preserve the dignity of the tie and not to obfuscate the wearing of the tie with any official capacity.

7 MAYORAL SUPPORT

Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by the Town Council Office under the direction of the Town Clerk. The exact nature and extent of support and processes will be agreed with the Town Clerk. The Mayor may expect all diary arrangements and processes to support them in undertaking duties.

The Town Council Office will be responsible for keeping the Mayoral engagement diary and liaison between the events host and Town Council. The Mayor must refer and agree all such matters with the Town Council Office to avoid confusion concerning event arrangements.

If the Mayor is unable to accept an invitation then it may be passed to the Deputy Mayor and then the Chair of Estates and Past Mayors (if this is acceptable to the inviting organisation).

Once an invitation has been properly accepted it should not be cancelled unless absolutely necessary.

All correspondence for the Mayor is kept in the Town Council Offices; it will be opened by Officers (alongside all other mail) and belongs to the Town Council. Items addressed in error to former Mayors will be redirected by the Town Clerk to the current Mayor. Personal invitations and correspondence to former Mayors will be forwarded as appropriate.

8 EVENTS

8.1 Civic Events

The Mayor is expected to attend the following Ilminster Civic Events:

	When	Chain of Office	Councillors to attend *
Annual Community Assembly	April	√	Discretionary – smart dress
Annual Town Council & Mayor Making	May	√	Discretionary – smart dress
Armistice Day	11am 11 th November	√	Discretionary – smart dress
Remembrance Sunday	Second Sunday of November	√	Discretionary – smart dress

** Councillors should contact the Town Clerk if they require clarification on dress code.*

Only in extenuating circumstances should the Deputy deputise for the Mayor, the Town Clerk will advise.

If a member of the Royal family visits Ilminster, specific instructions will be circulated by the Town Clerk.

The protocol to mark the death of a senior member of the Royal family will be actioned as appropriate.

8.2 Other Major Community Events

The Mayor is expected to attend the following Ilminster annual events:

	When	Chain of Office	Councillors to attend
IMEX Day	First Saturday in June	√	Discretionary
Ilminster Classic Car Show	First Sunday in June	√	Discretionary

Ilminster Carnival	October	√	Discretionary
Victorian night/ Christmas Lights Switch on	November	√	Discretionary
Other Official invitations	All year	As required	

8.3 National, County and Civic Events

The Mayor is expected to attend the following external Civic Events:

	When	Chain of Office	Councillors to attend
Wells Cathedral	All Year As per invitation	As required	As required
Other Official invitations	All year	As required	As required

9 MAYOR'S CHARITIES

The Mayor should give some consideration to the charity or charities they propose to support in their Mayoral year. The choice is left to the discretion of the Mayor but tends to be a local based charity.

The Mayor may identify the charity or charities of their choice at the Annual Mayor Making.

10 MAYORAL ALLOWANCE

The Local Government Act 1972 allows for the Mayor to be paid an allowance to meet the expenses of their term in office. The Town Council sets the budget for the Mayoral allowance during its budget setting process and is the responsibility of the Estates Committee.

The provision of the Mayoral Allowance is to allow any Councillor to be able to be Mayor regardless of personal financial circumstances and to allow each Mayor to fulfil the duties of the role with dignity.

General items of appropriate expenditure may include (but not be limited to):

- Clothing for civic representatives to be worn at events
- Donations to charities and collection
- Tickets for events
- Hospitality provided by the Mayor
- Travel to engagements and subsistence

- Appropriate gifts and/or cards.

The Mayoral Allowance is paid to the Mayor over the year and claimed using the appropriate form provided by the Town Clerk.

For purposes of transparency, the Town Council Office will maintain a spreadsheet of expenditure, which is reconciled to the 'Mayor's Account' monthly by the appointed Councillor and Town Clerk. A summary of expenditure will be produced and reported back to the Estates Committee following the end of the municipal year. Any donations for the Mayor's Charities are asked to be made payable to Ilminster Town Council and any cash donations are paid immediately to the office at Ilminster Town Council.

11 DEPUTY MAYOR

The Councillor elected as Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year and will represent the Council when asked to do so.

If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting the Deputy Mayor must preside if present.

The Deputy Mayor has no standing in that role when the Mayor is present but assumes the precedence and standing of the Mayor when deputising for the Mayor.

12 TOWN CRIER

The Town Crier of Ilminster is appointed to uphold and celebrate the town's heritage, deliver public proclamations, and serve as a vibrant ambassador at civic and community events. The scope of the role includes:

- Making formal announcements on behalf of Ilminster Town Council
- Attending and enhancing local events such as the Ilminster Midsummer Experience, Christmas lights switch-on and Remembrance Day
- Representing Ilminster at regional and national town crier competitions
- Collaborate with local schools, businesses, and heritage groups to promote civic pride

The Town Crier is expected to attend the following events:

Expected Events	When
Annual Community Assembly	April
Annual Town Council & Mayor Making	May
Armistice Day	11am 11 th November
Remembrance Sunday	Second Sunday of November
The following events are encouraged but optional: Optional Events	When
Iminster Classic Car Show	First or Second Sunday in June
IMEX Day	First or Second Saturday in June
Iminster Carnival	First Saturday in October
Victorian night/ Christmas Lights Switch on	November
Other Official invitations	All year

13 MAYOR'S END OF YEAR

At the Annual Town Council meeting which denotes the end of the Mayor's Term of Office, the custom is to invite the outgoing Mayor to make a short speech as a response to a vote of thanks for their services during the year. This normally comprises a short review of their period of office, thanks to the organisation and people of Iminster who extended their hospitality and have worked with the Mayor and Town Council during the year and to any other support they have received.

The new Mayor will present the previous Mayor with a Past Mayor's badge and Certificate of Recognition.

Past Mayors are encouraged to help incoming Mayors to familiarise themselves in the role.

Appendix A

MAYOR/DEPUTY MAYOR'S ATTENDANCE PRO FORMA

Name of function:	
Name of host:	
Time and date of function:	
Address:	
Dress code:	
Is a speech required? Yes or No	
Are refreshments provided?	