

Civic protocol and order of precedence

Guidance for event organisers

This guidance note on civic protocol is offered to organisers of events to which the Chairman of the County Council, possibly as one of a number of civic dignitaries, has been invited to attend. It is difficult for a single brief document to cover all eventualities and so, if in doubt, do please contact the Civic Affairs Office for advice. The other civic offices will similarly be able to offer advice.

Events in Leicester and Rutland

In Leicester and Rutland the Chairman of Leicestershire County Council has no direct representative role except at events organised by bodies constituted to represent Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. If the Chairman is invited to an event in the City of Leicester or Rutland it is assumed that the Lord Mayor and Chairman of Rutland respectively will have been invited, and will take precedence. The civic offices have an agreed protocol for the wearing of insignia in neighbouring areas.

Events in the County of Leicestershire

The Chairman of the County Council has a county-wide remit representing the principal authority in the County. Understandably the Chairman will take precedence over borough and district civic dignitaries at County-wide events and events organised by the County Council. For events local to a particular borough or district of Leicestershire the Chairman of the County Council will take the traditional position in precedence after the local Civic Head.

The involvement of other civic dignitaries

If the Lord-Lieutenant, Jennifer, Lady Gretton JP, is present at an event in her official capacity representing The Queen, then Chairmen and

Mayors must give precedence to her as Lord-Lieutenant of the County. Precedence is deferred to a Lord Mayor, Mayor or Chairman of a local authority in municipal premises, or at a municipal event. Similarly, the High Sheriff takes precedence immediately after the Lord-Lieutenant on Royal occasions and in matters relating to the Judiciary, and the High Sheriff will take precedence on the occasion of the Crown Court Service.

When organising an event it will be appropriate to consider inviting the Leader of the County Council and a local County Councillor(s). Although there are no formal rules of precedence in these cases it should be remembered that the Leader of the County Council is the senior executive member of the County Council. This significant role should be borne in mind when considering roles, seating, speeches etc.

Events may also include the local Member of Parliament. In such cases organisers will want to recognise the importance of the office of MP, but should be aware that the local civic dignitaries would still take precedence.

Processions

Advice is sometimes sought about the order for processions etc, when all or a number of Civic Heads are present. The local Civic Head will, of course, have precedence at non-county events in the Borough/District, with the Chairman of the County Council next.

As far as other Civic Heads are concerned there is no precedence enshrined in any protocol, but it is recommended that a structured approach should be adopted. It is the case that once out of their area Civic Heads have no specific status, although those of Principal Councils are taken as being senior to those of Town or Parish Councils.

It is recommended that Lord Mayors, Mayors and Chairmen of Principal Councils be treated as equals and assembled in a logical order. An approach which is frequently used is to place the Principal Councils in alphabetical order which can avoid many problems. The order can be alphabetically reversed when appropriate.

As previously stated the Lord-Lieutenant, if present, will take precedence over civic dignitaries and special consideration should be given to the position of the High Sheriff, Leader of the County Council and Member of Parliament.

It is established practice to adopt the last-in-first-out approach to ordering processions, with the Lord-Lieutenant entering last, at the rear of the procession.

Speeches

If you are arranging an event involving speeches you will need to consider who should say what, when. It is usual for the host to speak first and this is followed by the principal guest (eg the Chairman). It is always helpful to the Chairman to have background briefing notes and suggested points for the Chairman's speech, and this is arranged through the Civic Affairs Office when the invitation is received.

The position in Rutland

Since reorganisation Local Government in 1997, Rutland is a unitary authority and so deemed to be a Principal Council. In addition to the Chairman of Rutland County Council, the County of Rutland has its own Lord-Lieutenant and High Sheriff.

Announcements

An announcement is often made on formal occasions as a way of acknowledging the principal guests. The announcement would typically take account of the Lord-Lieutenant, Chairman and other civic dignitaries, the High Sheriff, the Bishop of Leicester, a Member of Parliament etc. The order taken for announcements will vary dependent upon where the event is being held and who is attending. The preamble should be as short as possible but not so short that offence could be caused to an office holder who feels they should be acknowledged. Please seek advice from the Civic Affairs Office if you are in any doubt.

An example could be:

“My Lord-Lieutenant, Mr (or Madam) Chairman, Mr (or Madam) Mayor (or Your Worships if plural), Member of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen, please.....”

Arrival arrangements

On arrival the Chairman (and the same applies to the Leader of the County Council and other principal guests) should be greeted by the host or if this is not possible, by his or her representative. You should allocate someone to accompany the Chairman throughout the visit if the event host is otherwise engaged. Where there are a number of principal guests the hosting arrangements need to be considered carefully. Particular provision for car parking will also be addressed.

Seating

The notes relating to processional arrangements apply equally to seating, where care needs to be taken to ensure that guests are seated in accordance with established protocol and a logical structure.

If the event is a dinner, then the Chairman (or Lord-Lieutenant if present), would sit on the right of the host.

The Civic Affairs Office can guide event organisers to the appropriate offices and provide contact details.

For further advice or information please contact:

Civic Affairs Office
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Glenfield
Leicester
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Email: chairman@leics.gov.uk

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/chairman