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CIVIC PROTOCOL POLICY 2026

This policy was approved by the council at its meeting held on 15th January 2026,
minute number 26-017

1. INTRODUCTION

This Civic Protocol has been produced to assist the Chairman of the Parish Council and Vice Chairman to understand their roles and responsibilities and provide some useful information, which may be of assistance when undertaking the civic role.

The Civic Role is also included, which assists the Chairman and Council staff to apply a consistent approach when dealing with issues connected to the civic function.

The object of the information is to try and ensure that your civic year runs as smoothly as possible.

Not all eventualities will be covered by this booklet but remember that assistance is always available at the Parish Community Office.

2. CIVIC ROLE OF THE PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

During the Civic year, the Parish Council Chairman acts as the civic figurehead of the Parish Council; first citizen of Whitwick, and primary representative of the Parish Council at any event, to which the Parish Council is invited to send a representative.

Duties which the Parish Council Chairman may carry out include:

- Organising events to raise funds for the council's or Chairman's chosen charity.
- Acting as host on behalf of the Parish Council at functions organised by the Parish Council.
- Attending functions within Whitwick, or on occasions outside the village, as a ceremonial representative of the Parish Council.
- Undertaking official openings or presentations within Whitwick on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Representing the Parish Council during the royal visits to the village.

When representing the Parish Council, the Parish Council Chairman will normally wear the Official Chain of Office. The Chain of Office will normally be worn at all official functions within the village, including when chairing full council meetings. The Chain of Office is also usually worn at functions outside of the village when invited in an official capacity, although there are some exceptions to this which are usually specified in the official invitations.

The Parish Council Chairman also has a number of statutory functions as set out below:

- If present at the Parish Council meeting, the Parish Council Chairman must chair the meeting.
- The Parish Council Chairman has a casting vote in the event of a tie.
- The Parish Council Chairman should ensure, together with the Parish Clerk, that the Council makes legal decisions.
- The Parish Council Chairman has a duty to ensure the agenda is followed correctly.

3. APPROPRIATE DRESS

As the figurehead of Whitwick, the Parish Council Chairman maintains appropriate dress when representing the Parish Council.

The Parish Council Chairman is expected to wear smart clothing when undertaking duties on behalf of the Parish Council, unless doing so would be patently absurd. However, the parish council members should adhere to smart casual where possible at meetings.

A recommended rule of thumb is that; if the Parish Council Chairman is expected to wear their Ribbon of Office, then smart attire would be appropriate.

4. THE PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S CHARITY

The Parish Council Chairman may nominate a charity to raise funds for during the Civic Year if they wish. The Parish Council Chairman may choose one main charity to support. A charity is only eligible to be the Parish Council Chairman's chosen charity once in each four-year election cycle.

The Parish Council Chairman should announce their chosen charity at the Annual Council Meeting of the Whitwick Parish Council or as soon as possible practicable thereafter.

Events and fundraisers for the Parish Council Chairman's chosen charity will be organised by the Parish Council Chairman with any voluntary support from fellow councillors or residents they may wish to encourage.

The Parish Council Chairman may normally expect the assistance of the Vice Chairman in organising fundraising events.

Funds raised for the Parish Council Chairman's charity will be accounted for by the Parish Clerk and disbursed to the chosen charity in one payment at the end of the civic year. Advice on financial procedures will be given by the Parish Clerk and need to be followed for transparency and scrutiny.

5. SUPPORT BY THE VICE CHAIRMAN

The Parish Councillor elected as Vice Chairman will support the Parish Council Chairman throughout the year by representing the Council if the Parish Council Chairman is unable to do so.

If the Parish Council Chairman is not present at a Council Meeting, the Vice Chairman must preside.

The Vice Chairman has no standing when the Chairman is present but assumes the precedence and standing of the Parish Council when they are deputising for the Parish Council Chairman.

Invitation to functions should not be sent to (or solicited by) a Vice Chairman.

All invitations should be sent for consideration by the Parish Council Chairman as first citizen, and, if the Parish Council Chairman cannot attend, it may be appropriate to 'pass down' an invitation. However, this should be by no means automatic or desirable. This will be handled by the Parish Clerk.

The Vice Chairman does not wear a civic insignia dedicated to that role.

6. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Remembrance Sunday is held on the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of Armistice Day, which is on November 11th at 11am.

The Parish Council Chairman will, alongside the Member of Parliament and the Chairman of North West Leicestershire District Council (as appropriate), lead the civic party in any ceremony of Remembrance.

The Parish Council Chairman will wear their Chain of Office.

The Parish Council Chairman will present a red poppy remembrance wreath, on behalf of the Parish Council, at Remembrance Sunday events taking place within the environs of Whitwick Parish.

The Vice Chairman will attend the event as an ordinary Parish Councillor.

7. PURDAH

At the end of each four-year cycle the Parish Council's functioning moves into a period known as 'Purdah' when the council must act in a politically neutral fashion.

Where a Parish Council Chairman has expressly stated that they will not be standing for re-election they may continue to represent the Parish Council at any civic event falling within the purdah period.

Where a Parish Council Chairman intends to submit their nomination for election then they must cease attending civic events from the published date on which purdah commences (although they will be expected to continue to preside over Parish Council meetings).

Where an invitation is received for an event during the purdah period, the Parish Clerk may delegate the longest standing parish councillor who is not standing for election to deputise for the Parish Council Chairman.

Where all parish councillors have stated they will re-stand for election then all invitations to events should be declined by the Parish Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council.

8. BOOK OF CONDOLENCE

From time to time, predominantly at times of national loss, the Parish Council may be asked by an upper tier local authority (or at their own volition) to open a book of condolences which residents may sign.

Where a book of condolence is to be considered an appropriate location for its opening will be determined jointly by the Parish Council Chairman and Parish Clerk, this is likely to be Park Hall. Similarly, the Parish Council Chairman and Parish Clerk will agree times for opening when local residents may be able to sign the book. The times for opening will likely be 9am-1pm each day of the mourning period- allowing for some evenings and weekends.

The Parish Manager will publish the location and opening times for signing of the Book of Condolence on both social media and parish noticeboards.

Where a Book of Condolence has been opened it must be accompanied by a Parish Councillor, or other responsible persons, at all times. It will be the responsibility of the Parish Council Chairman to seek volunteers to accompany the Book of Condolence throughout the duration of opening hours.

Where appropriate help cannot be sourced, the Parish Council Chairman must accompany the Book of Condolence.

9. FLAG FLYING POLICY

The **St. George Flag** will be flown permanently from the parish council flagpole at the City of Dan, with the following exceptions:

- The **Union Flag** is flown at Half Mast on days of National Mourning (normally the death of a principal member of the Royal Family), from the day of the announcement to the day of the funeral.
- The Union Flag is NOT flown at Half Mast on Remembrance Sunday.

For 2026:

- The **Union Flag** will be flown at full mast from morning to dusk on:

2 nd Monday in March	Commonwealth Day
9 th April	His Majesty The King's Wedding Anniversary (2005)
23 rd April	St George's Day (England)
6 th May	Coronation Day (2023)
17 th June	Official Birthday of His Majesty The King
21 st June	Birthday, HRH Prince of Wales (1982)
17 th July	Birthday of The Queen
8 th September	His Majesty The King's Accession (2022)
2 nd Sunday in November	Remembrance Day
11 th November	Armistice Day
14 th November	Birthday of His Majesty The King (1948)

The **Parish Council Flag** will be flown on other Civic Events of special significance, as delegated to the Parish Clerk and notified to staff and any Link Councillor.

3 rd Thursday in March	Annual Parish Meeting (PARISH COUNCIL FLAG)
3 rd Thursday in May	Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (PARISH COUNCIL FLAG)
4 th week in June	Armed Forces Week (ARMED FORCES FLAG) NB Flown for the whole week

The **Parish Council Flag** will be flown at Half Mast as follows:

- Death of a serving Councillor, Past Chairman or Honorary Freeman of the Parish – On the day of the announcement of the death and on the day of the funeral.
- Death of present Chairman or Parish Clerk – From the day of the announcement of the death to the day of the funeral.