



ITEM 6 – Mayor Regalia Proposal

Wells City Council

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Presented By (if different)	
Subject	Mayoral Chain Proposal
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For consideration at	Civic and Archives Committee
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Background:

The mayoral chain is a symbol of the civic duty held by the individual currently acting, in this case, as the Mayor of Wells. This report looks at the legal status and historical context for the mayoral chain for the City of Wells while taking into account the ceremonial significance of a mayoral chain within Wells. It also outlines a proposal to modify the current chain to accommodate both formal and informal civic occasions where a mayoral symbol is needed but should not be overdressed.

In the United Kingdom, there is no statutory requirement for a civic mayor to wear a chain of office. The practice is rooted in tradition and local custom rather than legal obligation.

The Local Government Act 1972, which governs the role of mayors in England and Wales, does not prescribe any specific dress code or regalia for civic officials. This means that wearing of a mayoral chain is entirely optional and that councils are free to determine their own ceremonial practices.

Many boroughs, cities, and towns possess ceremonial chains. These are often ornate and historically significant to the area in which it is representing, and are worn by mayors during official events. These chains serve as symbols of civic authority and continuity.

There are a small number of different options for the Mayor to use as opposed to a chain specifically. These are often based off of the history of the area and are not generally a wide spread practice. It is important to note, however, that civic mayors can perform all duties without wearing a chain and the absence of a chain does not diminish the mayors authority. Some councils opt for more than one official civic regalia while many smaller councils opt for simpler insignia such as a badge or medallion, especially if they do not have historic regalia. Some other examples of civic regalia include badges of office and velvet collars.

The current mayoral chain in Wells dates back to 1862. It was purchased by Dr. Livett using surplus funds originally raised for an exhibition hosted by the Bath and West of England Society. In November 1862, Dr. Livett presented the chain to the Council as a gift.

At the time he is reported to have said "According to the Wells Journal, he stated that he had "been enabled to get a proper chain of office if the Council would accept it at his hands." He further remarked, "The Mayor ought to have a chain to distinguish him from the Aldermen."

The chain is used today for all civic functions, however, it can at times be cumbersome, especially at community events when the Mayor may be expected to “get involved” with a task. As such, the current Mayor is proposing to enhance the versatility of the mayoral insignia by making small alterations to the badge on the current chain, to make it detachable. This would not change the design or colours of most of the chain but would instead add a flexibility in the use of the regalia enabling more people to see it where it otherwise would not be worn.

Interestingly, historically, the clasp looking to be applied was present on the chain, and through time has been altered and removed, thus, the proposal would likely see the chain and specifically the badge returning to its original state.

It is then proposed that a ribbon be sourced, and the badge could be fixed to a ribbon or small metal clasp and worn independently during less formal occasions.

For formal events, the badge would be reattached to the full chain, maintaining traditional ceremonial appearance. The definition of a formal event would be decided by both the Mayor and Town Clerk and if there was any doubt, then the full chain should be worn.

There are considered to be multiple benefits of this proposal, which include, allowing the Mayor to maintain a visible symbol of office in settings where the full chain may be impractical or overly formal. As well as preserving the integrity and heritage of the original chain while adapting to contemporary civic needs. The below pictures demonstrate how the badge may look as part of a ribbon.



Recommendation:

It is recommended to Civic and Archives Committee, to agree to the proposed amendment, to allow both continuity of the function and historical value, as well as ensuring usability and in keeping with the wider traditions of civic regalia and use.