

11 July 2019 at 7.30 pm

Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks
Despatched:



Governance Committee

At the above stated meeting the attached presentations and documents were tabled for the following items

	Pages	Contact
4. The Chairman of the Council	(Pages 1 - 2)	Lesley Bowles, Jim Carrington-West, Martin Goodman Tel: 01732 227335, Tel: 01732 227286, Tel: 01732227245

If you wish to obtain further factual information on any of the agenda items listed above, please contact the named officer prior to the day of the meeting.

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Notes for Governance Committee

- The Vice Chair is delighted this review is taking place and is pleased to have the opportunity to make a few general comments.
- The role should be that of Goodwill Ambassador promoting and publicising all that is good in the District; showing we are interested in our residents, care about and support their activities, in particular the Voluntary Sector.
- Democratic Services offer excellent support and cannot fault the team in any way. However, they are overburdened. There is no provision made to help them manage the Chairman's diary and events, in addition to their other duties.
- There have been many conversations with other Mayors who give a brief outline of their remit, which is unlike ours.
- The Role is in support of commerce and business throughout the District, opening ceremonies/appearance at their functions. This is not carried out at all by SDC and the Role should strongly support business and local employment. In particular, if a company or independent business is opening up in the District, it will garner them good press coverage and therefore extra business.
- Residents groups should be supported and part of the Role's schedule. To date we have not been invited to any of their AGM's/meetings. This would be good exposure for SDC showing it cares about our residents and their concerns.
- The Role should also be about attending Voluntary Sector AGM's and fundraising events. These events are crucial to them garnering enough income to provide all the services SDC needs. **We already do this.**
- Attending Parish/Town/school events, fairs and other functions, demonstrating how SDC are supporting Towns and Parishes. **We already do this.**
- There is a need to hold a Civic Service at some point during our tenure. Other Mayors and Chairmen do so, and SDC predecessors have also done so. Although I was informed the other day that "Chairmen don't only Mayors do", I would contest this. Tradition is part of the post as is pomp and ceremony and I would like some of that to be reinstated to the role.
- The Role is also about being an SDC Ambassador to events hosted by Mayors of Towns/Boroughs/Districts outside the SDC area, so that we are more outward, not inward facing. If we don't publicise how excellently our District is run, then how will they know? In the same vein it is very much noticed when we are not represented at events such as Civic Services and fundraisers hosted by others. If we want their support and presence at functions held by SDC it needs to be reciprocal. There is no suggestion of a Chairman's car or other such expense, however there should be adequate budget to recover our costs and to be able to hire a taxi on occasions. Many venues are near impossible to get to and if dressed for the occasion, public transport, if any existed, is not an option. Every event has, as a minimum, a raffle. In addition, the cost to attend severely depletes the current budget.
- One of the main issues is being called Chairman. The start of every conversation and speech is to explain who we are, followed by where we come from. Other Chairman

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and Vice Chairman been excellent ambassadors, but the title Chairman is the recurring theme. Other Mayors are automatically put ahead of us in the pecking order, as the title Chairman does not convey the gravitas of the Role and as a result Sevenoaks Town and Swanley get many invitations that SDC don't. An example being, at the recent Police Awards I was asked to speak last, my name being the last on the program of dignitaries' present.

- If a Chairman is not comfortably off it will be difficult to fulfil duties as I feel they should be. I am sure these two years are going to cost me plenty. Although it is written that I receive £5000 this year as an allowance to cover everything bar transport claims. This is not the fact as tax is deducted under an agreement with HMRC and I actually received £3960. It is a wonderful opportunity to honour and represent our District and I'm thrilled to be Vice Chairman, loving every minute but please don't underestimate the time and monetary commitment. It is daily and changes one's entire life.
- Finally, I would like to reiterate that I feel a review is healthy and well overdue and I hope my comments have helped make those members present more aware of our role and duties and where we feel change is needed to properly publicise and honour the role.