



POLICY AND PROTOCOL FOR THE DEATH OF THE SOVEREIGN OR OTHER SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE

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PROTOCOL TO MARK THE DEATH OF THE SOVEREIGN OR OTHER SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE

1. Introduction

Ferndown Town Council recognises that a formal procedure is required to mark the death of a senior national figure or local holder of high office is adopted. These guidance notes have been produced from those issued by SLCC and NACO (National Association of Civic Officers). They set out protocols to which local Councils should follow and observe on marking the death of a senior national figure and to be observed on the death of the Sovereign, which involves the greater number of ceremonial elements.

This procedure should be implemented by the Town Clerk or in her/his absence, the Mayor or Mayor's Secretary.

Plans to mark the death of the Sovereign or senior member of the Royal Family must only be implemented after a formal announcement has been made by the Royal Household or Downing Street.

It might also be appropriate to use elements of the procedure when responding to an incident which has led to a large number of deaths, for example, a train crash or terrorist attack. This would apply if a National Day of Mourning was announced by 10 Downing Street. This would be at the discretion of the Mayor and Town Clerk.

It is suggested that consideration be given to the offering of the Town Flag to drape over a coffin to the family of a previous Town Mayor.

This protocol sets out the action to be taken in the event of the death of:

- HM The Queen
- HRH The Duke of Edinburgh
- HRH The Prince of Wales
- HRH The Duchess of Cornwall
- HRH The Duke of Cambridge
- HRH The Duchess of Cambridge
- Any progeny of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge
- HRH The Duke of Sussex
- HRH The Duchess of Sussex
- Any progeny of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex
- HRH The Duke of York
- HRH The Earl of Wessex
- HRH The Princess Royal

The protocol also provides guidance in recognising the deaths of the following individuals.

- The Prime Minister
- The Member of Parliament for the Town's constituency.
- A serving Town Mayor

2. Implementation of the Protocol on hearing of the death

Ferndown Town Council's mourning protocol will be implemented only when a formal announcement has been made by Buckingham Palace / Downing Street of the death of any one of those persons name on page 3 (above) of this protocol. For instance, if news agencies are saying that "*reports are coming in of the death of*" it must be treated with caution. If possible, wait for a more definite announcement (perhaps along the lines of "*it has been announced by Buckingham Palace/Downing Street that*").

Implementation will be authorised by the Town Clerk or in her/his absence, the Mayor or Mayor's Secretary.

Operation London Bridge is the code name for planning for the death of H.M. The Queen. This civic operation would be instigated from the first day of death of H.M. The Queen.

Flying of a flag at half-mast will always be appropriate. Other decisions may be appropriate as well, such as whether:

- To fly other union flags with mourning cravat
- To read the Proclamation
- To insert a mourning front page to website
- To cancel or reschedule meetings or events
- To have a designated flower laying area
- To consider a dress code
- To open a Book of Condolence, or whether
- To mark a silence (and how and where)

3. Timetable for mourning

The timetable for national mourning is expected to be:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| • D Day | Date of death |
| • D+1* | Proclamation day (London) |
| • D+2* | Proclamation day – 12.30 pm, High Sheriffs
1.30 pm or after, Civic
Leaders
4.00 pm Town/Parish |

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| | Councils |
| • D+? | Middle Sunday Civic Service |
| • D+4 to D+9 | Lying in State |
| • D+10 | Date of funeral (if D+10 is a Sunday, D+11)
Two minutes silence to observed by STC at 11a.m. |

(*applies to the death of the sovereign only)

On the occasion of the death of the sovereign, at 4.00 p.m. on D+2 the Mayor shall read a local proclamation at the Town Council offices. Other members of the Town Council will be in attendance to read the proclamation. Invitations to attend shall be sent to the CivicList and it shall be advertised to local residents, via website/social media/noticeboards.

Please note:

- that the date of proclamation day could change due to bank holiday, Christmas, Election, etc. In those circumstances follow Buckingham Palace lead.
- Place of death – if in Scotland, change of plans.
- D+10 public holiday, unless on a Saturday – no extra day.

4. Proclamation Day Schedule

In the case of the death of the Sovereign, the day following the death (D+1) will be Proclamation day, which is the day the new Sovereign is proclaimed.

D+1 The Proclamation will be made at St. James' Palace at 11.00 a.m. (2.00 p.m. if it is a Sunday). The Proclamation will then be "cascaded". At noon on Proclamation Day it will be read at the Royal Exchange in the City of London.

D+2 At noon on D+2, it will be read in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast.

Once these Proclamations have been made it is appropriate for the Proclamation to be read at County, City, Borough and then Parish level. High Sheriff's will read the Proclamation at County level along with Lord Lieutenant's. Most High Sheriffs are expected to make their readings at 2.00 p.m. on D+2. It is suggested that local civic leaders should therefore make their readings at or after 4.00 p.m.

In all cases, following the county level Proclamation, where a local authority wishes to make the Proclamation, it is important that thought is given to the following:

- Who will read the Proclamation?
- Who will ring the bells and when?
- Where is the location that the Proclamation will be read?

- What are the arrangements that will be made to tell the public in advance of the reading of the Proclamation?
- Who will be invited to be present?
- Who will be in the platform party?

The wording of the Proclamation to be read out will be available from the Buckingham Palace website (www.royal.gov.uk) and the Privy Council website (www.privycouncil.org.uk). The High Sheriff will also have a copy.

The wording of the Accession Proclamation will be on the Buckingham Palace website and the Privy Council website soon after it has been read at St. James Palace on D+1 and that is probably the easiest way to get a copy for reading on D+2.

The Town Mayor will read a statement from the Town Council and the proclamation at 1400 hrs outside the Town Council offices on the day following Proclamation (D+2). See Appendix A. This will be a public event and those individuals named in Appendix will be invited.

The statement from the Town Council will appear on the home page of the website.

5. Flying the Flag

Following the death of the Sovereign or other members of the Royal Family identified on page 3, at the request of the Town Clerk/Mayor, the Union Flag outside the Town Council offices will be lowered to half-mast and the following shall apply. Guidelines for flying flags at half-mast can be found in Appendix C.

D Day	Union Flag at half mast.
D+1	Flags at half mast until 11 a.m.
D+1	Flags flown at full mast for Proclamation.
D+2	Flags return to half mast unless local Proclamation.
D+2	Flags full mast for Proclamation then returned to half mast.
D+3 until D+11	At 8.00 a.m. the day following funeral, flags to return to full mast or removed.

For the death of someone *other than* the Sovereign, the flag shall remain at half mast until D+11 when it will return to full mast.

6. Book of Condolence

On the first working day following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign, HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, HRH the Prince of Wales or HRH the Duchess of Cornwall, a Book of Condolence will be opened at the Town Council offices. The

condolence book at the Guildhall will be on a table, dressed in a black tablecloth, in the foyer with a photograph of the deceased (framed and with mourning ribbon).

A loose leafed folder will ensure that pages can be re-ordered in case the Mayor and others cannot be the first to sign the book; their signatures can be on the first page of the bound book.

The Book of Condolence will be open from 0930 hrs – 1300 hrs Monday to Friday and will remain open until 1300 hrs on the day following the funeral.

An online book of condolences should also be set up for those who are unable to get to any of the locations.

7. Focal point for grief

Upon the death of a member of the Royal Family or a senior national figure, members of the public may wish to visit a designated area as a focal point for grief. This may be to lay flowers and other tributes as well as to reflect and remember.

It will be requested that no plastic/cellophane is used. Flowers will be collected at 0900 hrs. on the day after the funeral and composted. There will be a ceremonial removal of the flowers. During this removal, the first bouquet/flower will be collected by the Mayor of Ferndown. The compost will be used to fertilise a tree which will be planted in memory of the deceased by the Mayor at a location to be determined by the Town Clerk and Mayor. Commemorative items such as stuffed toys will not be allowed.

8. Civic Engagements

From the day of death until the day after the funeral, careful thought should be given to the type of events and activities the Town Mayor should host or attend. Lunches, dinners and receptions may not fit in with the mood of the nation and as a mark of respect may need to be cancelled or postponed.

Where school visits are scheduled it might be helpful for the Town Mayor to spend time with the children to talk about the events that are unfolding. This should not be pressed upon a Town Mayor who is not comfortable with taking on such a role.

9. Dress Code

When conducting public business, councillors may wish to consider wearing black ties/dark clothing on the day of the death, day of the funeral and period of public mourning.

If a full Council meeting falls during the period of mourning it might be felt appropriate for Councillors to wear a black tie or black arm band. Black arm bands will be provided by the Council. Council members will be required to supply their own black tie.

On the day of the death, on the day of the funeral and during the period of public mourning, the Mayor's chains of office should include a black ribbon.

10. Public Observance of Silence

On the death of the Sovereign there will be a two minute silence at 1100 hrs. on the day of the funeral (D+10), which will be a public holiday (unless D+10 is a Saturday).

The Mayor may wish to lead the silence in an appropriate public place and thought needs to be given as to where that might be. It is suggested that a suitable place would be Millenium Park on the grounds of the King George V playing field. Consideration should be given on who will be present and how the beginning and end of the silence should be marked. It should be made public via social media, press releases and website.

It may be that silence will be kept for other members of the Royal Family, perhaps on the day of the funeral as part of the funeral service. However, action on a silence for members of the Royal Family other than the Sovereign should await an announcement from Buckingham Palace. Please note that a silence may be held to pay respects in the event of the death of the Duke of Edinburgh but there will not be a bank holiday.

11. Letter of Condolence from Ferndown Town Council

It is usual, in the case of the death of a member of the Royal Family, for letters to be sent to the Private Secretary of the deceased, asking that condolences be passed to the next of kin and other members of the family (except in the case of the Sovereign's death, in which case they should be sent to the new Sovereign's Private Secretary asking that condolences be passed to the new Sovereign). In each case, other than exceptional local circumstances, one letter of condolence only should be sent. The Mayor may wish to agree a form of words for a message, expressing sorrow at the news of the death. It might go on to state that flags will be flown at half-mast. If it is an occasion where Books of Condolence will be opened, then reference could be made to that. When a decision has been taken on the Mayor's programme of events and engagements it might be stated that events are being cancelled as a mark of respect or that they will be held with a period of silence.

This may be the form of words included in a press release, Twitter or Facebook message or on the home page of the website.

12. Social Media / Press

The Mayor may wish to agree a form of words for a message, expressing sorrow at the news of the death. It might go on to state that flags will be flown at half-mast. If it is an occasion where Books of Condolence will be opened, then reference could be

made to that. When a decision has been taken on the Mayor's programme of events and engagements it might be stated that events are being cancelled as a mark of respect or that they will be held with a period of silence.

This may be the form of words included in a press release, Twitter or Facebook message or on the home page of the website.

Appendix A

Suggested statement by the Mayor and reading of the Proclamation

“We come together this afternoon following the passing of our late Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth the second. Our sadness at this time is shared by people across the globe, as we remember with affection and gratitude the lifetime of service given by our longest serving Monarch. Today’s ceremony marks the formal Proclamation to the people of Ferndown and the beginning of our new King’s reign.

Yesterday, the Accession Council met at St. James’s Palace to proclaim our new Sovereign. The flags which had flown at half-mast since The Queen’s death are raised briefly to their full height to mark the start of His Majesty’s reign.

The Accession Council also made an order requiring High Sheriffs to cause the Proclamation to be read in the areas of their jurisdiction. It was that task that the High Sheriff of Dorset discharged earlier this afternoon and with my humble duty I now call on the Mayor of Ferndown to read the Proclamation to the people of Ferndown.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Proclamation of the Accession.”

READ THE PROCLAMATION (This will be available from the Buckingham Palace website www.royal.gov.uk or the Privy Council website www.privvy-council.org.uk)

At the end of the Proclamation the Mayor will say: God Save The King

Official guests repeat: God Save The King

All present join in saying: God Save The King

One verse of the National Anthem to be played.

Finally, the Mayor will call for three cheers for His Majesty The King.

NB:

The statement should begin with a suitable expression of sadness of the Town Council on hearing the announcement. It might go on to state that flags will be flown at half mast. If it is an occasion when Books of Condolence will be opened, then reference could be made to that.

When a decision has been taken on the Council’s programme of events and engagements, it might be stated that events are being cancelled as a mark of respect or that they will begin with a period of silence.

If in doubt, do not rush out a statement which commits the Town Council to action before that action has been discussed and has the necessary agreement from the political leadership.

Appendix B – Invitees to reading of Proclamation D+2

Those who might be invited to be present at the Reading of the Proclamation on the accession of a new Sovereign and at the Public Observance of a two-minute silence.

- All members of the Council
- Town Clerk
- Past Mayors
- Police
- Fire & Rescue
- Local civic guests
- Schools
- Church leaders
- Care homes
- Other community groups

The High Sheriff will have read the Proclamation at County Level but that does not prevent a Town Council from also inviting the High Sheriff to be present at subsequent reading and that may be especially appropriate if the High Sheriff is a resident of the Town.

Appendix C – Flying flags at half-mast

Authoritative information on flag flying can be found on the website of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Details can also be found on the website of the Flag Institute (www.flaginstitute.org).

It is important that the guidance given by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Flag Institute is adhered to strictly.

Half mast means the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the flagpole. Flags cannot be flown at half-mast on poles that are more than 45° from the vertical but a mourning cravat can be used instead.

When a flag is to be flown at half mast, it should first be raised all the way to the top of the mast, allowed to remain there for a second and then be lowered to the half mast position. When it is being lowered from the half mast, it should again be raised to the top of the mast for a second before being fully lowered.

Upon the death of those individuals listed below, the flag at the Town Council offices will be lowered to half-mast and be marked by a minute Silence.

- The Prime Minister (time and place of Silence to be directed by the Sovereign/Government).
- A serving Town Mayor (time and place of Silence to be directed by the Town Clerk).

Appendix D

GUIDANCE ON MARKING A DEATH DURING A PANDEMIC OR OTHER NATIONAL EMERGENCY

(From NACO guidance issued August 2020)

Background

The guidance in the main procedure document has a common theme of bringing people together share sadness and reflect. The coronavirus pandemic is an example of a situation that necessitates remodelling procedures where there are severe restrictions on movements.

NACO has provided suggestions for alternative arrangements that the Town Council may wish to consider putting in place in such a scenario and state:

“With the greatest sadness, it has to be recognised that the preservation of life and the care and well-being of the living must take precedence over acts of mourning and the remembrance of those who have died.”

Implementation

Arrangements remain the same: only following a formal announcement.

Staffing: where there is a possibility of staff being off sick/isolating make sure that sufficient people are fully briefed on implementation to safeguard plans.

Flag Flying

Where arrangements exist to ensure that only essential staff are going to their place of work it is suggested that no one should be required specifically to travel to various buildings to lower flags to half-mast. If staff are resident on the premises where a flag is being flown and can lower it to half mast then by all means do so, but the health of the wider community outweighs the need ask staff to leave their homes and travel around to lower flags at other sites.

This would also apply to the raising and re-lowering of flags for any Proclamation ceremony.

Books of Condolence

Where public health is an issue the Council may feel it is unsafe to open physical books of condolence.

Action: consider using online books of condolence where these are available and clearly signposting members of the public to this facility using social media and posterson noticeboards if safe to do so.

Organisation of Local Events

Where bringing people together within the local community is not possible:

Consider postponing plans to hold events (including civic church services). Use social media (and posters on noticeboards if safe to do so) to explain that arrangements will be made to hold these events when restrictions are lifted and it is safe to do so.

It is hoped that television broadcasters will step in to fill gaps should the need arise.

Laying of Flowers and Donations

The Council may wish to actively discourage people from laying flowers whilst it is unsafe to do so and not open the Memorial Peace Garden for this purpose. Use social media to explain the reason for the decision.

An alternative might be for the Council to suggest that people make donations in lieu of a floral tribute if they wish to. However, it needs to be made very clear that the Council understand the enormous financial pressures that the current situation is placing on some people and that nobody should feel obliged to donate.

As an example for those who wish to and are able to do so, The Duke of Cambridge has recently launched an urgent appeal asking those who can to donate money to the National Emergencies Trust so that the Trust can help local charities, distribute money and support victims in combatting the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Further information is available at www.nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk However, do be alert to any announcement by central government or by Buckingham Palace of any alternative arrangements for the making of donations, but in the absence of any such national guidance the National Emergencies Trust seems to be an extremely appropriate cause in the current circumstances.

Cancellation of Existing Planned Events

All events (e.g. lunches, dinners, receptions, or fundraising events) during a pandemic situation are likely to have been cancelled and if not, it is suggested that they should be.

Proclamation Day

Should there be a Proclamation to be made during the duration of the current crisis this can clearly not be a public event on the scale that many Councils had planned. This is another area where social media can come into play. The announcements that were to have been made during public ceremonies could be made direct to camera and made available on social media.

However, this will need to be done within the constraints placed on everyone by the travel restrictions. The person reading the words will need to be able to do so using a mobile phone or other similar device and then upload the piece to social media or forward it for someone else to upload. There can be no question of staff being asked to travel to someone's home to film them.

Again, it is important to build in some resilience into these plans. It may be that the list of possible people to make a proclamation should be extended so that if absence of IT capacity, illness or the need for social distancing prevents those you had planned to involve, then there are others who could take over.

At county level the list might well include “, Lord-Lieutenant, High Sheriff, Under Sheriff, Vice Lord-Lieutenant, Mayor or Lord Mayor of the county town or city, Deputy Lord Mayor, or County Council Chairman,”. In Boroughs, “Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Immediate past Mayor, a Deputy Lieutenant, Chief Executive”.

The Town Council should maintain “the cascade” approach so that County level proclamations go on-line ahead of those by Boroughs and Districts and in turn that those should precede those by towns and parishes.

Social Media

Consideration should be given to effectively using social media:

To express sadness at the loss of life;

To explain that the Council had appropriate plans in place;

To recognise that the preservation of life and the care and well-being of the living must take precedence over acts of mourning and the remembrance of those who have died;

To notify people of the necessarily limited response you are making in the current situation;

To reassure people that when restrictions are lifted and it is safe to do so, there will be opportunities to come together to reflect and mourn.