



**PROTOCOL FOR MARKING THE DEATH OF A
SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE**

August 2024

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Appendix 1 Protocol for flying a flag at half-mast.

This protocol document had been drawn up to prepare Williton Parish Council (WPC) for the death of a senior national figure (listed below) and the actions that need to be taken.

HM The King (Operation London Bridge)
HM The Queen
HRH The Prince of Wales (Operation Menai Bridge)
HRH The Princess of Wales
HRH Prince George
HRH Princess Charlotte
HRH Prince Louis
HRH The Earl of Wessex
HRH The Countess of Wessex
HRH The Princess Royal
The Duke of Sussex
The Duchess of Sussex
HRH The Duke of York

The Prime Minister
Any former Prime Minister, such as Sir John Major

The Member of Parliament for Tiverton and Minehead
Any serving member of Williton Parish Council

This Protocol will only be implemented following an official formal announcement. Upon notification, the Parish Clerk will advise all members that the protocol is to be implemented. In all cases where “the Chair” is mentioned the Vice Chair shall fulfil the roles if the Chair is not available.

2 DEATH OF A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

2.1 DEATH OF THE SOVEREIGN (Operation London Bridge)

2.1.1 Flag Flying. (See appendix 1)

On the death until the funeral of the Sovereign flags should only be flown at half-mast, except Proclamation Day when flags are flown at full mast following the proclamation.

From the announcement of the death of a Sovereign the Union Flag will be lowered to half-mast until 08:00 on the morning following the funeral, except for Proclamation Day when flags are flown at full mast following the proclamation.

The day of the death of the Sovereign will be known as D-Day, then D+1, D+2 etc. through the ten days of national Mourning. The state funeral will be held on D+10, except if this date falls on a Sunday, when the funeral will be on D+11. (D+10 and D+11 will be a Public Holiday unless D+10 falls on a Saturday).

The WPC will liaise with the British Legion regarding the flying of the flag from the memorial garden within the Williton War Memorial and Recreation Ground.

2.1.2 Proclamation Day

The day following the death D+1 will be Proclamation Day, which is the day the new Sovereign is proclaimed.

On Proclamation Day flags will, at the start of the day, be flying at half-mast. All flags will then be flown from the masthead from 1100hrs on Proclamation Day (D+1) to coincide with the reading of the Principal Proclamation, until 1630hrs the following day, (D+2).

(This is due to the official schedule of the Proclamation: - the Proclamations will be read in London on Proclamation Day (D+1), then read at noon in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff on the day following Proclamation Day (D+2). Once these Proclamations have been made it is appropriate for the Proclamation to be read at County, City, Borough and then at Parish level. High Sheriffs will read the Proclamation at County level along with Lord-Lieutenants. Most High Sheriffs are expected to make their readings at 1400hrs on D+2. It is suggested that local civic leaders should therefore make their readings at or after 1600hrs.)

2.1.3 Reading the Proclamation.

The Proclamation will be made at St James's Palace at 1100hrs (or 1400hrs if it is a Sunday).

The wording of the Accession Proclamation will be on the Buckingham Palace website (www.royal.gov.uk) and the Privy Council website (www.privycouncil.independent.gov.uk) soon after it is read at St James's Palace.

A copy will be downloaded and displayed in the Parish Office window and in the Parish Council Notice Board

2.1.4 Marking A Silence

In the event of the death of the Sovereign there will be a two-minute silence at the start of any scheduled Parish Council meeting, which is held in the official mourning period.

2.1.5 Books of Condolence

On the day following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign, HM The Queen Consort, HRH The Prince of Wales or HRH The Princess of Wales, a Book of Condolence will be opened at Williton Parish Council Office.

In the event of the death of any other member of the Royal Family, notable person, or a local, national or international disaster the Parish Clerk, in conjunction with the Chair of the Parish Council, will judge public feeling as to whether a Book of Condolence should be opened.

The Book of Condolence will be available during the Parish Office opening hours (Monday – Friday 10:00-12:00) and be closed at the end of the day following the day of the funeral. (i.e. if the funeral falls on a Thursday, the Book of Condolence should close at 12:00hrs on the Friday). Once the Book of Condolence has been closed it will be bound and retained in WPC official archives.

Books of Condolence are essentially a local record of the sentiments expressed by local people on the death of a national figure or event and, as such, they form part of WPC's archives, so that future generations are able easily to gain access to them and find out the way in which national events were marked in the area.

It is not feasible for every book of condolence to form part of the Royal Archives.

2.1.6 Online Book of Condolence

WPC will accept online submissions for the Book of Condolence through a contact form on our website (www.willitonparishcouncil.org) the submissions will then be collated and included in the Book of Condolence. A link to the Buckingham Palace e-Book of Condolence will be included on the website (www.royal.gov.uk).

2.1.7 Letters of Condolence

WPC will not send a letter of condolence.

2.1.8 Website

An official photograph, on a black background, will be displayed on the front page. There will be links from the WPC's normal homepage about: Condolence Books, Church Services, Laying of Flowers, and Flying of Flags. The website will revert to normal on the day after the official period of mourning.

2.1.9 Events During the Period of Mourning

From the day of the death until the day after the funeral, careful thought will be given to the types of events and activities which should take place. Whilst it may not be appropriate for an event to go ahead it might be possible to hold a scheduled Parish Council meeting, with an appropriate period of silence at the start.

The Parish Clerk in conjunction with the Chair of the Parish Council will review any other event or activity organised by the Parish Council to ensure it is appropriate for a time of national mourning to ensure it fits comfortably with the mood of the nation, and as a mark of respect the event or activity may need to be cancelled or postponed.

2.1.10 Dress Code

During the official mourning period of the Sovereign; Parish Councillors, Parish Clerk and Assistant to the Parish Clerk will be encouraged to dress sombrely whilst on official business when representing WPC. During the official mourning period when the Chain of Office is worn a small black bag or purse will fit over the jewel, so that only the chain is seen.

2.1.11 Church Services

WPC will be sent details of all Church services being held in the Parish and Parish councillors advised. Details will be put onto the WPC website.

2.1.12 Flowers

A designated area will be allocated on the Memorial Garden in Williton War Memorial and Recreation Ground as a place for residents and visitors to lay flowers during the period of mourning should residents wish to do so. Flowers will be removed in a dignified way at 9am on the day following the funeral. All flowers will then be taken away to be composted. In the event of the death of The Sovereign a tree will subsequently be planted using this compost at a location in the community, agreed by WPC, in memory of the Sovereign.

2.2 DEATH OF A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

2.2.1 Flag Flying

The Union Flag will be flown at Half-Mast: -

From the announcement of the death until the funeral of a member of the Royal Family styled "Royal Highness", subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case.

On the day of the announcement of the death and on the day of the funeral of other members of the Royal Family, subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case.

The funerals of foreign rulers, subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case.

The WPC will liaise with the British Legion regarding the flying of the flag from the memorial garden within the Williton War Memorial and Recreation Ground.

2.2.2 Events During the Period of Mourning

From the day of the death until the day after the funeral, careful thought will be given to the types of events and activities which should take place. Whilst it may not be appropriate for an event to go ahead it might be possible to hold a scheduled Parish Council meeting, with an appropriate period of silence at the start.

The Parish Clerk in conjunction with the Chair of the Parish Council will review any other event or activity organised by the Parish Council to ensure it is appropriate for a time of national mourning to ensure it fits comfortably with the mood of the nation, and as a mark of respect the event or activity may need to be cancelled or postponed.

2.2.3 Dress Code

During the official mourning period for a Senior Royal Parish Councillors, Parish Clerk and Assistant to the Parish Clerk will be encouraged to dress sombrely whilst on official business, when representing WPC. During the official mourning period when the Chain of Office is worn a small black bag or purse will fit over the jewel, so that only the chain is seen.

3 THE DEATH OF THE PRIME MINISTER EX-PRIME MINISTER OR THE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR TIVERTON AND MINEHEAD

The flag will fly at half-mast on the day of the announcement of the death and on the day of the funeral only.

(In the case of the death of First Minister and ex-First Ministers of the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the flag will fly at half-mast on the day of the announcement of the death of death and on the day of the funeral only, subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case. Unless otherwise commanded by the Sovereign this only applies to their respective Countries)

The WPC will liaise with the British Legion regarding the flying of the flag from the memorial garden within the Williton War Memorial and Recreation Ground.

The Chair of the Parish Council will not issue a statement

3.1 Events During the Period of Mourning

From the day of the death until the day after the funeral, careful thought will be given to the types of events and activities which should take place. Whilst it may not be appropriate for an event to go ahead it might be possible to hold a scheduled Parish Council meeting, with an appropriate period of silence at the start.

The Parish Clerk in conjunction with the Chair of the Parish Council will review any other event or activity organised by the Parish Council to ensure it is appropriate for a time of mourning, and as a mark of respect the event or activity may need to be cancelled or postponed.

A minute's silence will take place at the start of the first Full Parish Council Meeting following the death.

Dress Code

During the period between the death and funeral, Parish Councillors, Parish Clerk and Assistant to the Parish Clerk will be encouraged to dress sombrely whilst on official business when representing WPC. During the official mourning period when the Chain of Office is worn a small black bag or purse will fit over the jewel, so that only the chain is seen.

4 THE DEATH OF A SERVING MEMBER OF WILLITON PARISH COUNCIL

The flag will fly at half-mast on the day of the announcement of the death of death and on the day of the funeral only.

The Parish Council will liaise with the British Legion regarding the flying of the flag from the memorial garden within the Williton War Memorial and Recreation Ground.

The Parish Clerk will inform all members of the Parish Council via email or telephone.

If appropriate the Chairman will represent the Parish Council at the funeral of the deceased Parish Councillor. If the death is that of the Chair of the Parish Council, the Vice Chairman will represent the Parish Council.

The Parish Council will issue a statement via the Parish Clerk expressing the sadness of the Parish Council at the news of the death. The statement will appear on the home page of the website and will be posted on social media and sent the West Somerset Free Press. The statement will confirm that the flag is to be flown at half-mast.

The Casual Vacancy will be advertised on the day after the funeral.

A minute's silence will take place at the start of the first Full Parish Council Meeting following the death.

4.1 Events During the Period of Mourning

From the day of the death until the day after the funeral, careful thought will be given to the types of events and activities which should take place. Whilst it may not be appropriate for an event to go ahead it might be possible to hold a scheduled Parish Council meeting, with an appropriate period of silence at the start.

The Parish Clerk in conjunction with the Chair of the Parish Council will review any other event or activity organised by the Parish Council to ensure it is appropriate for a time of mourning, and as a mark of respect the event or activity may need to be cancelled or postponed.

4.2 Dress Code

During the period between the death and the funeral Parish Councillors, Parish Clerk and Assistant to the Parish Clerk will be encouraged to dress sombrely whilst on official business, when representing WPC. During the mourning period when the Chain of Office is worn a small black bag or purse will fit over the jewel, so that only the chain is seen.

Protocol approved at Williton Parish Council's meeting held on 5TH August 2024

Signed (Chairman)

Appendix 1

Protocol for flying a flag at half-mast.

Williton Parish Council will liaise with the Williton Branch of the British Legion and the flagpole erected in the Memorial Garden as soon as rumours of a death of a senior figure (as listed above) start to circulate.

Upon receiving formal notification of the death of a senior figure (as listed above), the Parish Clerk will instruct the flag in the British Legion Memorial Garden be lowered to half-mast.

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 half-mast, it should again be raised to the top of the mast for a second before being fully lowered.

When a British national flag is at half-mast, other flags on the same stand of poles should also be at half-mast or should not be flown at all. Flags of foreign nations should not be flown unless their country is also observing mourning.

In the event of a local, national or international disaster, the Parish Clerk, in conjunction with the chair of the Parish Council, will instruct that the flag will be flown at half-mast if deemed appropriate.

Full details for the correct way to fly flags at half-mast is given on the Flag Institute's website (www.flaginstitute.org) It is important that the guidance given by the Flag Institute is strictly adhered to.