



GORING-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure

POLICY DOCUMENT

1. Policy Application

This policy is applicable to the procedure is for marking the death of any prominent national or local figure such as the Monarch or other member of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister, a serving Member of Parliament or other prominent person.

- The Queen will be given a Royal State Funeral.
- The Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales will be given a Ceremonial Royal Funeral
- Other senior members of the Royal Family will be given Non-Ceremonial Royal Funerals.

Elements from the policy below may be selected to be appropriate for marking the death of, for instance, another member of the Royal Family, a Prime Minister / First Minister or former Prime Minister / First Minister, a serving Member of Parliament, a Mayor, Council Leader or other prominent person.

2. The Proclamation

High Sheriffs have responsibility for reading the Proclamation within their county and will work closely with the county Lord-Lieutenant.

Plans to mark the death should only be implemented when a formal announcement has been made. 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 that *"it has been announced by Buckingham Palace / Downing Street that"*).

3. Implementation of the Policy

Death of the Sovereign: The full policy may be implemented by the Clerk immediately after the confirmation of the Death of the Sovereign. In the absence of the Clerk the responsibility will fall to the Chairman, or then to any other Councillor.

Death of HRH Duke of Edinburgh or HRH Prince of Wales or other Senior members of the Royal Family: Either the full policy or elements of the policy may be implemented by:

- The Clerk in consultation with the Chairman
- The Clerk in consultation with 3 Councillors (In the absence of the Chairman)
- The Chairman in consultation with 3 Councillors (In the absence of the Clerk)
- A Quorum of Councillors (in the absence of both the Clerk and Chairman)



4. Flags

The Flag at the Rectory Garden is the responsibility of the Parish Council, other organisations in the Parish with flag poles will be advised of the protocols in this policy which the Parish Council will follow. Specific guidance on angled flag poles can be provided separately to those who need it.

A key for the flag is maintained by a community volunteer, who normally manages the raising and lowering of the flag. A key is also kept in the parish office. The community volunteer will be made aware of the policy.

The contact list for the key holders will be kept at the parish office.

On the formal announcement of Death, all flags are to be lowered to half-mast until 0800hrs. on the morning following the Funeral.

Proclamation Day

In the case of the death of the Sovereign, the day following the death will be Proclamation Day (the day when 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 at the Masthead from 1100hrs. on D+1 (Proclamation Day) to coincide with the Reading of the Principal Proclamation. They will continue to fly at full-mast until 1300hrs. the following day, i.e., D+2. This is because the Proclamation, having been read in London on Proclamation Day, will then be read in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff on the day following Proclamation Day. At 13.00 on D+2 they should be returned to half-mast (*See "Cancellation of existing planned events" of this Policy for further guidance on Proclamation Day.*)

Flag-flying Days

Should it happen that between the day of death and the funeral there is a period when the parish may be scheduled to fly the Commonwealth flag, the Merchant Navy flag or the Armed Forces flag, these days may be passed un-marked, instead to continuing to fly the Union flag at half-mast as a symbol of National mourning. It would be inconsistent to celebrate the Commonwealth, the Armed Forces or the Merchant Fleet by flying their flags at half-mast, but it would be inappropriate to fly them at full mast during a period of mourning. It is better therefore not to fly them at all.

Which flags to fly?

In marking a death it is right to lower to half-mast the Union Flag or any other the flags of the Nations of the United Kingdom. Flags of any other countries will be removed whilst marking a period of mourning.



5. Book of Condolence

A book of Condolence shall be opened on the first working day after the day of death. The book will be available at the Parish Office, using the Conference Room as an easily accessible place, which is quiet enough to enable those signing the books a moment of privacy and quiet reflection whilst doing so.

A table with cloth & chair will be provided, with a supply of pens and if necessary, a desk lamp. A suitable photograph in a frame will be provided if available.

The paper provided will have a black border and wide left hand margin, hole-punched to fit in a loose leaf binder as recommended. This will allow for the pages to be re-ordered, so that if the Mayor / Chairman, Council Leader and others cannot be the first to sign the book, their signatures can nevertheless be on the first page of the bound book.

At the discretion of the council, pages including any questionable comments may be permanently excluded.

The Parish Website will link to the Buckingham Palace e-Book of Condolence (www.royal.gov.uk).

The Book of Condolence shall 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 shall close at 5.00 p.m. on the Friday), and is a record of the sentiments expressed by local people on the death of the national figure. It will form part of the Parish archive and will be sent, once bound, to the County Archive in Oxford.

6. Events and Activities

From the day of the death until the day after the funeral, careful thought should be given to the types of events and activities which should take place. The question 'why is it really necessary and appropriate for this event to go ahead' should be considered. For instance, if the Village Fete were to be due to take place during the time of mourning, it may not be appropriate, but it might be possible to hold the Parish Council meeting with an appropriate period of silence at the start.

7. Dress Code

Councillors will be encouraged to dress soberly on official business. The Councillors and the Clerk will be provided with black arm bands.

8. Letters of Condolence

The Parish Council will decide whether to send a letter of condolence to the Private Secretary of the deceased or the new Monarch's Private Secretary as appropriate.



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9. Further Reference

Additional information can be found in the National Association of Civic Officers Guidance. Re-adopted at a Parish Council Meeting on 6 August 2020 to be reviewed in two years or when legislation dictates.

10. Review

This policy document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 11th January 2021, it shall be reviewed periodically plus in the event the Deceased is a named person in this document.

Signed:

Dated:

K Bulmer, Chairman