

POLICY

Marking the Death of a Senior National figure

What is in the Policy?

The approach to be taken by Ware Town Council.

Date Adopted

27th January 2025

Review Date

January 2028

For more information please contact: info@waretowncouncil.gov.uk / 01920 460316

1. Background

Guidance has been made available for a procedure to follow with the death of the Sovereign, other senior member of the Royal Family, senior national figure or local holders of high office. It has been drawn up with the co-operation of the Royal Household and the Government.

This procedure should be implemented by the Town Clerk or in his absence, the Finance and Administration Manager.

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.

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.

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 or holder of the Freedom of Ware.

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

- HM The King
 - Queen Camilla
 - HRH The Prince of Wales
 - HRH The Princess of Wales
 - HRH The Duke of Edinburgh
 - HRH The Duchess of Edinburgh
 - HRH Prince George of Cambridge
 - HRH The Princess Royal
 - Other members of the Royal Family as advised by the Royal Household and the Government
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- The Prime Minister
 - The serving Member of Parliament for the Hertford and Stortford
 - A serving Town Mayor
 - A serving member of the Council
 - A Former Town Mayor of the Council

Action Required	Authorised by	Other Notes
Ware Town Council's mourning protocol will be implemented on the formal announcement of the death of any one of those persons name on page 1 of this protocol.	Implementation will be authorised by the Town Clerk or in his absence, the Finance and Administration Manager.	References to the Town Clerk as the chief officer may be replaced by the senior officer present within the council.

Flying the Flag

Action Required	Implemented by	Other Notes
At the request of the Town Clerk, the flag at The Priory will be lowered to half mast.	Grounds Maintenance Manager.	See Appendix A in this protocol setting out the correct procedure for flying a flag at half mast If the death falls on St George's Day or the period of mourning includes St George's Day, the flag of the patron saint should be replaced by the Union Flag at half mast.
Following the death of the Sovereign, when the new Sovereign is proclaimed (flags will – at 11.00hrs – be raised to full mast and flown throughout the day at full mast, returning to half mast at 1800. In the case of the death of the Sovereign, the day following the death will be the 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 be flown from the Mast Head from 1100 hours on Proclamation Day (D + 1) to coincide with the Reading of the Principle Proclamation and until 1300 hrs the following day (D + 2). This is because the Proclamation, having been read in London on Proclamation	Grounds Maintenance Manager.	The funeral of the Sovereign will take place 10 days after the day of death. For other senior members of the Royal Family, the funeral will take place eight days after the day of death.

Day, will then be reading Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff on the following Proclamation Day. After the day of Proclamation, all flags are to be lowered to half mast until 0800 hours on the morning following the State Funeral (day of death plus 11 days). For any other prominent figures or local holder of high office, the flag should fly at half mast only on the day of death and the day of the funeral.		
At The Priory, following the death of the Sovereign or other members of the Royal Family identified in the list on page 1, flags will continue to be flown at half mast until 0800hrs on the day following the funeral. For all others identified in the list of page 1, flags at The Priory will fly at half-mast on the day of the announcement of the death. On subsequent days, the usual local arrangements will resume (see the note opposite) until the day of the funeral when they will again fly at half mast.	As above	The funeral of the Sovereign will take place 10 days after the day of death. For other senior members of the Royal Family, the number of days will be fewer. The phrase 'Usual local arrangements' should be read as meaning that where a flag is usually flown it can, on the day following the funeral, again be flown at full mast. If no flag is usually flown, the flag can be taken down.

Book of Condolence

A quiet location for the book should be considered so that those signing the books can have a moment of privacy and quiet reflection whilst doing so.

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 the first page of the bound book.

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
On the day following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign, The Prince of Wales or The Duchess of Cornwall, a Book of Condolence will be opened at The Priory. Book of Condolence will be open from 1000hrs – 1600 hrs Monday to Friday and will remain open until the day following the funeral. A table and chair should be made available for members to sign the Book of Condolence which should be loose leaf black folders and a supply of flag edged paper will be supplied as will table clothes and a framed photograph of the relevant person will be supplied from the stock held by the Town Clerk.	Finance and Administration Manager.	The officer should ensure there is adequate paper available in the book. Pages that have been defaced or include offensive or other questionable comments should be quietly removed until such time as a decision can be taken at senior level (Town Clerk) on whether or not they should be permanently excluded. Books of Condolence should be opened on the first working day after death. Depending of anticipated demand, consider whether one or two books should be available. It should be an easily accessible place. Downloadable images of the Royal Family are available from www.royal.gov.uk
The Mayor will issue a statement via the Town Clerk expressing the sadness of the Council and people of Ware at the news of the death of The statement will also appear	Statement to be issued by the Town Clerk. Administration Officer to ensure copy of the statement appears on the home page of	Guidance on the content of the statement is set out in Appendix B.

on the home page of the website. The statement will confirm that flags are to be flown at half mast and will give details of the Books of Condolence. In the case of the death of the Sovereign or a member of the Royal Family it will also mention any arrangements for an e-Book of Condolence on the Royal Website. On the death of any other significant person, the Town Clerk will discuss with the Town Mayor whether an e-book of Condolence should be opened on the Council's website.	the Council's website.	
When the Book of Condolence has been closed, the Town Clerk will arrange for the pages to be bound and make arrangements for the final bound version to be lodged	Town Clerk	

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 to 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.

Action Required	Authorised /Implemented By	Other Notes
To review the programme of engagements undertaken by the Town Mayor to ensure it is appropriate in a time of national mourning and that it sits comfortably with the national mood.	The Town Mayor in conjunction with the Town Clerk.	Consider working with local faith groups to arrange some sort of service on the eve of the funeral.

Dress Code

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.

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
A stock of black ties, mourning rosettes and black armbands will be held in and available from the Clerk's Office for use by the Councillors and Town Clerk following the death of a senior figure.	The stock to be issued and maintained in good order by the Mayor's Secretary.	At the time of the annual review of this protocol, consideration will be given to the number of items in stock, their condition and the need for cleaning, repair or replacement.
On the death of the Sovereign, the Chains of office will not be worn by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and instead badges of office will be worn on black neck ribbons.	Mayor's Secretary	The black ribbon for the chains of office to be held with black ties, rosettes and arms bands in the Civic Office.

Public Observance of Silence

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
When the death of a senior member of the Royal Family is to be marked by a Silence, an announcement will be made by Buckingham Palace. The Town Mayor will lead a Public Silence at _____. All those listed in Appendix C to be present. Councillors to wear black ties/arm bands/rosettes.		

Letter of Condolence from Ware Town Council

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
As soon as practical, a letter of condolence will be drafted and circulated to the Town Mayor before dispatch.	Town Clerk.	

Appendix A

Full details for on the correct way to fly flags at half mast is given on the website of the Flag Institute (www.flaginstitute.org).

It is important that the guidance given by the 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.

Appendix B

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 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 with commits the Town Council to action before that action has been discussed and has the necessary agreement from the political leadership.

Appendix C

All members of the Council

Town Clerk

Honorary Townsmen / Townswomen

Past Mayors

Date	Update
27 th January 2025	Readopted with updated list of members of the Royal family
14 th February 2022	Re adopted with minor amendments
20 th January 2020	Significant revision and updating , adopted by WTC
22 nd October 2014	Adopted by WTC