



Saltash Town Council



Policy/Procedure:

Protocol For Death Of A Senior Member Of The Royal Family

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This is a Policy or Procedure document of Saltash Town Council to be followed by both Councillors and employees.

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SALTASH TOWN COUNCIL

PROTOCOL FOR DEATH OF A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

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1. INTRODUCTION

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 Council's 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.

From this template it is possible to select elements that are appropriate when marking the death of, for instance, another member of the Royal Family, a Prime Minister or former Prime Minister, a serving Member of Parliament, a Mayor, Council Leader or other prominent person.

All parts of this protocol apply on the death of the Sovereign (and of course, those sections around the Accession Proclamation arise only on the Monarch's death). Beyond that implementation of the protocol is a matter to be decided locally.

This protocol offers guidance on how to mark a death. It is down to the Mayor and Town Clerk to decide for whom the protocol is implemented and to what extent.

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)

High Sherriff's have responsibility for reading the Proclamation within their counties and so questions about that aspect of the arrangements can be directed to the local High Sheriff or Under Sheriff. The Lord Lieutenant's office is another source of information.

It might also be appropriate to use elements from this guidance when responding to an incident which has led to a large number of deaths, for example, a train crash or terrorist attack.

It is important that plans include out-of-hours contact details for all those who will be called on to act.

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 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 Sheriff's 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 – Suggestions in Appendix 1
- 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.

Suggested words for the Ceremony:

For the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Town Clerk:

"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 but the basis on which our Monarchy is built has ensured that through the centuries the Crown has passed in an unbroken line of succession. Today's ceremony marks the formal Proclamation to the people of Saltash 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 Cornwall discharged earlier this afternoon and with my humble duty I now call on the Mayor of Saltash to read the Proclamation to the people of Saltash. Ladies and gentlemen, the Proclamation of the Accession."

READS THE PROCLAMATION

At the end of the Proclamation, the Mayor will say "God Save the King"
Official guests will repeat "God Save the King"
All present join in saying "God Save the King"

If there is a band present, they will play one verse of the National Anthem. Finally, the Mayor will call for three cheers for His Majesty the King.

Dispersal.

5. FLAGS

On the formal announcement of death, the Union Flag will be lowered to half-mast and the following shall apply. Guidelines for flying flags at half-mast can be found in Appendix 2

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| • 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. 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. BELLS

- Bell tolled for each year of the Sovereign's life.
- If death formally announced before 12.00 noon – tolled at noon on D-Day.
- If death announced after 12 noon D-Day, toll at 12 noon on D+1
- If Civic Service held D+9, full or half muffled peal.

7. WEBSITE

Following the official announcement from Buckingham Palace, a black homepage featuring a photo of the deceased, their birth and death years and links to the main website and information on local tributes (condolence books, church services, flowers and proclamations – extra tabs may need to be added) will be added to the Town Council website until 8.00 a.m. on D+11. A message from the Mayor will be published.

8. EVENTS DURING THE PERIOD OF MOURNING

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 the Mayor should host or attend. Scheduled Town Council meetings will be reviewed for postponement or rescheduling. Also any Civic lunches, dinners, receptions, etc., may not fit with the mood of the nation and as a mark of respect may need to be cancelled or postponed. This is a local decision and one which may need to be reached with great sensitivity.

Visits to local schools and care homes may be scheduled for the Mayor to spend time with the community, talking about the events that are unfolding. This again will need to be handled with sensitivity and should not be pressed on the Mayor if they do not feel comfortable taking on such a role.

Thought should also be given to the consideration of cancelling any bookings in the Guildhall.

9. PORTRAIT

The Mayors Secretary will arrange for a portrait to be displayed, with mourning ribbon, in the Council Chamber for one month following the funeral.

10. LIGHTING

The Service Delivery Team will arrange for any STC property that has floodlights, eg Guildhall, Library and Cornish Cross, a deep purple screen/bulb should be fitted to illuminate it and show that we are in mourning.

11. DRESS CODE

A view will be taken locally on what is the correct dress in the event. Whilst flags are at half mast, it will be appropriate for black ties, badges, ribbons and armbands to be worn by Council members and senior officers which will be provided.

On occasions where Councillor's are robed (i.e. a full Council meeting during the period of mourning or on the reading of the Proclamation on the death of the Sovereign), they will wear black ribbon on their gowns (and a small Town Seal badge???)

On all occasions of public mourning the mace will have a black ribbon tied around it. This should apply both when the mace is in use and when it is on display.

The badge of the Mayoral chains shall be worn in a black mourning pouch until after the funeral.

12. CHURCH SERVICES

A formal Civic Service will be held on the middle Sunday in Truro and which members of Saltash Town Council will be expected to attend.

Eve of Funeral Parish Service the Mayor to decide on a local service with members of the Council and residents joining together in an act of remembrance. It is suggested we use the largest church within Saltash available .

13. MARKING A SILENCE

On the death of the Sovereign there will be a two minute silence at 11.00 a.m. 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 we used the Memorial Peace Garden, who will be present and how the beginning and end of the silence should be marked, both bugler and piper should be present at the decision of the Mayor. It should be also 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.

14. FLOWERS

An area for floral tributes only shall be provided in the Memorial Peace Garden for residents and visitors to lay flowers during the period of mourning. It will be requested that no plastic/cellophane is used. The flowers will be collected at 9.00 a.m. 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 Saltash. 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.

15. LETTER/BOOK OF CONDOLENCE

The Town Council will provide loose leaf condolence books at the Guildhall and Parish Church decided by the Mayor on the first working day after day of death (D+1). Sheets shall also be provided to schools and other organisations. 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).

Books of Condolence should be closed at the end of the day following the day of the funeral (i.e. if the funeral falls on a Thursday, Books should close at 1700hrs on the Friday).

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

Following the funeral, all sheets will be bound with a photograph of the deceased and their birth/death years and a message from the Mayor into a condolence book which be placed on deposit in **?????? (Library? Saltash Heritage?)**

It is usual in the case of the death of a member of the Royal Family for a letter from the Mayor be sent to the Private Secretary of the deceased, asking that condolences be passed to the next of kin and other members of the Royal 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 sent to the new Sovereign. In each case, other than exceptional local circumstances, one letter of condolence only should be sent.

16. 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 1

ATTENDANCE AT READING OF PROCLAMATION

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.

- The Mayor of Saltash and all Members of the Council
- Freemen of the Town
- Senior Council Officers
- Former Mayors
- Mayor's Chaplain
- Honorary Recorder
- 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 2

FLYING FLAGS AT HALF-MAST

Authoritative information on flag flying can be found on the website of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-digital-culture-media-sport>)

Information is also available on the website of the Flag Institute (www.flaginstitute.org) but bear in mind the institute is not an official body and whilst its guidance can assist it does not carry the same weight as information from the Government.

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 degrees from the vertical, but a mourning cravat can be used instead (see the Flag's Institute's website for further details).

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 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.

APPENDIX 3

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 to 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 posters on 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.