

PROTOCOL
MARKING THE DEATH OF A PROMINENT NATIONAL FIGURE
or ELECTED MEMBER OF SALTFORD PARISH COUNCIL

This protocol offers guidance to the elected Members, staff and population within the Parish covered by Saltford Parish Council (SPC) on marking the death of a prominent national figure or a current elected member of Saltford Parish Council.

A copy of this document has been shared with the Chair of the Saltford Community Association, the Head Teacher at Saltford Primary School and the Rector of St Mary's Saltford, who have agreed with its contents.

It sets out the specific protocols to be observed on the death of the Sovereign, which involves the greatest number of ceremonial elements.

This protocol is constructed in a way to enable appropriate elements when marking the death of other members of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister/former Prime Minister, a serving Councillor or other prominent person.

All parts of this protocol apply on the death of the Sovereign (note: those sections around the Accession Proclamation arise only upon the Monarchs death).

Saltford Parish Council will follow Bath and North East Somerset Council's protocol where given in the instance of the death of a prominent national figure.

The Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair if required, will decide when this protocol will be enacted.

- Her Majesty The Queen will be given a State funeral
- The Prince of Wales will be given a Ceremonial Royal Funeral
- The Duchess of Cornwall, The Duke of Cambridge, The Duchess of Cambridge, Prince George of Cambridge, Princess Charlotte of Cambridge, Prince Louis of Cambridge, The Duke of Sussex, The Duchess of Sussex, The Duke of York, The Earl of Wessex, The Princess Royal, The Countess of Wessex, The Duke of Gloucester, The Duchess of Gloucester, The Duke of Kent, Prince Michael Kent, Princess Michael of Kent and Princess Alexandra will be given Non-Ceremonial Royal Funerals.

Should SPC acquire a flag / flag pole, the flying of flags at half-mast across the parish will be appropriate. The Saltford Community Association, if they wish, will fly a flag at half-mast on the flag pole outside Saltford Hall, however SPC has no jurisdiction over this. (Further information on flag flying can be found below under item 2)

The National Proclamations will be read in London (St James Palace and the Royal Exchange), Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff, along with County Proclamations normally read by the High Sheriff or Lord-Lieutenant of each county.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset has responsibility for the primary reading of the Proclamation (produced/circulated by Buckingham Palace/Central Govt) within the county of Somerset.

Elements of this protocol may be used when responding to another incident which has led to a large number of deaths (i.e. a local disaster or terrorist attack).

1. Implementation of the Protocol on hearing of the death

Plans to mark a death must be implemented only when a formal announcement has been made (i.e. where news agencies say 'reports are coming in of the death of...') These will be treated with caution. Wherever possible SPC will wait for a more definite or specific announcement (i.e. 'it has been announced by Buckingham Palace/Downing Street that...') The Parish Clerk shall be responsible for enacting the protocol.

For the death of the Sovereign or another prominent national figure or elected member, the Clerk will cascade information through the community to ensure timely decisions and notifications can be made.

For figures who are not the Sovereign or Prime Minister, there may need to be consultation at the time on the ways in which such a death should be marked.

2. Flag Flying (see 7 below – Proclamation Day)

Should SPC acquire a flag / flag pole it will be flown at half-mast:

The Parish Council has responsibility for lowering the flag.

On the formal announcement of death, as guidance all flags are to be lowered to half-mast until 08:00hrs on the morning following the funeral.

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 as guidance flags must fly at half-mast at the start of the day.

All Flags will then be flown at the Mast-Head from 11:00hrs on D+1 (Proclamation Day) to coincide with the Reading of the Principle of the Proclamation and until 13:00hrs.

The following day (D+2, as the Proclamation firstly having been read in London on Proclamation Day) will then be read in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff on the day following Proclamation Day.

If the Monarch's birthday occurs during a period of national mourning the flag will be positioned as directed by the Royal Family.

3. Books of Condolence

Should SPC provide any 'Books of Condolence' locally in the Parish, these will remain in the power of SPC. Book(s) of Condolence will be made accessible to residents, preferably in the foyer of Saltford Hall (with the permission of SCA). Alternative locations include the Saltford Community Library and Post Office Hub (with the permission of the management team) or St Mary's Church or Church Hall (with the permission of the Rector).

The Parish Clerk, or if not available, the Chair or Vice-Chair, will liaise as appropriate and arrange the Book of Condolence to be displayed at a publicly accessible location in a timely manner. The Book of Condolence will be removed from its public location a week after the funeral has taken place.

The provision of 'Books of Condolence' from B&NES Council will remain within the power of Bath and North East Somerset Council.

4. Official Correspondence

The Chair (as the figurehead of Saltford Parish Council) will agree a form of words for a message, expressing sorrow at the news of the death. This will be the official form of words to be used on Saltford Parish Council's website and will be shared also on its Facebook and Twitter pages.

An external link to the Buckingham Palace e-book of condolence (www.royal.gov.uk) will be made on the SPC website and via its social media channels.

This link will be removed at the end of the day following the day of the funeral (i.e. if the funeral falls on a Thursday the link will be removed at 5.00pm on the Friday) if on the home page.

5. Organisation of Local Events During the Period of Mourning

On the death of the Sovereign or prominent national figure, or elected member, large numbers of people may wish to pay their respects and to take part in events that mark not just a sad passing, but a moment in history. The focus will inevitably fall on London, which many will perceive to be the centre of events.

Residents may choose to express their sadness locally by laying flowers; in order to manage such activity safely, Saltford Parish Council has identified the following sites within the Parish:

- Saltford War Memorial (junction of Beech Rd / Norman Rd / High St)
- Saltford Memorial Gardens (junction of Bath Rd / Manor Rd)

All flowers will be removed the week after the funeral has taken place (or once the flowers have died). Weather conditions will have an effect on the above but decisions will be made giving forethought and sensitivity to the needs of the community.

Church Services may also provide a setting for people to come together to express sadness. Councillor and staff attendance at such services is encouraged – but not obligatory - to add to the sense of community coming together in a unified expression of grief.

6. Cancellation of Existing Planned Events

It is impossible to create hard and fast rules around cancelling long planned events which fall in the period between a death and a funeral. It is best practice to remove the importance of 'cost and inconvenience' when cancelling events, remaining mindfully guided by the public mood. Public opinion can be volatile and change quickly in such emotional circumstances and there is a risk of public criticism if the decision to go ahead is seen to 'go against the grain'.

It is hard to envisage any Council event that should carry on in the period between a death and the funeral as it would risk negative publicity at a time when the rest of the country is in mourning.

When the time comes, the question to ask is not 'do we cancel?' but 'is it really necessary and appropriate for this event to go ahead?'

7. Proclamation Day

As stated in 2 above, Proclamation Day is set to be the day following the death of the Sovereign (Day of Death plus 1).

- (i) The Proclamation will be made at St. James Palace at 11.00hrs (or 14:00hrs on a Sunday)

The Proclamation is then cascaded.

- (ii) At noon on Proclamation Day it will be read at the Royal Exchange in the City of London.

At noon on D+2 it will be read:

- (iii) In Edinburgh by Lord Lyon King of Arms at Mercat Cross and at the drawbridge to Edinburgh Castle; in Cardiff by Wales Herald Extraordinary at Cardiff Castle; in Belfast by Norroy and Ulster King of Arms
- (iv) Once those Proclamations have been read it is appropriate for the Proclamation to be read at County, City, Borough and Parish level if they so choose. The Chair will make the decision regarding this.
- (v) The Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset will cause the Proclamation to be read at County level at 12.30hrs.

8. Dress Code

Whilst flags (nationally) are at half-mast it is discretionary for black ties/scarves or more formal clothing in muted colours to be worn by the Chairman, Councillors and staff.

On occasions where a full Council meeting falls during the period of mourning or on the death of the Sovereign and when the Proclamation is read it is discretionary for all Councillors and members of staff to wear a black or dark coloured tie/scarf, small rosette, black armband, or other similar indication of acknowledgement of the period of mourning.

Any item of dress code would need to be self-supplied.

9. Timings

For Royal or state funerals planning largely assumes that when a death occurs it will be on an ordinary day of the week and the funeral will follow a given number of days later.

When reports of any death of a prominent figure or elected member are received, it will be possible to take a view of whether it is a 'straightforward' time of the year, which gives a clear run, or whether other elements like Easter or Christmas are likely to complicate matters. A Royal funeral will not take place on a Sunday.

Should Remembrance Sunday fall between D and the day of the funeral it is likely that the National commemorations would go ahead in some form, but again the lead on local ceremonies should be taken from indications on television or B&NES Council, and in the media of plans for the Cenotaph.

10. Saltford Parish Council Meetings

On the death of the Sovereign or prominent national figure, Saltford Parish Council business will continue as usual but with respect and grief.

In accordance with the SOs and legislation, Council meetings and certain events cannot take place during periods of national mourning. Similarly, 'three clear days' cannot include days which are part of an official period of national mourning. Outside of official periods of national mourning, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and/or Vice Chair, may decide to postpone a meeting i.e. should a meeting occur on the same day as the death of the Sovereign, prominent national figure or elected member.

On the death of an elected member of SPC the Clerk, in consultation with all Councillors, will with the Chair and/or Vice Chair decide if a meeting will go ahead or be postponed.

11. Marking a Silence

The death of a Prominent National Figure may be marked by a National Silence.

On the death of the Sovereign there will be a Two Minute Silence at 11.00am on the day of the funeral (D+10).

It may be that Silence will be kept for other members of the Royal Family or other prominent national figure; advised for the day of the funeral as part of the funeral service.

12. Letter of Condolence

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 Sovereigns deaths, in which case they should be sent to the new Sovereigns Private Secretary asking that condolences be passed on to the new Sovereign).

In each case one 'official' letter of condolence will be sent on behalf of the Parish Council by the Parish Clerk. The Parish Council may similarly send a letter of condolence to the next of kin of a prominent national figure or the next of kin of an elected member.

13. Public Holiday

The day of the State Funeral will be a Public Holiday, unless D10 falls on a Saturday.

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