



# **Policy and Protocol for Death Of the Sovereign or other Senior Royal or National Figure**

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## Introduction

Wimborne Minster Town Council recognises that a formal procedure is required to manage the occurrence of the death of a senior national figure or local holder of high office.

Guidance has been made available from the National Association of Civic Officers (May 2019) for the procedure to follow upon the death of the Sovereign, other senior members of the Royal Family, senior national figures or local holders of high office.

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 or Downing Street.

This procedure should be implemented by the Town Clerk or in her/his absence, the Assistant Town Clerk, Mayor or Mayor's Secretary.

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. This would be at the discretion of the Mayor and Town Clerk/Assistant Town Clerk.

## When the Policy is to be used:

This Policy should be used in the event of the death of:

### Group 1

- HM the Queen
- HRH the Duke of Edinburgh
- HRH the Prince of Wales
- HRH the Duchess of Cornwall
- HRH the Duke of Cambridge
- HRH the Duchess of Cambridge
- Any progeny of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge
- HRH the Duke of Sussex
- HRH the Duchess of Sussex
- Any progeny of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex
- HRH The Duke of York
- HRH The Earl of Wessex
- HRH The Princess Royal

### Group 2

- The Prime Minister
- Any former Prime Minister
- The Member of Parliament for the Town's Constituency

## Implementation of the Policy on hearing of the death

Wimborne Minster Town Council's mourning protocol will be implemented on **the formal announcement by Buckingham Palace / Downing Street** of the death of any one of those persons named on page 4.

Implementation will be authorised by the Town Clerk or in his/her absence, the Assistant Town Clerk, Mayor or Mayor's Secretary.

## Flying the Flag

Once the formal announcement has been received, at the request of the Town Clerk/Assistant Town Clerk the Union Flag at the Town Council offices will be immediately flown 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.

## Flying the Flag on Proclamation Day (D + 1) following the death of the Sovereign

**On Proclamation Day (D+1)** (the day 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).

On the day following Proclamation Day (D+2) the flag will be returned to half-mast at 1300 hrs.

If the death occurs late in the day arrangements for the ceremonial matters on D + 1 may not be put in place swiftly enough and so timings may change. Guidance will be given by Buckingham Palace/Downing Street.

## Flying the Flag on Subsequent Days

Following the death of the Sovereign or other members of the Royal Family identified in Group 1 on page 4, the flag will continue to fly at half-mast until 0800 hours on the morning following the funeral.

For those identified in Group 2 on page 4 the flag will fly at half-mast on the day of the announcement of the death and the day of the funeral only.

## The Day After Proclamation Day (D + 2)

The Town Mayor will read a statement from the Town Council and the Proclamation at 1400 hrs outside The Minster on the day following Proclamation (D+2). See Appendix A. This will be a public event and those individuals named in Appendix B on page 9 will be invited.

The statement from the Town Council will appear on the home page of the website.

## Book of Condolence

On the first working day following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign, HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, HRH the Prince of Wales or HRH the Duchess of Cornwall, a Book of Condolence will be opened at the Town Council offices.

Consideration will be given at the time whether Books of Condolence should be opened for other members of the Royal Family.

Book of Condolence will be open from 0930hrs – 1300 hrs Monday to Friday and will remain open until 1300 on the day following the funeral

When the Book of Condolence has been closed, the Town Clerk/Assistant Town Clerk will make arrangements for the final version to be lodged in local archives).

## Day of the Funeral of the Sovereign (D + 10)

The funeral of the Sovereign will take place 10 days after the day of death (unless this would mean it would fall on a Sunday in which case it will then be D + 11). Other events may also mean that the date of the funeral will change e.g. if it would clash with Christmas/Easter/ Remembrance Day.

On the death of the Sovereign there will be a two minute silence at 11 am on the day of the funeral. This will be held outside The Minster.

A toll of bells will be agreed in liaison with The Minster. The recommendation is one ring for each year of the Sovereign's life with an 8 second gap between each toll.

## Focal Point for Grief

Upon the death of a member of the Royal Family or a senior national figure, members of the public may wish to visit a designated area as a focal point for grief. This may be to lay flowers and other tributes as well as to reflect and remember.

There will be a designated area at The Minster for members of the public to lay flowers etc. The exact place will be agreed with the Rector at the time and this will be communicated to the public as part of the Statement issued by the Mayor, see D + 2 above.

Tributes will be carefully removed within one week after the state funeral. On removal floral tributes will either be offered to a local care home or composted. Other tributes will be disposed of sensitively and appropriately.

## Events During the Period of Mourning

The programme of engagements undertaken by the Town Mayor during the period of mourning will be reviewed to ensure it is appropriate and that it sits comfortably with the national mood. If events do continue they should begin with a period of silence.

Councillors will be informed in advance that a Town Council meeting held during the mourning period will be preceded with a 2 minute silence.

## Dress Code

When conducting public business, councillors may wish to consider wearing black ties/dark clothing on the day of death, day of the funeral and period of public mourning.

Black arm bands will be available for the councillors and staff.

On the death of the Sovereign, the Chains of office will not be worn by the Mayor during the period of mourning and instead the badge of office will be worn on a black neck ribbon. A black rosette will be added to the Mayor's robes.

## Public Observation of Silence

For other senior members of the Royal Family, the funeral will take place eight days after the day of death.

When the death of a senior member of the Royal Family is to be marked by a two-minute Silence, an announcement will be made by Buckingham Palace.

The Town Mayor will lead a Public Silence outside The Minster on the day of the funeral. There will be an open invitation to Councillors and the public to attend.

The death of an individual listed in Group 2 on page 2 will be marked by a 1 minute silence.

## Letter of Condolence from WMTC

As soon as practical, a letter of condolence will be drafted and circulated to the Town Mayor for approval before dispatch. See Appendix C.

## Appendix A

### **Statement by Mayor and reading of Proclamation - To be read at 2 pm the day after Proclamation Day (D Day + 2)**

The Mayor (or in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor) to say:

*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-reigning Monarch.*

*Floral tributes may be laid on at The Minster Green and a Book of Condolence has been opened at the Town Hall. and will be available to sign until (put in date D + 11).*

*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 Wimborne Minster of 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 were 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. The High Sheriff of Dorset discharged that duty earlier today and now, with my humble duty, I now bring the words of the Proclamation to the residents of Wimborne Minster.*

*Ladies and Gentlemen, The Proclamation of the Accession:*

#### **READ THE PROCLAMATION**

(This will be available from the Buckingham Palace website [www.royal.gov.uk](http://www.royal.gov.uk) or the Privy Council website [www.privacy-council.org.uk](http://www.privacy-council.org.uk).)

At the end of the Proclamation the Mayor will say: **God Save The King**

Official Guests repeat: **God Save The King**

All present join in saying: **God Save the King**

One verse of the National Anthem to be played.

**Finally, the Mayor will call for three cheers for His Majesty The King.**

Dispersal.

## Appendix B

### **Invitees to reading of Proclamation on D + 2**

All members of the Council

Town Clerk

Past Mayors

Freemen/women

High Sheriff

## Appendix C

### **Letter of condolence to Buckingham Palace on death of HM the Queen**

**FAO: Private Secretary of new Sovereign**

Dear

As we learn of the sad news that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has passed away the thoughts of the citizens of Wimborne Minster are with the Royal Family as they grieve for their Mother, Grandmother and Great-Grandmother.

The Queen demonstrated extraordinary dedication and commitment to duty throughout her Reign and did so with a graceful strength and admirable determination. She ruled throughout decades of change, from the dark post war years through to the new horizons of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, providing essential continuity for the nation.

This is a period of public grief when people who do not know each other come together to mourn a national figure who has been consistent throughout our lives and for whom we have collective affection despite not knowing her personally.

Please pass the condolences of the Town Council to HM King ..... A Book of Condolence has been opened at the Town Hall and will be retained in local archives in due course.

Yours sincerely

Town Mayor