



Protocol: Death of a Senior Figure

Adopted: 4 May 2021 [Amended: Apr 2025]

Introduction

This protocol sets out the action to be taken by Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe Parish Council [LW&GC PC] in the event of the death of any of the following persons:

1. The Sovereign
2. A senior member of the royal family (see Appendix A)
3. The Prime Minister
4. A former Prime Minister
5. The Member of Parliament for this constituency (Kenilworth & Southam)
6. A serving member of Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe Parish Council
7. It might also be appropriate to use elements from this protocol when responding to an incident which has led to a large number of deaths, for example: a train crash or terrorist attack.

Implementation of the Protocol

Plans to mark a death should be implemented only when a **formal announcement** has been made. So, 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...*")

For the Sovereign or another senior member of the Royal Family the decision will be delegated to the Parish Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman. For other figures, there may need to be consultation at the time on the appropriate ways in which the death should be marked.

PROTOCOL ON THE DEATH OF THE SOVEREIGN OR A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

The day of the death of the Sovereign will be known as D-Day, then D+1, D+2 etc., through the ten days of national Mourning. The state funeral will be held on D+10, except if this date falls on a Sunday, when the funeral will be on D+11.

Flags [NOTE: At the time of drafting this protocol, there is no official flagpole in LW&GC]

On the formal announcement of death, flags will be lowered to half-mast until 0800hrs on the morning following the funeral. For other members of the Royal family (without HRH), flags may be lowered to half-mast on the day of the announcement and on the day of the funeral.

On Proclamation Day flags will, at the start of the day, be flying at half-mast. All flags will then be flown from the mast-head from 1100hrs on Proclamation Day (D+1) to coincide with the reading of the Principal Proclamation, until 1630hrs the following day, (D+2).

Proclamation Day

In the case of the death of the Sovereign, the day following the death D+1 will be Proclamation Day, which is the day the new Sovereign is proclaimed at St James' Palace and the proclamation cascades down until D+2.

- D+1 1100hrs (or 1400hrs if it is a Sunday) - The proclamation is read at St James's Palace
 12 noon - The proclamation is read at the Royal Exchange in the City of London

Revision Due:

D+2 1200 noon - The proclamation is read at Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff
1400hrs - The High Sheriff of Warwickshire reads the Proclamation at County level
After 1600hrs - The Chairman reads the Proclamation at Parish level

For information about the Proclamation, please see Appendix B

For a list of suggested invited guests to the Proclamation, please see Appendix C

Books of Condolence

Books of Condolence will be opened on the first working day after the day of death D+1.

The Chairman may wish to agree a form of words for a message, expressing sorrow at the news of the death. This will be included in the front of the book of condolence and on the Royal e-condolence book and may also be the form of words included in a press release or on the home page of the website.

All books will be placed in an easily accessible location [Leek Wootton Village Hall or Committee Room (or in conjunction with the Church)], though it is important the place is quiet enough to enable those signing the books a moment of privacy and quiet reflection.

Books will be placed on a good-sized table with suitable cloth, along with a portrait of the deceased and a small arrangement of flowers. a chair and a supply of pens.

A good supply of paper with a black border and wide left-hand margin, hole-punched to fit in a loose-leaf binder will be provided and kept well stocked. A loose-leaf folder offers an opportunity to act if the book is defaced or offensive comments included. LW&GC PC will store the condolence book, picture, frame, etc., in its locked cupboard at Leek Wootton Village Hall.

Review

The Chairman and Parish Clerk will review all comments. Pages including any questionable comments should be quietly removed until such time as a decision can be taken by the Chairman or Parish Clerk on whether they should be permanently excluded.

Closing the Book of Condolence

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). Books of Condolence are essentially a local record of the sentiments expressed by local people on the death of a national figure. As such, they should form part of the LW&GC PC's archive, so that future generations are able easily to gain access to them and find out the way in which national events were marked in the area.

It is simply not feasible for every book from all sad occasions to form part of the Royal Archives. However, in a letter of condolence from the Chairman reference should be made to the Book of Condolence and its existence in the local archives.

The letter will then be stored in the Royal Archives and act as an effective cross reference.

Online Book of Condolence

LW&GC PC will provide a link to the Buckingham Palace e-Book of Condolence on the website: www.royal.uk and other local e-Books of Condolence, e.g. Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council or Coventry Cathedral (if they have provided their own)

Period of National Mourning

The Government will publish advice on the Period of National Mourning.

The advice from the National Association of Civic Officers (NACO) and National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is, *"there is an official period of mourning for eight days set out in the Government guidance. As a result these days should be excluded for calculation of time and any timescales that end in this period should be postponed until the first day after the period in*

accordance with section 243 of the Local Government Act 1972. We do not draw a distinction between national and public mourning."

From the day of the death until the day after the funeral, careful thought will be given to the types of events and activities which the Parish Council or Chairman should host or attend.

Scheduled Parish Council meetings will be reviewed for postponement or rescheduling. Also, any civic lunches, dinners, receptions and so forth, 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 need to be reached with great sensitivity.

Visits to local schools and care homes may be scheduled, for the Chairman to spend time with the community, talking about the events that are unfolding. This again will need to be done with great sensitivity and should not be pressed upon a Chairman who does not feel comfortable taking on such a role.

Church Services & Bellringing

Clerk and Chairman to liaise with Vicar of All Saints' Church about Church Services. Parish Councillors will be sent details of any services being held in the Parish. *Local parish churches will be encouraged to hold services on the eve of the State Funeral.*

Flowers

A designated area will be allocated as a place for residents and visitors to lay flowers during the period of mourning. Should residents wish to lay flowers during this time, they may do so in the *memorial arboretum area on Leek Wootton War Memorial Recreation Ground*. It is important to note that all of the plastic wrap should be removed before laying them. At the end of the mourning period, at 0900hrs the day following the funeral, there will be a ceremonial removal of the flowers.

All flowers will then be taken away to be composted, with the compost a tree will be planted at a location in the community, agreed by the Parish Council, in memory of the Sovereign.

Dress Code

A view will be taken locally on what is the correct dress in the event of the death of a senior national figure. Whilst flags are at half-mast, it will be appropriate for black ties, ribbons and arms bands to be worn by Council members and senior officers at official functions.

Please note; the black arm bands are for Members of Council and staff. LW&GC PC will store an adequate supply in its locked cupboard at *Leek Wootton Village Hall*.

Silence

On the death of the Sovereign there will be a two-minute silence at 1100hrs on the day of the funeral (D+10). Which will be a public holiday (unless D+10 is a Saturday).

It may be that silence will be observed 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.

The Chairman may wish to lead the silence in an appropriate public place and thought needs to be given as to where that might be, who will be present and how the beginning and end of the silence will be marked (perhaps the firing of a maroon, a drum roll, bugle call or similar). It should also be established in the protocol how this information will be made public. The list of suggested guests is detailed in appendix 4 and the information will be made public through our website, social media pages and through the local radio stations.

For a list of suggested invited guests to a Public Observance of Silence, please see Appendix C

Website

After the official announcement of the death of *the Sovereign* or *Prince of Wales* from Buckingham Palace, LW&GC PC will activate a website holding page with a black background featuring: a

photograph of the deceased, the year of birth to the year of death, and links to the following information: Council Services, Condolence Books, Church Services, Flowers and Flying of Flags. The holding page can be closed, for visitors to then access the main homepage. Each of the links will lead to a website page with the relevant information. The website mourning page has been drafted with all the correct information but remains unpublished. The page will be activated as soon as an official announcement is made.

Instructions on how to make required changes to the website are in Appendix D [NOT FOR PUBLICATION].

Letters 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 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 passed to the new Sovereign.* In each case, other than exceptional local circumstances, one letter of condolence only should be sent.

PROTOCOL ON THE DEATH OF THE PRIME MINISTER, A FORMER PRIME MINISTER OR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR KENILWORTH & SOUTHAM

Flags [NOTE: At the time of drafting this protocol, there is no official flagpole in LW&GC]

This may be subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case, as are foreign rulers and other figures. Authoritative information on flag flying can be found on the Gov.UK website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/designated-days-for-union-flag-flying>

Ordinarily it would be expected to fly any flag as follows:

- At half-mast for on the day of the announcement of the death
- On subsequent days the usual local arrangements will resume
- At half-mast on the day of the funeral

Chairman's Statement

The Chairman will issue a statement expressing the sadness of the Council and community at the news of the death. It will also contain information about any related arrangements.

The statement will appear on the LW&GC PC website.

Dress code will apply as above.

PROTOCOL ON THE DEATH OF A SERVING MEMBER OF LEEK WOOTTON & GUY'S CLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

Flags [NOTE: At the time of drafting this protocol, there is no official flagpole in LW&GC]

Any flag will be flown as follows:

- At half-mast for on the day of the announcement of the death
- On subsequent days the usual local arrangements will resume
- At half-mast on the day of the funeral

Announcement

The Clerk will inform all members of the Council via email (or telephone) and inform the Monitoring Officer at Warwick District Council.

The Chairman will issue a statement to be read at the next Parish Council meeting and to appear on the LW&GC PC website. A minute's silence may be observed at the meeting and a resolution to send condolences to the family may be considered.

The Casual Vacancy will be advertised the day after the funeral.

TIMELINE OF ACTIONS

	In advance	Day of Official Announcement	Proclamation of New Sovereign	1 st Working Day after Announcement	Funeral	After Funeral
The Sovereign	In storage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condolence book • Portrait • Black armbands/ties • Black floristry ribbon Draft website tribute page	10-Days of Official Mourning begins Flags to half-mast until day after funeral, except for Proclamation Day Activate website tribute page + info Chairman & Clerk to consider events: cancellation / re-scheduling	Chairman may attend other proclamation ceremonies LW&GC Proclamation at 1600hrs on D+2	Open Condolence Book Chairman's tribute to be included at front of book, on website and Royal e-Condolence Book Circulate any tribute and information about e-Condolence Books, flower-laying and events (e.g. website / Facebook / WhatsApp)	Public Holiday (unless on Saturday) National Two-Minute Silence at 1100hrs	By 0900hrs flag to full-mast or removed Remove flowers for composting & organise tree-planting Close Condolence Book at 1700hrs on day after funeral. Archive. Letter to Palace advising of book's existence Deactivate website tribute page Read tribute and consider observing silence at next PC meeting
HRH The Prince of Wales	In storage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condolence book • Portrait • Black armbands/ties • Black floristry ribbon Draft website tribute page	Flags to half-mast until day after funeral Activate website tribute page + info Chairman & Clerk to consider events and postpone if appropriate		Open Condolence Book Chairman's tribute to be included at front of book, on website and Royal e-Condolence Book Circulate any tribute and information about e-Condolence Books and, flower-laying events	A National Silence to be observed as per guidance	By 0900hrs flag to full-mast or removed Remove flowers for composting and consider tree-planting Close Condolence Book at 1700hrs on day after funeral. Archive. Letter to Palace advising of book's existence Deactivate website tribute page Read tribute and consider observing silence at next PC meeting

TIMELINE OF ACTIONS

	In advance	Day of Official Announcement	Proclamation of New Sovereign	1 st Working Day after Announcement	Funeral	After Funeral
Senior Royals		Flags to half-mast until day after funeral, subject to special command by Sovereign Chairman to prepare tribute. Chairman & Clerk to consider events and postpone if appropriate		Duchess of Cornwall: as above. For other Senior Royals, Chairman & Clerk to consider whether a Condolence Book is appropriate Circulate any tribute and information about e-Condolence Books, flower-laying and events	A National Silence to be observed as per guidance	Remove any flowers for composting Close any Condolence Book Read tribute and consider observing silence at next PC meeting
Prime Minister, Former PM or MP		Flags to half-mast for day (unless Government directs otherwise) Chairman to prepare tribute		For notable figures, Chairman & Clerk to consider whether a Condolence Book is appropriate Circulate any tribute and information about e-Condolence Books, flower-laying and events	Flags to half-mast for day (unless Government directs otherwise) A National Silence may be observed as per guidance	Remove any flowers for composting Close any Condolence Book Read tribute and consider observing silence at next PC meeting
Serving Parish Councillor		Chairman to prepare tribute Local government bodies are permitted to fly the Union Flag at half-mast to mark local losses		Circulate tribute and information about funeral	Council representative(s) attend funeral Local government bodies are permitted to fly the Union Flag at half-mast to mark local losses.	Read tribute and consider observing silence and letter of condolence to family at next PC meeting Tribute to be included in article submitted to The Link magazine

TIMELINE OF ACTIONS

	In advance	Day of Official Announcement	Proclamation of New Sovereign	1 st Working Day after Announcement	Funeral	After Funeral
Local or national disaster		Local government bodies are permitted to fly the Union Flag at half-mast to mark local as well as national commemorations or losses		Chairman & Clerk to consider whether a Condolence Book is appropriate Circulate any tribute and information about e-Condolence Books, flower-laying and events (e.g. website / Facebook / WhatsApp)	<i>Depending on nature of incident this may be a Memorial Day or similar, not a 'funeral'</i> Local government bodies are permitted to fly the Union Flag at half-mast to mark local as well as national commemorations or losses A National Silence to be observed as per guidance	<i>Depending on nature of incident this may be a Memorial Day or similar, not a 'funeral'</i> Remove any flowers for composting Close any Condolence Book Read tribute and consider observing silence at next PC meeting

Appendix A:

Senior members of the royal family

Senior Members are styled their Royal Highness as listed below:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. King Charles III | |
| 2. Queen Camilla | |
| 3. William, Prince of Wales | 1 (Heir Apparent) |
| 4. Catherine, Princess of Wales | |
| 5. Prince George of Wales | 2 |
| 6. Princess Charlotte of Wales | 3 |
| 7. Prince Louis of Wales | 4 |
| 8. Harry, Duke of Sussex* | 5 |
| 9. Meghan, Duchess of Sussex* | |
| 10. Prince Archie of Sussex* | 6 |
| 11. Princess Lilibet of Sussex* | 7 |
| 12. Prince Andrew, Duke of York | 8 |
| 13. Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh | 11 |
| 14. Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh | |
| 15. Anne, Princess Royal | |

Bold text denotes 'working members of the Royal family'

* The Duke & Duchess of Sussex are included here because, whilst they are not working Senior Royals and have given up using their HRH titles, the Duke retains the title of Prince, having been born one. They will remain on this list until/unless official advice to the contrary is received.

If the death happens during a national health crisis or similar

The death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh on 9 April 2021, occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. This affected all face-to-face and contact activities, so there were no physical Books of Condolence, only e-Books of Condolence (the PC posted links to Royal.uk, WCC and Coventry Cathedral on its website), no flower-laying, donations were requested in lieu of flowers, either to a charity supported by the Duke, or of the donor's choice (the PC posted a link to an article on Royal.uk that detailed the Duke's charities). An open-air Service of Thanksgiving was held in conjunction with the Church at 1700hrs on the evening after the funeral (18 April) in the church car park.

Follow guidance that is provided and encourage residents to follow any guide-lines

Appendix B:

Proclamation Day

Schedule

In the case of the death of the Sovereign, the day 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's Palace at 1100hrs (or 1400hrs 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 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 and in Belfast by Norroy and Ulster King of Arms.

Once these Proclamations have been made it is appropriate for the Proclamation to be read at County, City, Borough and then at Parish level. High Sheriffs will read the Proclamation at County level along with Lord-Lieutenants. Most High Sheriffs are expected to make their readings at 1400hrs on D+2. It is suggested that local civic leaders should therefore make their readings at or after 1600hrs.

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 following issues:

- Who will read the Proclamation? *[You may also wish to have the proclamation read by the High Sheriff (if available) one of your Deputy Lieutenants or the Chairman - check with your local Lieutenancy Office for procedures they have in place.]*
- 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?
- Who will be in the platform party?

Proclamation Day

On Proclamation Day flags will, at the start of the day, be flying at half-mast. All flags will then be flown from the mast-head from 1100hrs on Proclamation Day (D+1) to coincide with the reading of the Principal Proclamation, until 1630hrs the following day, (D+2). This is due to the official schedule of the Proclamation (see below for more details), it will be read in London on Proclamation Day (D+1), then read at noon in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff on the day following Proclamation Day (D+2). Once those Proclamations have been made at 1400 hrs on D+2, High Sheriffs will then read the Proclamation at County level and Lord-Lieutenants will be alongside them.

Protocol

The key points arising from the review are:

Flag Timings:

having flown at half-mast since the announcement of the death of the Sovereign, all flags will be raised to full-mast at 1100hrs on D+1 (the day after death), when the Proclamation is read at St James's Palace in London. They will continue to fly at half-mast until 1300hrs on D+2 to allow for the Accession Proclamation to be read out in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh. These times are fixed as part of the National plan for mourning and should not be interpreted locally. It is important that all flags are raised to full-mast at 1100hrs on D+1 and are returned to half-mast following the Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe Proclamation reading on D+2.

Reading of the Proclamation:

There is benefit in coordinating the reading of the Proclamation on D+2 after it has been read in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh. The High Sheriff's Association is encouraging its members to agree that High Sheriffs will read the Proclamation at 1400hrs on D+2. In some areas Mayors are being invited to be present at that reading so that they can then return to their areas and read the Proclamation within their own communities. It is strongly recommended that Mayors, Chairs and Chairmen of Councils should therefore aim to read the Proclamation from 1600hrs onwards. It is recognised that in some large rural areas, it will not be possible for a civic leader present at the County reading by the High Sheriff to return that swiftly and that is why that degree of flexibility has been included in the timings.

Form of Words:

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's 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 Chairman:

*"We come together this afternoon following the passing of our late Sovereign, ***. 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 service 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 Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe 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 rein.

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 which the High Sheriff of the County of Cambridgeshire discharged earlier this afternoon and with my humble duty I now call on [Name] to read the Proclamation to the people of Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Proclamation of the Accession."

READS THE PROCLAMATION

At the end of the Proclamation, the Chairman will say "God Save the King."

Official guests will repeat "God Save the King."

All present join in saying "God Save the King."

The band (if there is one present) will play one verse of the National Anthem.

Finally, the Chairman will call for three cheers for His Majesty the King.

Dispersal.

Appendix C: Invitation List

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 silence.

- The Chairman and all Members of the Council
- Warwick District Council Chairman & Executive Leader
- Senior Council Officers
- Deputy Lieutenants
- Former Chairmen
- Schools
- Church Leaders
- Care Homes
- Other Community Groups

Appendix D: Website [NOT FOR GENERAL PUBLICATION]



Appendix E: Flags

Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe Parish Council does not currently have a flagpole. This advice is recorded for future reference and where advice may be sought by residents/businesses that do have flagpoles.

The following information about the Union Flag is from the College of Arms website.

Q. How should the Union Flag be flown?

A. The Union Flag must be flown the correct way up. This is with the wider diagonal white stripe above the red diagonal stripe in the half nearest to the flag pole. The wider diagonal white stripe should be above the red diagonal stripe at the top left-hand side of the Flag nearest the flag pole.

Q. What is half-mast?

A. 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 flag pole. If more than one flag is flown, they should all be raised at half-mast or not flown at all. Flags of foreign nations should not be flown unless their country is also observing mourning.

Q. When should the Union Flag be flown at half-mast?

A. Occasions on which the Union Flag is to be flown at half-mast:

- from the announcement of the death of the Sovereign until the funeral

In the following cases, half-mastings will be by special command from Her Majesty:

- the death of a member or near relative of the Royal Family or the funeral of members of the Royal Family
- the funerals of foreign Rulers
- the funerals of Prime Ministers and ex-Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom
- the funerals of First Ministers and ex-First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (unless otherwise commanded by the Sovereign, this only applies to flags in their respective countries)
- any other occasions as commanded

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will inform Government departments of any other occasions when Her Majesty has given a special command. The College of Arms will publish details of half-masting instructions for the information of local and national government and any other interested bodies or individuals.

Local government bodies are permitted to fly the Union Flag at half-mast to mark local as well as national commemorations or losses.

<https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/resources/union-flag-faqs>

NOTE: If your flag pole is at an angle the Union Flag should be flown to full mast, with black cravats attached (contact your local florist for a role of black floral ribbon).