



Portishead Town Council Death of a Senior Figure Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the action to be taken in the event of the death of the following persons:

- a) HM The Queen
- b) HRH The Duke of Edinburgh
- c) HRH The Prince of Wales
- d) HRH The Duchess of Cornwall
- e) HRH The Duke of Cambridge
- f) HRH The Duchess of Cambridge
- g) HRH Prince George of Cambridge
- h) HRH Princess Charlotte of Cambridge
- i) HRH Prince Louis of Cambridge
- j) HRH The Duke of York
- k) HRH The Princess Royal
- l) HRH The Earl of Wessex
- m) HRH The Countess of Wessex
- n) The Prime Minister
- o) The Member of Parliament for North Somerset
- p) A serving member of Portishead Town Council

Plans will only be implemented following an official announcement. Upon notification, the Town Clerk will advise all members that the policy is to be implemented.

This policy should be implemented by the Town Clerk or in his/her absence, the Assistant to the Town Clerk or the Chairman of the Council.

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 Town Clerk and Chairman of the Council.

Reference should also be made to the North Somerset Council death of a senior figure policy and the national Operation London Bridge protocol, details of which are filed in the PTC policies (shared drive) folder.

2. Implementation of the Policy on hearing of the death

Portishead 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 above.

3. Flying the Flag

Once the formal announcement has been received, at the request of the Town Clerk the Union Flag located outside the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead, 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.

Upon receiving notification of the death of a senior figure (as listed above), the Town Clerk will instruct that the flag to be lowered to half-mast.

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.

In the event of a local or national disaster, the Town Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman of the Council, will instruct that the flag to be lowered to half-mast if deemed appropriate.

Flags should be flown at half-mast on the following occasions:

From the announcement of the death until the funeral of the Sovereign, except on Proclamation Day when flags are flown at full mast following the proclamation.

From the announcement of the death until the funeral of a member of the Royal Family styled 'Royal Highness', subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case.

On the day of the announcement of the death and on the day of the funeral of other members of the Royal Family, subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case.

The funerals of foreign rulers, subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case.

The funerals of Prime Ministers and ex-Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case

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The funerals of First Ministers and ex-First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case. Unless otherwise commanded by the Sovereign, this only applies to flags in their respective countries.

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 strictly adhered to.

4. Book of Condolence and Marking a Silence

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

In the event of another member of the Royal Family or notable person, the Town Clerk in discussion with the Chairman, will judge public feeling as to whether a book of condolence should be opened locally.

The Book of Condolence will be available during the Town Councils office opening hours and will remain until the close of the council offices on the day following the funeral. When a Condolence book has been closed, it will be bound and retained with the Councils official archives.

Where 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 Chairman of the Council will lead a public silence outside of the Town Council office with Town Councillors. The Clerk will be responsible regarding arrangements for any media access.

The Chair of the Council will issue a statement via the Town Clerk expressing the sadness of the Council and community of Portishead at the news of the death.

The statement will also appear on the home page of the website. The statement will confirm that the flag is to be flown at half-mast and will give details of the Book of Condolence. The public observing of the silence will also be cited.

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

5. 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 such 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 for members of the public to lay flowers etc. The exact place will be agreed at the time and this will be communicated to the public.

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.

6. Events During the Period of Mourning

The programme of engagements undertaken by the Town Council 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 as 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 two-minute silence.

7. Dress Code

During the official mourning period Councillors and the Clerk will be encouraged to dress soberly on official business – dark clothing and black ties should be worn when representing the Council. This is for a minimum for the first day after the announcement, Proclamation Day, for any official minutes silence and on the day of the funeral.

8. Website

For the deaths of the Queen, Prince Philip and Prince Charles the home page of the Town Councils website will be overwritten with a black page carrying a portrait of the Senior Royal with a tab link to the normal home page of the website. The website will be restored to normal the day after the official period of mourning.

9. The Death of The Prime Minister or Member of Parliament for North Somerset

The flag will fly at half-mast on the day of the announcement of the death. On subsequent days, the usual local arrangements will resume until the day of the funeral when the flag will again fly at half-mast.

The Chairman of the Council will issue a statement via the Town Clerk expressing the sadness of the Council and community of Portishead at the news of the death. The statement will also appear on the home page of the website. The statement will confirm that the flag is to be flown at half-mast.

As above the same will apply for dress code and events and activities.

10. The Death of a Serving Member of Portishead Town Council

The flag will fly at half-mast on the day of the announcement of the death and again on the day of the funeral when the flag will again fly at half-mast.

The Clerk will inform all members of the Council via email (or telephone) and a message posted on social media.

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

A minute silence will take place at the subsequent meeting of the council or committee.

Adopted by Town Council on 20 January 2021