

Operation Bridges - Activation Policy

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Document History

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This policy sets out the procedure which will be followed by Gainsborough Town Council (GTC) in the event of the death of member of the royal family. This includes H.M. The King (Operation Menai Bridge).

The policy shall only be enacted when an official announcement is made by Buckingham Palace. A period of state mourning will commence which, depending on which Monarch, could potentially last up to 10-days. The State Funeral shall be held on the 10th day; unless this falls on a Sunday in which case the funeral will be on the Monday.

The Town Clerk will be the lead for this procedure, in the event of the Royal death, in liaison with WLDC. The following actions will be undertaken to mark the occasion:

1. Implementation of the Protocol on hearing of the death

Plans to mark a death **must only be implemented** when a **formal announcement** has been made (i.e. where news agencies says “*reports are coming in of the death of*” **PLEASE TREAT WITH CAUTION**). Wherever possible wait for a more definite or specific announcement (i.e. “*it has been announced by Buckingham Palace/Downing Street that*”)

For the death of the Sovereign or another senior member of the Royal Family the Town Clerk or representative will cascade information through the community to ensure timely decisions and notifications can be made. For other figures, there may need to be consultation at the time on the ways in which such death should be marked.

2. Flag flying (see 10 below – Proclamation)

The Richmond Park the Union or National Flag is to be flown at half-mast:

Guidance on flag flying and what is meant by “half-mast” is shown at Appendix 1.

The Town Council retains responsibility for lowering the flag, however it is envisaged this will be carried out in conjunction with the Royal British Legion.

On the formal announcement of death, all flags are to be lowered to half-mast **until 08:00hrs** on the morning following the Funeral, when the flag is to be taken down.

In the case of the death of the **King**, the day following the death will be ‘**Proclamation Day**’ (the day when the new King is proclaimed (Operation Spring Tide)). On Proclamation Day flags must be flying 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 Principal Proclamation and until 13:00hrs on D+2.

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.

3. Books of Condolence

The provision of ‘Book(s) of Condolence’ will remain within the power of West Lindsey District Council. A Book of Condolence’ will be opened at the Guildhall in Gainsborough and further books will be opened at Market Rasen and Caistor Town Council offices.

4. Words of Condolence

A message of condolence from the Town Council as a corporate body shall be published on the website, noticeboards and social media and released to local press. Before publication the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor shall review the wording to ensure appropriateness.

Suggested words as follows:

Gainsborough Town Council has, with great sadness, received an announcement from the “XXX”, regarding the passing of “XXX” on “Date”. The Town Council joins the nation in expressing its deep sadness at this time, as we remember with affection and gratitude the lifetime of service given by “XXX”. Our thoughts are with “XXX”. The funeral will be broadcast, including a minute's silence at “XXX” on “Date “. The National Book of Condolence is available at “XXX” and will be closed at “Date and Time”

Words to be shared on the Website and social media after official announcement is made (as soon as possible, however resource dependent).

An external link to the Buckingham Palace e-Book of Condolence (www.royal.gov.uk) (or other appropriate site) will be made.

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 17:00hrs on the Friday).

5. 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 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 **one 'official'** letter of condolence will be sent on behalf of the Town Council by the Town Clerk.

6. In Mourning Veil on Website

After the Official Announcement GTC will activate a black homepage*, featuring a photo as provided by Buckingham palace, of the deceased, their birth and death years and links to the main website and information on local tributes (condolence books, any religious services or gatherings, location for laying of flowers and proclamations) will be added to the Council website until 8:00hrs D+11. A message from the Chair will be published. Website text shown at Appendix 2.

*This service is agreed with DrumBeat (website provider) and will be activated on the Town Clerks request (for The King only currently).

7. In Mourning Covering Image (for GTC Facebook Page)

From the first day after death a suitable cover image shall be published. This shall stay in place until the day after the state funeral has taken place. To be arranged by the Town Clerk.

8. Organisation of local events during the period of Mourning

On the death of the Sovereign 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, however, West Lindsey District Council along with partnership organisations, may organise

events or publicise events in order for those affected to come together and take part in well-planned, properly advertised and appropriate events.

The reading of the Proclamation by the High Sheriff of Lincoln at Lincoln Cathedral at 12:30hrs will stand as the first opportunity for people in the District to gather and this will be followed by the Proclamation reading in districts, towns and parishes across the United Kingdom. The Chairman of West Lindsey District Council will read the proclamation at The Guildhall in Gainsborough at approx. 15:00hrs.

Gainsborough Town Council would take guidance from Buckingham Palace or the Government regarding flowers but would encourage residents who wished to lay flowers place them at the War Memorial, Parnell Street or Richmond Park, around the flag pole.

with the following stipulations:

- All plastic wrap removed.
- Flowers will be collected and composted at the end of the Mourning Period (day after funeral, resource dependant).
- The Council reserves the right to move floral tributes to an alternative location if the War Memorial area becomes overcrowded.
- Flowers past their best will also be removed during the period on National Mourning.
- Tribute cards will be collected and placed with the Book of Condolence.

Church Services may also provide a setting for people to come together and collectively express sadness. Councillor and staff attendance at such services is encouraged to add to the sense of the community coming together in a unified expression of grief. It will be important to ensure that such services bring together other denominations and other faiths and they address the wants and needs of those within the parish having no personal beliefs to enable effective bringing together of the whole community.

9. Council procedure during the Period of Mourning

- Local Government Act 1972, s243 excludes days appointed for public mourning from the calculation of the three clear days' notice of a Council meeting, or anything that is required to be done. If the summons has been issued, the meeting cannot take place if any of the three clear days fall within the mourning period, if there are three clear days prior to D-Day then the meeting can go ahead but will be at the discretion of the Chair, with appropriate minutes silence and tribute, as appropriate.
- Any prearranged Council events may need to be cancelled during the 10-day state mourning period, all costs of cancelling the events will need to be incurred by the event organiser.

10. Proclamation

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

D+1	Proclamation read in London
D+2 at 12 noon	Proclamation read at Belfast, Cardiff & Edinburgh
D+2 at 12:30	High Sheriffs read County Proclamation
D+2 at 1:30 or thereafter	Civic leaders read local Proclamation (Chairman of the WLDC)

Flags for proclamation reading must be at full mast.

High Sheriffs have responsibility for reading the Proclamation within their county and will work closely with the county Lord-Lieutenant.

The Chairman of West Lindsey District Council to read the proclamation at a designated time and place, which will be publicised.

11. Dress Code & Mayor's Regalia

Whilst flags are at half-mast it is appropriate for black ties/scarves to be worn by the Mayor, 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 appropriate for all Councillors and members of staff to wear either a small black rosette (self-supplied) or a black arm band (issued by the Town Clerk (& to be returned)).

The Mayor will wear the jewel of the Mayor's chain on a black ribbon between the day of the death and on the day of the funeral.

12. Timings

It is difficult to plan for or give definitive information on timings.

For Royal 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.

That is because when you start to ask "what if?" it soon becomes almost impossible to anticipate every conceivable set of circumstances. Easter, Christmas and Remembrance Sunday all throw up possible problems.

Also, there remains a possibility that if death occurs late in the day, arrangements for the ceremonial on D+1 could not be put in place swiftly enough and may have to slip slightly.

NACO advises that Town Council's should remain flexible in respect of planning events surrounding the circumstances ensuring, in the case of the Monarch's death, subsequent Proclamation readings by High Sheriffs take place at 12:30hrs or later on the same day as the readings in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff, with readings by Mayors and Council Chairmen following on later in the day.

When reports of a death 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.

When the announcement is made of the first reading of the Proclamation at St. James's Palace, it will be possible to establish (via television coverage) when the Proclamations are being read in the three other capital cities. Local timings should be taken from this.

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 and in the media of plans for the Cenotaph.

13. Marking a Silence

The death of a Senior National figure may be marked by a National Two Minute Silence.

On the death of the Sovereign there will be a Two Minute Silence at 11:00hrs on the day of the funeral (D+10).

It may be that Silence will be kept for other members of the Royal Family; advised for 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 wait** for an official announcement on such arrangements or protocol from Buckingham Palace.

14. Flood Lights

Flood Lights on public buildings should be fitted with a purple filter during the ten-day period of public mourning or turned off.

15. Portraits

Portraits of His Majesty The King hanging in Council chambers / meeting rooms should have a black ribbon placed diagonally across one top corner. This should remain in place for one month, being the period of Royal Mourning. After this time the portrait of the new King should be put in place, with an alternative position of His Majesty The King's portrait found.

APPENDIX 1

Flags at Half-mast

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° from the vertical or have fixed point fixings. A mourning cravat can be used instead in this case (see illustration(s) below).

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 to the half-mast position. When it is being lowered from half-mast, it should again be raised to the top of the mast for a second before being fully lowered.

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.
- 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.
- Any other occasions where the Sovereign has given a special command.



APPENDIX 2

Website

Home Page

1948 – 20[??]

In memory of **[MONARCH TITLE]**

A Message of Condolence from our Mayor of Gainsborough,

Councillor **[NAME]**

[MAYOR'S QUOTE]

Church Services

We will list Gainsborough church services and services of remembrance here once details have been confirmed.

Please see below for information received so far

Service of Commemoration for the life of **[TITLE]** Late Majesty **[MONARCH NAME]**

[CHURCH NAME], Gainsborough

[DAY] [DATE] [MONTH] [YEAR] at **[TIME]**

[CHURCH NAME] does not yet have details of when a service of commemoration will be held, there will be Special services of:

Holy Communion this coming **[DAY] [DATE] [MONTH]** as follows:

[CHURCH NAME] [TIME]

[CHURCH NAME] [TIME]

Also **[CHURCH NAME]** is open until **[TIME]** today **[TODAY'S DATE]** and from **[TIME] – [TIME]** on **[DATE]** for anyone wishing to sign a Book of Condolence, to reflect, pray or light a candle. There is also a designated area near the church entrance for anyone wishing to leave a floral tribute.

More information can be found on their website **[WEBSITE LINK]** and Facebook page.

Flags & Proclamation

Gainsborough Town Council will fly the Union Flag at half-mast from the flagpole at Richmond House.

The Proclamation of Ascension will initially be read at **[CHURCH NAME]** on **[DATE]**.

Following this there is a protocol of reading the Proclamation of Ascension throughout the realm. The reading at local level will follow the reading at county level at **[CHURCH]** at **[TIME]** on **[DATE]**.

The Reading of the Proclamation of Ascension will be read in Gainsborough in Marshall's Yard in front of The Guildhall at **[TIME]** on **[DATE]**.

Flowers

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

Should you wish to lay flowers during the period of mourning, you may do so at

Richmond Park, around the flag pole

War Memorial, Parnell Street

Outside the Guildhall in Gainsborough

We would kindly ask that you remove any form of wrapping from the flowers before laying them.

At the end of the mourning period, the day after the funeral, the flowers will be removed.

All flowers will be taken away to be composted and a tree will be planted in the town, in memory of **[MONARCH TITLE]**, following the coronation of **[UPCOMING MONARCH NAME]**.

Book of Condolence

Books of condolence have been placed at The Guildhall in Gainsborough, for residents to express their sadness at this time.

Opening Times:

Saturday and Sunday: **[TIME]** to **[TIME]**

Monday to Friday: **[TIME]** to **[TIME]**

Alternatively, you may wish to sign Buckingham Palace's book of condolence online by visiting **[LINK]**

APPENDIX 3

Proposed Words for High Sheriffs Reading the Proclamation at County level

(subject to change by official instruction)

(for information only)

a) SPEECH

The High Sheriff (or in his / her absence the Under Sheriff / the immediate past High Sheriff) 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.

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 the County of Lincolnshire 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. It is that task which as High Sheriff of Lincolnshire and with my humble duty I will in a few moments discharge here today.

When I have read the Proclamation I will present copies to the Mayors and Chairmen of Boroughs and Districts within this County so that they in turn may return to read the Proclamation in their own communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Proclamation of the Accession.

b) THE HIGH SHERIFF WILL READ THE PROCLAMATION

At the end of the Proclamation the High Sheriff 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 may be played

c) The High Sheriff will call for three cheers for His Majesty The King.

As the High Sheriff leaves the dais he/she will pass along a line of District Council Chairmen/Mayors and hand each a copy of the Proclamation to read in their own communities. The Mayors and Chairmen will then follow the High Sheriff in Procession as the principal guests depart.

APPENDIX 4

Civic Funeral Protocol

The Council will normally attend a funeral formally only if the deceased was a past mayor or serving member of the Council and then only at the invitation of the deceased's family.

In relation to the death of a serving Mayor: -

- a) Try to obtain details of the circumstances – date/time/cause etc. in order that we can inform members/colleagues.
- b) Clarify details of the position they held in the Council – period they were member/chairman/chairman's lady etc
- c) The Council flag shall be flown at half-mast from the day of the death until sunset on the day of the funeral.
- d) A book of condolence will be opened at the Gainsborough Town Council offices.
- e) A formal letter of condolence or card will be sent from the Management Team. A separate condolence card will be sent from the Deputy Mayor.
- f) If possible, organise for a condolence bouquet to be sent to the spouse/family from the Chair and Members.
- g) Email all Members (except relatives) to advise of the death.
- h) Email all staff to advise of the death.
- i) Obtain details of the funeral arrangements and, if appropriate, advise Members and staff.

For the funeral of a Mayor who died in office the senior member of the Council will follow the coffin bearing the Mayoral Regalia on a black cushion. However, the overriding factor shall be that of the family's wishes and protocol will not dictate precedence or procedure in these circumstances.

Procedure notes:

- Agree with family/funeral director what the Council input into the service should be (if any).

In relation to the death of a serving Councillor: -

- a) Try to obtain details of the circumstances – date/time/cause etc. in order that we can inform members/colleagues.
- b) Clarify details of the position they held in the Council – period they were member/chairman/chairman's lady etc
- c) The Council flag shall be flown at half-mast from the day of the death until sunset on the day of the funeral.
- d) A formal letter of condolence or card will be sent from the Management Team. A separate condolence card will be sent from the Mayor.
- e) If possible, organise for a condolence bouquet to be sent to the spouse/family from the Chair and Members.
- f) Email all Members (except relatives) to advise of the death.
- g) Email all staff to advise of the death.
- h) Obtain details of the funeral arrangements and, if appropriate, advise Members and staff.
- i) Organise for the Mayor to attend funeral (unless family specifically request the Council not to attend). The Mayor should prioritise a funeral over other engagements and always attend themselves – it is not appropriate to send a deputy.

- j) The Mayor should wear black ribbon and medallion not Chains – Chain permission may need to be sought if funeral not in Gainsborough.
- k) If the Mayor is to attend and the chain is to be worn the church must be notified and the family of the deceased may then mention the attendance of the Mayor during the service if they so wish.

In relation to the death of a Past Mayor: -

- a) Clarify details of the year position they held in the Council – period they were member/Mayor.
- b) Obtain details of the funeral arrangements and, if appropriate, advise Members and staff.
- c) The Mayor should wear black ribbon and medallion not Chains – Chain permission may need to be sought if funeral not in Gainsborough.
- d) Organise for the Mayor to attend funeral (unless family specifically request the Council not to attend). The Mayor should prioritise a funeral over other engagements and always attend themselves – it is not appropriate to send a deputy.
- e) If the Mayor is to attend and the chain is to be worn the church must be notified and the family of the deceased may then mention the attendance of the Mayor during the service if they so wish.