

Operation London Bridge

Background

Planning for the death of a senior royal began many years ago and is no secret. Marking the death is not compulsory or mandatory but as a council we will need to think about what we might want to do in advance and judge what the expectations of our parishioners would be in this event.

There are plans established for all senior members of the Royal Family but the main two ones are as follows.

Operation London Bridge - HM the Queen (planning started in 1960)

Operation Menai Bridge - HRH the Prince of Wales (planning started in 1968)

National Mourning Timetable

For the Queen

D Day = date of the Death

D + 1 Proclamation Day (London) the proclamation is a statement that is read out declaring the new monarch – this could change if D + 1 if a bank holiday, Christmas, election day etc. follow Buckingham Palace's lead.

D + 2 = Proclamation Day (remainder of the country)

D + ? = Middle Sunday – Civic services (see Church Services)

D4-6 to D9 Lying in State

D10 = Day of the funeral (unless a Sunday where the funeral would be held on D11, the Monday)

Other than the Queen

D Day = Date of death

D+? = Middle Sunday (see Church services)

D2-4 to D7 Lying in state

D8 = Day of the funeral (unless a Sunday where the funeral would be held on D9, the Monday)

Events Planned during the period of national Mourning

As a parish council we will need to give thought to any planned events (judging the mood of the nation and our parishioners). Pre-arranged events will have to be postponed or cancelled especially those events seen as a celebration (Christmas lights, Village Fete etc.) The day of the Queens Funeral will be a public holiday unless D10 falls on a Saturday. We may need to look at our insurance cover for large events.

Meetings

The days of national mourning cannot be counted as CLEAR DAYS for issuing the summons and advertising the meeting. It will be necessary to re-schedule any meetings that have already been called or are due to take place during the period of national mourning and also may be necessary to postpone any meetings due to be held after the funeral for which there are not enough CLEAR DAYS.

At the first meeting held after the event it should start with a minute's silence.

Flags

Any flags the parish council display must be flown at half mast during the period of national mourning (see exceptions for proclamations.) Only Union Flags to be flown at half mast with all other flags removed.

If we have a vertical flagpole, the flag is flown a third way down the flagpole from the top, with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the flagpole.

If we have a flagpole at an angle the Union Flag should be flown at full mast, with black cravats attached (you will need black ribbon for this). A black cravat or ribbon is attached to the top of the flag, at the hoist.

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| D Day | Flags at half mast |
| D + 1 | Flags at half mast for until 11 am |
| D + 1 | At 11 am flags flown at full mast for the proclamation |
| D + 2 | At 1 pm (or after the proclamation) flags return to half mast |
| D + 11 | (cay after the funeral) 8 am return to full mast |

Website

It is best to have a page ready on our website and it should have the following information

A picture of the deceased (this can be downloaded and also used to display the book of condolence's unless additional permission is given.

The dates of birth and death

Sympathetic words from the chairman and these should not be too corporate and emotions can be expressed.

Information of events which have been cancelled and when services will be held.

Information on laying flowers

Information about book of condolence

Condolence Books

A condolence book should be considered including where held and what type of book and what will be done with the book after. Loose leaf books can be leather bound after but I am sure South Norfolk District Council will have a virtual one all parishioners can sign on line if required.

The chair should write the first page in the book and these books are kept as a local record of the sentiments of the community and should be held locally such as in the church in a safe archive.

Flowers

We should arrange a pre-determined area for the laying of flowers and this should be agreed in advance so that no access routes are blocked. The chairman would lay a bunch of flowers unwrapped first. We should also make it clear that when flowers are being removed i.e., the first day after the funeral. If the flowers are to be placed in a bin make sure the bin can cope and if not then we must ensure an area where they can be laid to compost and used to plant a memorial tree. We must make sure we relay our plans to parishioners.

Dress Code

Should the chairman attend a service on the middle Sunday accordance should be given to the dress code as at all funerals and can include black ties, black armbands and black ribbons.

Portrait

I am unsure the area is of our concern as large councils have a picture of the queen in their reception areas, we do not but should we feel the need to put one up in the village hall the portrait should have a black ribbon placed diagonally across from the top corner on the portrait for a period of 1 month.

Proclamation

The National Proclamation will be read in London on D + 1 and in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh at 12 noon on D + 2. At 13.00 pm it will be read in each county by the High Sheriff.

We need to consider if we want to be involved in a local proclamation and these can be read out on the early evening of D + 2 and the words will be provided by Buckingham Palace and we will need to consider who will read them out i.e., The chairman or deputy lord lieutenant, county councillor, district councillor or a member of the church.

Church Services

Each diocese will arrange their own civic services I presume in Cathedral's and main churches on the mid-Sunday of the 10-day mourning period but each PCC may arrange their own services which a civic Presence may be expected to attend such as the Chairman.

Bells

If the local church bells are to be rung then they must toll one ring for each year of life. If the death is announced before midday, then the bells should be tolled at Noon. If the death is announced in the afternoon, then the bells should be tolled at Noon on D + 1. If the bells are sounded at a church service it should be a muffled peal (for the monarch) or half muffled peal (for everyone else). A full open Peal can be sounded after the proclamation.

Moving forward and things to consider

Prepare a budget to include a coronation event such as a street party or something similar and this could take place within 6 months of the death of Sovereign.

Ensure this information is made public and everyone knows and understands their roles and responsibilities regarding flag flying and what duties are being delegated to the clerk.

We should ensure we have flexibility in our arrangements as some things will not be known until the actual time of the death.

We must ensure what our district and county councils have planned

Finally, if the Queens death occurs at Sandringham (or Scotland) then she will be transported by train to London. The train journey will be broadcast live and if you have a station on route, we may want to consider a civic party on the platform as she passes.