

HP HC HELLESDON PARISH COUNCIL

Operation London Bridge

Introduction

Operation London Bridge is the codename of the plan for what will happen in the days following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth the Second or another senior national figure.

Following the official announcement from Buckingham Palace, 10 days of state mourning will follow. D day is death day and D10 is the date of the full state funeral in Westminster Abbey, unless D10 falls on a Sunday in which case the funeral will be held on D11 Monday.

Work started on the plan in the 1960s, and nationally is a collaboration between the Royal Household, the Government, Armed Forces, Royal Parks, Church of England and Metropolitan Police Service

The plan has been cascaded down to local authorities through the Lord Lieutenants and the National Association of Civic Officers, to ensure local plans are in place. Guidance from these organisations/dignitaries forms the basis of local plans. They set out the protocols that local Councils should follow and observe on marking the death of a senior national figure and to be observed on the death of the Sovereign, which involves the greatest number of ceremonial elements.

All parts of this protocol apply on the death of the Sovereign (and, of course, those sections around the Accession Proclamation arise only on the Monarch's death). Beyond that, implementation of the Protocol is a matter to be decided locally.

This protocol document had been drawn up to prepare Hellesdon Parish Council (HPC) for the death of a senior national figure. It will be reviewed quarterly to ensure that all the information remains relevant.

The following appendices are included:

Appendix 1 - Activity Checklist for the Implementation of the Protocol.

Appendix 2 - Senior National Figures included in Plan

Appendix 3 - Guide for Flying Flags at Half-mast

Appendix 4 - Chairman's Statement

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...”*)

This protocol for HPC identifies those who are authorised to implement the plans. For the Sovereign or another senior member of the Royal Family the decision will be delegated to the Parish Clerk or duly authorised Deputy, 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.

The day of the death of the Sovereigns 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.

Flag Flying

HPC currently do not have a flag pole, any reference to flags is to note only.

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.

The Chairman of Hellesdon Parish Council will publish a statement (see Appendix 4) on the HPC website once the Proclamation has been read at District Level.

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.

Proclamation Day Protocol

The NACO guidance has now been reviewed and the latest version of the protocol is attached. The key points arising from the review are regarding 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 High Sheriffs Proclamation reading on D+2.

Books of Condolence

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

All books will be placed in an easily accessible location Hellesdon Community Centre (room to be confirmed) 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, covered with a suitable cloth, a chair, a supply of pens along with a suitable framed photograph on the table and a small arrangement of flowers.

A good supply of paper, 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. Pages including any questionable comments should be quietly removed until such time as a decision can be taken by the Chairman, on whether they should be permanently excluded.

The Chairman may wish to agree a form of words for a message, expressing sorrow at the news of the death. This may be the form of words included in a press release, Twitter or Facebook message or on the home page of the website. (See Appendix 4)

Dependent on local circumstances it is suggested that 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 1600hrs 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 Parish Council archive, so that future generations are able to gain access to them easily 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.

On-Line Book of Condolence

HPC will be accepting online submissions for the Book of Condolence through a link on our website: www.hellesdon-pc.gov.uk The submissions will then be collated and included in the Book of Condolence. Alternatively, a link to the Buckingham Palace e-Book of Condolence will be included on the website: www.royal.gov.uk

Events During the Period of 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 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.

Church Services

Hellesdon Parish Councillors will be sent details of all Church services being held in the Parish. (The Clerk will liaise with Rev Alder)

Flowers

The War Memorial will be the designated area 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. 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 9am the day following the funeral, there will be a ceremonial removal of the flowers. Any message cards will be kept with the Condolence Books as part of the local archive. The flowers will be taken away to compost. The compost produced will then be used to

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. A supply of armbands for councillors and staff on duty will be held by the Clerk.

Marking a 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 kept for other member 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.

Website

After the official announcement from Buckingham Palace HPC 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 page will be activated as soon as an official announcement is made.

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.

Items to Budget

- Flowers
- Black armbands (Purchased)
- Black ribbons
- Picture, Frame and Stand

Appendix 1 - Activity Checklist

Implementation of Protocol

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
HPC mourning protocol will be implemented on the formal announcement of the death of any one of those persons named in appendix 2.	Implementation will be authorised by Parish Clerk	

Flag Flying

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
Currently HPC do not fly a flag in the Parish		Appendix 3 to this protocol sets out the correct procedure for flying a flag at half-mast. Note: 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.
Applicable only 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 11.00 - be raised to full mast and flown throughout the day at full mast. On the day (D+2) following the proclamation reading flags will be returned to half mast.		

Proclamation Day

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
Reading of the Proclamation to be publicised.	Facebook, website and local press.	

Books of Condolence

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
<p>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 Hellesdon Parish Council Community Centre .</p> <p>Consideration will be given at the time of each death on whether Books of Condolence should be opened for other members of the Royal Family.</p>	Parish Clerk or Senior Administrator	Parish Clerk or Senior Administrator to ensure there is adequate paper available in the book. Pages that have been defaced or include offensive or other questionable comments should be quietly removed until such time as a decision can be taken at senior level on whether they should be permanently excluded.
<p>On the death of the Sovereign or The Duke of Edinburgh a second Book of Condolence will be opened.</p>	Parish Clerk or Senior Administrator	
<p>A link will be set up on the mourning pages of the website, for visitors to submit their condolences online.</p>	Parish Clerk or Senior Administrator	These condolences will then be collated and added to the book of condolence.

Events During the Period of Mourning

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
<p>To review the program of engagements undertaken by the Chairman to ensure it is appropriate in a time of national mourning and that it sits comfortably with the national mood.</p>	Chairman and Parish Clerk	

Church Services

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
<p>Council Members will be sent the details of any services in Hellesdon-Parish</p>	Parish Clerk	To liaise with Rev Alder

Flowers

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
Allocate a designated area for residents to lay flowers during the period of mourning.	Parish Clerk or Head Groundsman	Ensure there is enough space for the flowers, without impeding any access routes. Area to be checked Daily

Dress Code

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
A stock of ribbons and black arm bands will be held in and available from the Parish Clerk	The stock to be issued and maintained in good order by the Parish Clerk	At the time of the annual review of this protocol consideration will be given to the number of items in stock, their condition and the need for cleaning, repair or replacement.

Marking a Silence

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
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.	Parish Clerk or Chairman	Consideration will be given at the time of each death on whether a Silence will be kept for other members of the Royal Family.

Website

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
Senior Administrator to look at holding page	Parish Clerk or Senior Administrator	The hold page will have 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 information for the Condolence Books, Church Services and Flying of the Flags to be drafted for the content of the website.	Parish Clerk or Senior Administrator	

Letter of Condolence

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
As soon as is practical, a letter of condolence will be drafted and circulated to the Chairman and Parish Clerk	Parish Clerk	

Appendix 2 - Senior National Figures

This protocol sets out the action to be taken in the event of the death of:

The Queen

The Duke of Edinburgh

The Prince of Wales

Appendix 3 - Flying Flags at Half-Mast

Authoritative information on flag flying can be found on the website of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Information is also carried on the website of the Flag Institute (www.flaginstitute.org). but bear in mind that the Institute is not an official body and whilst its guidance can assist it does not carry the same weight as information from the Government.

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, but a mourning cravat can be used instead (see the Flag Institute's website for further details).

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.

When a British national flag is at half-mast, other flags on the same stand of poles should also be at half-mast or should not be flown at all. Flags of foreign nations should not be flown, unless their country is also observing mourning.

Appendix 4 - The Chairman's Statement

A statement will be issued by the Chairman on the announcement of the death of a senior national figure or other prominent figure.

The statement should begin with a suitable expression of the sadness of Hellesdon Parish Council on hearing the announcement.

If it is an occasion when Books of Condolence will be opened, then reference could be made to that.

When a decision has been taken on the Chairman's programme of events and engagements it might be stated that events are being cancelled as a mark of respect or that they will begin with a period of silence.

If in doubt, do not rush out a statement which commits the Authority to action before that action has been discussed and has the necessary agreement from political leadership.

This protocol is dated:

Review is due: