

FINDON PARISH COUNCIL

PROTOCOL

MARKING THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE

This protocol offers guidance to the elected Members, staff and population within the Parish covered by Findon Parish Council (FPC) on marking the death of a senior national figure. It sets out the protocols to be observed on the death of the Sovereign, which involves the greatest number of ceremonial elements.

This document is derived from the template supplied by the National Association of Civic Officers (NACO) and is the adopted template of interpretation and implementation within the Findon Parish.

This protocol is constructed in a way to enable appropriate elements when marking the death of other members of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister/former Prime Minister, a serving Councillor or other prominent person.

All parts of this protocol apply on the death of the Sovereign (note: those sections around the Accession Proclamation arise **only** upon the Monarchs death).

- Her Majesty The Queen will be given a State funeral
- The Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales will be given a Ceremonial Royal Funeral
- The Duchess of Cornwall, The Duke of Cambridge, The Duchess of Cambridge, Prince George of Cambridge, Princess Charlotte of Cambridge, Prince Louis of Cambridge, The Duke of Sussex, The Duchess of Sussex, The Duke of York, The Earl of Wessex, The Princess Royal, The Countess of Wessex, The Duke of Gloucester, The Duchess of Gloucester, The Duke of Kent, Prince Michael Kent, Princess Michael of Kent and Princess Alexandra will be given Non-Ceremonial Royal Funerals.

Flying of flags at half-mast across the Parish will be appropriate.

The National Proclamations will be read in London (St James Palace and the Royal Exchange), Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff, along with County Proclamations normally read by the High Sheriff. The High Sheriff of West Sussex has responsibility for the primary reading of the Proclamation (produced/circulated by Buckingham Palace/Central Government) within the county of West Sussex.

Elements of this protocol may be used when responding to another incident which has led to a large number of deaths (i.e. a local disaster or terrorist attack).

1. Implementation of the Protocol on hearing of the death

Plans to mark a death must be implemented **only when a formal announcement** has been made (i.e. where news agencies say 'reports are coming in of the death of...' will be treated 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 Clerk 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 a death should be marked.

2. Book of Condolence

On the death of the Sovereign only, a Book of Condolence provided by the Diocese with an appropriate message from the Diocese on behalf of the Bishop of Chichester will be placed within the church of St John the Baptist, Findon, along with a photograph.

The Book of Condolence will close the day after the funeral and the book deposited with the West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Record Office.

3. Official Correspondence/website

The Chairman (as the figurehead of the Parish Council) will agree a form of words for a message, expressing sorrow at the news of the death, along the lines of:

“The Councillors and Clerk of Findon Parish Council are deeply saddened at the news of the death of XXXXXXXXXXX. Our thoughts are with the Royal Family at this time.

This will be the official form of words to be used on the Parish Council’s website homepage and Facebook Page, along with details of the Church opening hours and village Book of Condolence. The website must be replaced by a black screen with a photograph of the deceased, the year of birth and death and where, if any, members of the public can access Books of Condolence and leave flowers. (This will be managed by Processmatters2 on behalf of FPC)

An external link to the Buckingham Palace e-book of condolence (www.royal.gov.uk) 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 5.00pm on the Friday).

4. 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.

Residents may choose to express their sadness by laying flowers or lighting candles in the church. In order to manage such flower laying activity safely, FPC and St John the Baptist Church have identified the following site within the Parish:

- **The War Memorial or garden adjacent to the Church.**

All flowers will be removed the week after the funeral has taken place (or once the flowers have died). Weather conditions will have an effect on the above but decisions will be made giving forethought and sensitivity to the needs of the community.

Church Services may also provide a setting for people to come together to express sadness. These arrangements will be made by the Priest in Charge and Parochial Church Council. Councillor and staff attendance at such services is encouraged to add to the sense of community coming together in a unified expression of grief.

5. Cancellation of Existing Planned Events

It is impossible to create hard and fast rules around cancelling long planned events which fall in the period between a death and a funeral. It is best practice to remove the importance of ‘cost and inconvenience’ when cancelling events, remaining mindfully guided by the public mood. Public

opinion can be volatile and change quickly in such emotional circumstances and there is a risk of public criticism if the decision to go ahead is seen to 'go against the grain'.

It is hard to envisage any civic event that should carry on in the period between a death and the funeral as it would risk negative publicity at a time when the rest of the country and the Commonwealth is in mourning.

When the time comes, the question to ask is **not** 'do we cancel?' but **'is it really necessary and appropriate for this event to go ahead?'**

6. Proclamation Day

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

- (i) The Proclamation will be made at St. James Palace at 11.00hrs (or 14:00hrs on a Sunday)

The Proclamation is then cascaded.

- (ii) At noon on Proclamation Day it will be read at the Royal Exchange in the City of London.

At noon on D+2 it will be read:

- (iii) 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; in Belfast by Norroy and Ulster King of Arms.
- (iv) Once those Proclamations have been read it is appropriate for the Proclamation to be read at County, City, Borough and Parish level if they so choose.
- (v) The High Sheriff of West Sussex will cause the Proclamation to be read at County level at 12.30hrs.

7. Period of Mourning and Dress Code

Mourning for the Monarch lasts 1 month. Mourning for the Duke of Edinburgh or the Prince of Wales last 9 days from day of death until the end of the day of the funeral.

Whilst flags are at half-mast it is appropriate for black ties/scarves to be worn by the Chairman, Councillors and staff when on Council business.

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 a small black rosette (self-supplied) or a black armband.

8. 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.

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.

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.

9. 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 11.00am 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.

10. 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 Sovereigns deaths, in which case they should be sent to the new Sovereign's Private Secretary asking that condolences be passed on to the new Sovereign). In each case **one 'official'** letter of condolence will be sent on behalf of the Parish Council by the Parish Clerk.

11. Public Holiday

The day of the State Funeral will be a Public Holiday, unless D10 falls on a Saturday.

(Once adopted, this protocol will be shared with organisations, businesses and individuals within the community and the wider population at the time of necessity. The protocol has been developed in conjunction with the Church of St John the Baptist, Findon).