



Swindon Parish Council Plan for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure

Introduction

This plan is provided primarily as guidance to mark the death of a senior national figure. It will also be used as the basis of events where a response is considered appropriate from Swindon Parish Council (SPC) to mark the death of a councillor, a significant figure within the local community or even a tragic event.

It is based on information contained within the Operation London Bridge plan that provides protocol for the passing of the Sovereign. Protocols for other senior national figures will be observed as directed by UK Government.

Objectives of SPC Plan

To ensure that formal protocols are observed following the death of a senior national figure and provide the public with information and outlets for demonstration of grief and sympathy.

Part 1. Implementation of the Plan

Action Required	Authorisation	Notes
The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will publish a formal announcement of the death following activation of Operation London Bridge. This announcement will require activation of the SPC Plan.	Chairman of SPC will activate SPC Plan and be the primary source for activating all other parts of the SPC Plan. Vice-Chairman will activate SPC Plan if Chairman is absent and take responsibility for all other parts of the SPC Plan. SPC Clerk will provide support as required.	The definitive source for information on the announcement of the death will be from DCMS. Other sources of information, such as news outlets, must be treated with caution and may only be used as preparation for activation of SPC Plan.

Part 2. Union Flag

Action Required	Authorisation	Notes
Lower the Union flag to half-mast at the earliest opportunity following the announcement detailed at Part 1. Protocol at Appendix 1 to be implemented.	Chairman or Vice-Chairman as detailed at Part 1. SPC Clerk will provide support as required.	Details of protocol for lowering Union flag to half-mast at Appendix 1.

Part 3. Announcement and Statement of Condolence and Information

Action Required	Authorisation	Notes
Announce the death and provide a statement of condolence and information. Announcement to be available on noticeboards used by SPC and website for SPC. Protocol at Appendix 2 to be implemented.	Chairman or Vice-Chairman as detailed at Part 1. SPC Clerk will provide support as required.	Example announcement and statement of condolence and information provided at Appendix 2.

Part 4. Book of Condolence and Laying of Floral Tributes and Wreaths

Action Required	Authorisation	Notes
Announce location of book of condolence and where floral tributes and wreaths can be laid. Announcement to be available on noticeboards used by SPC and website for SPC.	Chairman or Vice-Chairman as detailed at Part 1. SPC Clerk will provide support as required.	SPC will use the facilities provided by South Staffordshire District Council as detailed at Appendix 2. This announcement can be included with announcement at Part 3 if the information is available at the time. Waiting for information for this announcement should not delay the announcement at Part 3.

Part 5. Business Continuity

Action Required	Authorisation	Notes
Decide what SPC business will be conducted. Decide what facilities will be curtailed.	Chairman or Vice-Chairman as detailed at Part 1. SPC Clerk will provide support as required.	Business will continue as appropriate and decision will be taken on having meetings or use of facilities owned by SPC. Guidance at Appendix 3 will be noted.

This Plan was adopted by SPC at the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting on 8th December 2021.

Appendix 1

Flying Union Flag at Half-mast

Following the formal announcement of the death outlined at Part 1 of the SPC Plan, the Union flag on SPC flagpole will be lowered to half-mast until 0800 on the morning following the funeral. During this period, only the Union flag will be flown and any other flag will be removed. Protocol for Proclamation Day will be implemented.

At the start of the day on Proclamation Day the Union flag will be flying at half-mast. The flag will be raised to full-mast at 1100 to coincide with the Reading of the Principal Proclamation. The flag will continue to fly at full-mast until 1300 the following day. This is because the Proclamation, having been read in London on Proclamation Day, will then be read at Hillsborough and in Edinburgh and Cardiff on the day following Proclamation Day. At 1300 on the day following Proclamation Day the flag will be returned to half-mast. The Union flag will be returned to half-mast at 1300 whether or not any local announcements at either District or County councils have been made.

Half-mast means the flag is to be 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. Assuming the flag will already be at full mast, it will be fully lowered followed by a short pause before raising it to full-mast and following a short pause at full-mast, will be lowered to half-mast. When raising it to full-mast from half-mast, it will be fully lowered followed by a short pause before raising it to full-mast.

Authoritative information on Union flag flying will be provided by DCMS.

(www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-digital-culture-media-sport)

Information is also provided by the College of Arms. (<https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/resources/union-flag-faqs>)

Appendix 2

Announcement and Statement of Condolence and Information

Following formal notification of the death outlined at Part 1 of the SPC Plan, the Chairman will make an announcement on behalf of SPC to express sadness on hearing the news. Other information, such as the lowering of the Union flag and opportunities for the public to express their sympathy by signing a book of condolence or laying of floral tributes and wreaths, will also be considered for inclusion. An example of a suitable announcement is:

Swindon Parish Council is deeply saddened to learn of the death of and our thoughts and heartfelt condolences are with (*or: the Royal Family*) at this sad time.

We have no doubt the people of Swindon Parish are also saddened by this news and share our deepest sympathy with (*or: the Royal Family*).

The Union flag outside the Community Centre will be flown at half-mast until 0800 on the day following the funeral, with the exception of Proclamation Day when it will be full-mast from 1100 and return to half-mast at 1300 the following day.

We will use the Book of Condolence to be opened by South Staffordshire District Council to enable our community to pay their respects. There is also an online Book of Condolence available at (*See Note 1*)

We will use the site nominated by South Staffordshire District Council for those who wish to pay their respects by the laying of floral tributes or wreaths. (*See Note 2*)

Note 1.

It is expected a Book of Condolence will be made available by South Staffordshire District Council at the Council Chamber, Wombourne Parish Council, Gravel Hill, Wombourne, WV5 9HA. While other sites, namely at Codsall Community Hub, and at The Haling Dene Centre, Penkridge, are expected to offer a Book of Condolence, SPC will reference the Wombourne site as being nearest for the Parish. It is expected the Book of Condolence will be available for signing from 0900 to 1700 until the day after the funeral. Full details will be provided by South Staffordshire District Council. Regardless of location all entries will be combined to form a single South Staffordshire Book of Condolence that will form part of the National Archive. It is also expected a digital Book of Condolence will be available on the Royal Family website. (<https://www.royal.uk/royal-family>)

Note 2.

It is expected South Staffordshire District Council to announce Sytch Lane Cemetery, Sytch Lane, Wombourne, WV5 0JP, will be used for floral tributes and wreaths. While other sites, namely at Codsall Community Hub, and Strawberry Lane Cemetery, Great Wyrley, are expected to be available, SPC will reference Sytch Lane Cemetery as being nearest for the Parish. It is expected the Cemetery will be open from 0900 to 1700 until the day after the funeral. It is expected that, in the interest of safety, the public will be asked not to light any candles which are left with tributes and any candles that are lit will be extinguished to preserve the integrity of the tribute sites.

A photograph can be used to accompany the announcement and statement of condolence and information. The photograph will either have a black border or be mounted on black card.

Appendix 3

Business Continuity

SPC will consider and decide what business is appropriate to continue. Guidance from other sources including District and County councils, national and local government or parish associations, will be noted. The use of SPC owned or managed facilities will be reviewed. Decisions regarding continuity of SPC business, or use of SPC owned or managed facilities, will be based on whether it is necessary for continuation or whether postponement or cancellation is more appropriate.