



DEATH OF A SIGNIFICANT FIGURE POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to confirm the protocol to mark the death of a senior national figure or local holder of high office.

Introduction

This guidance has been made available for a procedure to follow upon the death of the Sovereign, other senior members of the Royal Family, senior national figures or local holders of high office. It has been drawn up with reference to published guidance from the Royal Household and the Government.

This protocol should be implemented by the Clerk, or the Chair in the absence of the Clerk.

Plans to mark the death of the Sovereign or senior member of the Royal Family must only be implemented after a formal announcement has been made by the Royal Household.

This protocol sets out the action to be taken in the event of the death of but not limited to:

- HM The King
- HRH The Prince of Wales
- HRH The Duchess of Cornwall
- HRH The Duke of Cambridge
- HRH The Duchess of Cambridge
- HRH Prince George of Cambridge
- HRH Prince Henry (Harry) of Wales
- HRH Princess Charlotte of Cambridge
- HRH Prince Louis of Cambridge
- HRH The Duke of Sussex
- HRH The Duchess of Sussex
- HRH The Duke of York
- HRH The Princess Royal
- HRH The Countess of Wessex
- HRH The Earl of Wessex
- The Prime Minister
- The Theale Member of Parliament
- A serving Member of the Parish Council

The protocol will only be implemented following an official announcement. Upon notification, the Clerk will advise all Members that the protocol is to be implemented.

Protocol

Upon the announcement of the death of a significant figure, the Council will:

- Ensure any appropriate dark page is placed as the front page on the Council website, with the official photograph where applicable. The figures name, date of birth, date of death is to appear with the photo. A commemorative statement from Council may also be placed on the page.
- The Church will be contacted to liaise regarding a Book of Condolence. If the Church are not proposing a Book of Condolence then the Council will purchase one and place in a prominent place within Theale. It is recommended that the book be placed in the Church, with their permission. Should permission not be granted, Council to place the book at the Parish Council Office.
- Any Council owned union jack flags in and around Theale to be flown at half mast. Any other flags to be removed during the mourning period. If the death falls on St George's Day or the period of mourning includes St George's Day, the St George flag may be flown at half mast.

Proclamation

In the case of the death of the Sovereign, the day following the death will be the Proclamation Day (the day when the new Sovereign is proclaimed).

The funeral of the Sovereign usually takes place 10 days after the day of death. For other senior members of the Royal Family, the funeral usually takes place eight days after the day of death.

Parish Councils are not required to read a proclamation. It is recommended that the Church is contacted to ask if they are reading the proclamation, and whether any special service will be held. If so, the Council can then promote this.

The proclamation is read in London on Proclamation Day, followed by it being read in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff.

Official Photographs

Downloadable images of the Royal Family are available from www.royal.gov.uk.

Dark Page

The website provider needs to be contacted to arrange for a dark page to be placed as the front page of the website.

The Chair, or Vice-Chair in the absence of the Chair, will provide a statement to the Clerk to be placed on the dark page expressing the sadness of the Council and people of Theale at the news of the death. The statement will confirm that flags will be flown at half mast (if flags are in place), and will give details of the Book of Condolence (if applicable).

On the death of any other significant person, the Clerk will discuss with the Chair whether an e-Book of Condolence should be opened on the Council's website.

Focal point for grief

Upon the death of a member of the Royal Family or a senior national figure, residents may wish to visit a designated area as a focal point for grief. This may be to lay flowers and other tributes as well as to reflect and remember. The Clerk to contact the Church to ascertain if a special service will be held and if so, to advertise the details on the website, social media, and noticeboards.

Meetings / Events during the Mourning Period

From the day of death until the day after the funeral, Council should give careful thought as to whether it is appropriate for any meetings or events to go ahead.

It is usual for no meetings to be scheduled during the mourning period, and no agendas should be issued.

Observance of Silence

Should a meeting have already been arranged and Council agree that it should proceed, the meeting should start with a minute silence for reflection.

When the death of a senior member of the Royal Family is to be marked by a minute silence, an announcement will be made by Buckingham Palace.

Adopted at the Parish Council meeting held on 03.10.22

Review date: October 2024