

Document 6.13

PROTOCOL TO MARK THE DEATH OF A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

(Guidance for Councillors and Officers)

Adopted 27 March 2020

Review by March 2022

1 Introduction

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

HM The Queen
HRH The Duke of Edinburgh
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 Princess Charlotte of Cambridge
HRH Prince Louis of Cambridge
HRH The Duke of York
HRH The Earl of Wessex
HRH The Princess Royal
HRH The Countess of Wessex

2. Implementation of the protocol on hearing of the death

- 2.1 Plans to mark a death should be implemented only after a formal announcement has been made. For example “It has been announced by Buckingham Palace/Downing Street that.....”
- 2.2 The Mayor in discussion with the Leader and Town Clerk have the authority to implement the Protocol.
- 2.3 The authorising person will arrange for the Union flag to be lowered immediately. Books of Condolence should be opened on the next working day.

3. Flag Flying

- 3.1 On the formal announcement of death, flags are flown at **half-mast** until **08.00 on the morning following the state funeral**. If the death or period of mourning falls on St George’s Day, the English flag should be replaced by the Union flag.
- 3.2 For the Sovereign, the funeral will take place **10 days** after the day of death. For other senior members of the Royal Family, the funeral will take place **8 days** after the day of the death.
- 3.3 The day following the death of the Sovereign is known as **Proclamation Day** (the day when the new Sovereign is proclaimed). On this day, flags will be flown at **half mast until 11.00**.
- 3.4 Flags will be flown at **full mast from 11.00 on Proclamation Day** to coincide with the Reading of the Principal Proclamation, **until 13.00** on the **day after** Proclamation Day.

Full details of the correct way to fly flags at half-mast can be found at www.flaginstitute.org

4. Book of Condolence

- 4.1 On the **next working day** following the death, a book of condolence will be placed in an appropriate place on the ground floor of the Castle, with a chair, black tablecloth, pens and a framed picture of the deceased.
- 4.2 The book should be loose leaf so pages can be re-ordered. The Mayor and Town Clerk should be the **first to sign the book**. If this is not possible, the pages can be re-arranged before the book is closed. It also allows for the removal of offensive comments or defacing.
- 4.3 The Mayor will issue a statement via the Town Clerk, expressing the sadness of the Council and people of Hertford at the news of the death. The statement will confirm flags are to be flown at half mast and will give details of the Book of Condolence. The statement will also be posted on Social Media, with a link to the Buckingham Palace e-book of condolence. (www.royal.gov.uk).
- 4.4 The book of condolence will be closed **at the end of the working day** following the day of the funeral.
- 4.5 The books should be placed in archive and a letter written to Buckingham Palace informing them of the location of the books.

5. Events during the period of mourning

- 5.1 From the day of the death until the day after the funeral, careful thought should be given to the types of events and activities hosted by the Council or attended by the Mayor. Some events may not fit in with the mood of the nation and may need to be cancelled as a mark of respect.
- 5.2 If the Mayor wishes, a service of remembrance may be arranged to bring local people together on the eve of the funeral.

6. Proclamation Day

- 6.1 The Proclamation will be made at St James' Palace at 11.00 (or 14.00 if a Sunday – to be confirmed). The Proclamation is then 'cascaded'.
 1. It will be read at The Royal Exchange in the City of London at 12.00
 2. The Heralds travel to Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff to make the Proclamation the day after the Proclamation in England.
 3. Once the Proclamation has been made as above, the High Sheriff will read the Proclamation at County level. The Lord Lieutenant will be present at that Ceremony. **Mayors and Chairmen of Hertfordshire will be invited to attend.**
 4. Once the Proclamation has been made at County level, the Chairman of East Herts Council will read it at District level at 14.00.
 5. Following the Proclamation by the Chairman of the East Herts Council, the Mayor will read the Proclamation on the steps of the Lion Door at 15.00, accompanied by the Leader of the Council, The Town Clerk and the Sergeants at Mace. Robes should be worn along with black armbands.

6. Arrangements should be made to tell the public in advance and invitations sent to Councillors, local Churches, a Deputy Lord Lieutenant and staff.
7. Local Police should be informed of the reading.
8. The Proclamation wording will be publicised on the Council's website and social media accounts.
9. The wording of the Proclamation can be found on the Buckingham Palace website (www.royal.gov.uk) and the Privy Council website (www.privy-council.org.uk)

7. Dress Code

- 7.1 While flags are at half mast, black ties/armbands should be worn by the Mayor, Town Clerk and Senior Managers.
- 7.2 On the day of the death, on the day of the funeral and when public mourning is observed, The Mayor's chain should include a black ribbon.

8. Marking a Silence

- 8.1 On the death of the Sovereign or other senior member of the Royal Family, there will be a 2 minute silence at 11.00 on the day of the funeral led by the Mayor on the steps of the Lion Door at the Castle. Arrangements should be made to tell the public in advance. The end of the silence will be marked by the Mayor.

9. Letters of Condolence

- 9.1 On the death of the Sovereign, a letter of condolence should be sent to the New Sovereign's Private Secretary asking for condolences to be passed to the New Sovereign.
- 9.2 On the death of a member of the Royal Family, a letter of Condolence should be sent to the Private Secretary of the deceased asking for condolence to be passed to the next of kin and other members of the family.

10. Marking the Death of:

The Prime Minister

The Member of Parliament for Hertford and Stortford

A serving Member of the Council

- 10.1 Flags to fly at **half mast** on the day of the announcement of the death.
- 10.2 Usual flag flying arrangements will resume on the days **between the announcement of the death and the day of the funeral.**
- 10.3 Flags will fly again at **half mast** on the **day of the funeral**