

Dartmoor Forest Parish Council – Policy on death of a senior national figure

Aim

Local Councils are advised to be prepared and to have considered the actions that the council will take following the death of a senior member of state (HM King Charles III, Queen Consort). This policy sets out the arrangements that the Council is aware of however, any guidance from Buckingham Palace that deviates from this will be followed.

Operation London Bridge is the official code name given to the passing of HM King Charles III.

Period of State Mourning

Following the passing of HM King Charles III and the official announcement from Buckingham Palace, a ten-day period of state mourning will follow. D-Day being the date of the death and D+10 the date of the full state funeral, unless D+10 falls on a Sunday, then the funeral will be held on D+11, Monday.

Events

The Local Government Act 1972, s.243 excludes days appointed for public mourning from the calculation of the three clear days' notice of a council meeting, or anything that is required to be done. Therefore, Council meetings may need to be postponed until after the funeral has taken place. Similarly, if the four days between a council election and the day new Members take office fall within the period of mourning the taking of office will be delayed until after the funeral.

If Remembrance Sunday falls within the ten-day period of mourning, remembrance services will continue as normal with added prayers. If National Beacon Lighting and/or Bell ringing are planned these will be cancelled as they are a sign of celebration. Other activities such as performances, galas, opening events, carol service, markets, light switch-on will be cancelled or rescheduled.

Flags

Flag to be flown at half-mast on the flagpoles. The exceptions being D+1 and D+2, Proclamation Day, when the new King is Proclaimed (Operation Spring Tide).

Flags will be returned to normal by 9am the day after the funeral.

NB. Red firing warning flags for the Army training areas on the moor should not be flown at half mast.

Website

The home page of the council website will be overwritten with portrait of HM King Charles III.

The Chair, in conjunction with the Clerk, will prepare a statement on behalf of the Council. The statement will be posted on the council's website and noticeboards. Details of any cancellations will be included.

Portraits

A suitable portrait of HM King Charles III will be displayed alongside the Book of Condolence. The portrait will have a black ribbon placed diagonally across one top corner, as will any other portraits of HM King Charles III the Council may have on display at the time. These ribbons will be left in situ for one month.

Condolence Books

On the day following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign, the spouse of the Sovereign, the Heir to the Sovereign or the spouse of the Heir to the Sovereign, a Book of Condolence will be opened at Princetown Community Centre.

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.

The Book of Condolence at Princetown Community Centre will be open from 09.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday and, 09.00 to 12.00 on Saturday and will remain open until 18.00 on the day following the funeral, or as agreed by Princetown Community Centre Trustees.

A Councillor will arrange for the Book of Condolence to be taken to Venville House and Royal Court.

On the death of the Sovereign or their spouse a second Book of Condolence will be opened at The Village Hall, Postbridge.

The Book of Condolence at Postbridge Village Hall will be open at hours agreed with the Postbridge Village Hall Committee.

A trestle table and chair will be positioned in each venue. Books of Condolence (loose-leaf black folders) and a supply of black edged paper will be supplied by the Parish Clerk as will table cloths and framed photographs of the relevant person will also be supplied from the stock held by the Parish Clerk.

Following D+11, the condolence book/folder will be collated, and a letter sent to the Private Secretary at Buckingham Palace advising that a Book of Condolence is held in the Council archive.

Floral Tributes

The Village Green is designated as a safe area for the laying of flowers.

Flowers should be left unwrapped, with cellophane removed. They will be collected the day after the funeral by the Clerk.

Proclamations

The National Proclamation will be read in London on D+1. Then on D+2 in Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff. County Proclamations are normally read by the High Sheriffs on D+2. The Chair can read the proclamation if they wish.

Flags should be flown at full mast for proclamation readings.

Bells

If the Royal death is announced before 12noon on D-Day, every Church will toll one bell for each year of the Kings life – if the announcement is made after 12noon the Bell will be tolled on D+1 at 12noon.

Church Service

The Dioceses will arrange civic services in cathedrals and major churches on the mid Sunday of the ten-day mourning period. Local parish churches will be encouraged to hold services on the eve of the state funeral.

Public Holiday

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