



PROTOCOL TO MARK THE DEATH OF A LOCAL HOLDER OF OFFICE

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Town Council already has written protocol in place – Operation Menai Bridge – to be implemented upon the death of the reigning sovereign, H.M. The King. The document states: *‘Although the Guidance Notes are titled “Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure”, it has always been the intention that they should also be read as a series of suggestions for ways in which local authorities may mark death in a range of circumstances. It might be the death of The Sovereign or a member of the Royal Family. It could be the passing of a serving Mayor, or senior Councillor. It may even be the death of a significant figure within a local community..... this plan should be adapted for any individuals deemed appropriate by the Town Council.’*

1.2 The Council’s ‘Flag Flying Protocol’ states *‘The Union Flag will be flown at half-mast on the following occasions:*

- *from the announcement of the death until the funeral of the Sovereign, except on Proclamation Day, (the day after the Death of a Sovereign), when flags are hoisted to full mast from 11am to sunset.*

- *in response to any Special Commands by the Sovereign – for example, the funerals of members of the Royal Family, Prime Ministers or Ex-Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom or Foreign Rulers and any other occasions.*
- *the death or funeral of a current or former Town Mayor of Biddulph and Fusignano, a serving or former Biddulph Town Councillor, a current or former Member of Parliament for Staffordshire Moorlands, or a serving or former Staffordshire County Councillor representing Biddulph or a notable person in the town.*
- *at the discretion of The Mayor or Chief Officer or after guidance from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport at times of national mourning due to an major incident where British lives are lost (for instance, a terrorist attack, a train or air crash or a major incident on British soil or abroad)*
- *at the discretion of The Mayor or Chief Officer.'*

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

2.1 This document is in addition, specifically concerning the protocol required upon the death of a local holder of office, and should be read alongside the 'Operation Menai Bridge' and 'Flag Flying Protocol' procedure.

LOCAL HOLDER OF OFFICE

3.1 Defined as a current or former Town Mayor of Biddulph and Fusignano, a serving or former Biddulph Town Councillor, a current or former Member of Parliament or a notable person in the town, at the discretion of The Mayor or Chief Officer.

AGREED ACTIONS

4.1 As soon as a Councillor or Officer becomes aware of the death, then the information must be passed to the Chief Officer. Don't assume that someone else will already have passed the information on.

4.2 The Chief Officer will:

- inform all current Councillors, the Town Clerk at Fusignano and all past Biddulph Town Mayors.
- direct Officers and staff, the Town Mayor and Councillors.
- arrange for a book of condolence and a condolence area to be set up within the Town Hall – to be opened on the first working day after death until the day following the deceased's funeral.

- provide and publish a statement to the Council's social media/website, following the Town Mayor's approval, giving details of the book of condolence.
- brief local media.
- draft and dispatch a letter of condolence to the deceased's next of kin, following the Town Mayor's approval, together with flowers, if appropriate.
- arrange for the Union Flag to be flown at half-mast on the day of death and on the day of the deceased's funeral until sunset.
- review any Council events and the Town Mayor's programme of engagements to determine whether they're appropriate to continue. Events may be cancelled as a mark of respect or begin with a period of silence.
- ensure at the next available Council Meeting one minute's silence is observed and a formal motion of condolence moved.
- convey funeral arrangements, once known.

COUNCIL ATTENDANCE AT A FUNERAL

5.1 The Council will normally attend a funeral formally only if the deceased was a past Mayor or a serving member of the Council, and then only at the invitation of the deceased's family.

The Chief Officer will agree with the deceased's family/funeral director what the Council input into the service should be and will advise accordingly.

For the funeral of a Mayor who died in office the Deputy Mayor may follow the coffin bearing the Mayoral Regalia on a black cushion. However, the overriding factor shall be that of the family's wishes and protocol will not dictate precedence or procedure.

The attendance of the Mayor at funerals is often at the discretion of the family. See 'The Mayor's Handbook' for further information.