

<b>Protocol</b> Death of a national figure
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Hythe Town Council  
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To	Hythe Town Council
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Version	1
Status	Approved
Responsible officer	Town Clerk and responsible financial officer
Subject	Death of a prominent figure

## 1 Summary

- 1.1 In the event of the death of a senior national figure, local holder of high office or past town mayor then certain actions will need to take place in a short space of time.
- 1.2 Hythe town councillors and officers need to be prepared and rehearsed should such an event take place.
- 1.3 This protocol outlines the requirements, people involved and sequence of actions that will be required.

## 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That this protocol is agreed.
- 2.2 That these items be purchased and / or checked annually to allow the protocol to be enacted:
  - 2.2.1 Flag pole at town hall
  - 2.2.2 Appropriate flag(s)
  - 2.2.3 Two books of condolence
  - 2.2.4 Appropriate pens
  - 2.2.5 Black armbands
  - 2.2.6 Black tablecloth
  - 2.2.7 Black rosettes

## 3 Background

- 3.1 Guidance has been released for a procedure to follow in the event of the death of the Sovereign, other senior members of the royal family, senior national figures or local holders of high office.
- 3.2 The protocol has been drawn up with reference to published guidance from the royal household and the government.
- 3.3 There has been a long standing tradition to commemorate the deaths of serving town mayors and former mayors and town mayors which this protocol formalises.
- 3.4 This protocol should be implemented by the town clerk or in her/his absence, the deputy town clerk or in her/his absence, the town mayor or mayor's secretary.

3.5 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.

3.6 It might also be appropriate to use elements of the procedure when responding to an incident which has caused a large number of deaths, for example, a train crash or terrorist attack. This would apply if a national day of mourning was announced by 10 Downing Street.

3.6.1 This would be at the discretion of the town clerk in consultation with the town mayor.

3.7 The protocol sets out the action to be taken in the event of the death of these members of the royal family:

- 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 Prince Henry (Harry) of Wales
- HRH. Princess Charlotte of Cambridge
- HRH The Duke of York
- HRH The Earl of Wessex
- HRH The Princess Royal
- HRH The Countess of Wessex

3.8 The protocol separately sets out the action to be taken in the event of the death of current and former town mayors of Hythe, and the current and former members of parliament for Hythe.

3.9 The protocol also provides guidance in recognising the deaths of a current prime minister.

#### 4 Implementation of the protocol on hearing of the death of a member of the royal family listed in section 3.7

Action required	Authorised by	Other notes
4.1 Hythe Town Council’s mourning protocol will be implemented on the formal announcement by Buckingham Palace / Downing Street of the death of any one of those persons name on page 1 of this protocol.	Implementation will be authorised by the town clerk or in her/his absence, the deputy town clerk or in her/his absence, the town mayor or mayor’s secretary.	The town clerk will liaise with the Folkestone and Hythe District Council control centre to ensure actions are co-ordinated across the district.

## 5 Flying the flag

Action required	Implemented by	Other notes
<p>5.1 <b>Immediately</b> at the request of the Town clerk, the flag at the Town Hall will be lowered to half-mast.</p>	<p>Town sergeant, or if town sergeant is not immediately available, deputy town clerk.</p>	<p>See Appendix A in this protocol setting out the correct procedure for flying a flag at half-mast.</p> <p>If the death falls on St George's Day or the period of mourning includes St George's Day, the flag of the patron saint should be replaced by the Union Flag at half-mast.</p>
<p>5.2 Following the death of the Sovereign, when the new Sovereign is proclaimed flags will – at 11.00 – be raised to full mast and flown throughout the day at full mast, returning to half-mast at 18:00.</p>	<p>Town sergeant, or if town sergeant is not immediately available, deputy town clerk.</p>	
<p>5.3 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). On proclamation day flags will, at the start of the day, be flying at half-mast. All flags will be flown from the mast head from 11:00 on proclamation day (D + 1) to coincide with the reading of the principle proclamation and until 1300 the following day (D + 2). This is because the proclamation, having been read in London on proclamation day, will then be read in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff on the following proclamation day.</p>		<p>The funeral of the Sovereign will take place 10 days after the day of death. For other senior members of the royal family, the funeral will take place eight days after the day of death.</p>
<p>5.4 After the day of proclamation, all</p>		

<p>flags are to be lowered to half-mast until 08:00 on the morning following the state funeral (day of death plus 11 days).</p>		
<p>5.5 For any other prominent figures or local holder of high office, the flag should fly at half-mast only on the day of death and the day of the funeral.</p>		<p>See Appendix D.</p>
<p>5.6 At the town hall, following the death of the Sovereign or other members of the royal family identified in the list on page 1, flags will continue to be flown at half-mast until 08:00 on the day following the funeral.</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>The funeral of the Sovereign will take place 10 days after the day of death. For other senior members of the royal family, the number of days will be fewer.</p>
<p>5.7 For all others identified in the list on page 1 and appendix D, flags at the town hall will fly at half-mast on the day of the announcement of the death. On subsequent days, the usual local arrangements will resume (see the note opposite) until the day of the funeral when they will again fly at half-mast.</p>		<p>The phrase 'usual local arrangements' should be read as meaning that where a flag is usually flown it can, on the day following the funeral, again be flown at full mast. If no flag is usually flown, the flag can be taken down.</p>

## 6 Books of condolence

A quiet location for the books will be made available so that those signing the books can have a moment of privacy and quiet reflection whilst doing so.

A loose leafed folder will ensure that pages can be re-ordered in case the town mayor, councillors and council officers cannot be the first to sign the book; their signatures can then appear on the first page of the bound book.

Action required	Implemented by	Other notes
<p>6.1 On the day following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales or the Duchess of Cornwall, books of condolence will be opened at the town council offices and Hythe library.</p>	<p>Town clerk / Town sergeant. If necessary, temporary seasonal staff will be deployed so that someone is always available.</p>	<p>Officers should ensure there is adequate paper available in the book. Pages that have been defaced or include offensive or other questionable comments should be quietly removed until such time as a decision can be taken by the town clerk on whether or not they should be permanently excluded.</p>
<p>6.2 A notice will put posted to the door of the town hall to let people know where the books of condolence will be.</p>	<p>Deputy town clerk</p>	<p>The notice will be laminated with a black border.</p>
<p>6.3 Books of condolence will be open from 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday in the council offices, and Monday to Saturday in the library. The facility will remain available until the day following the funeral.</p> <p>The Hythe Town Council website will detail the location of the books of condolence, and link to the Buckingham Palace and Hythe Town Council ebooks of condolence.</p>	<p>Town sergeant, deputy town clerk.</p> <p>Town clerk</p>	<p>Books of condolence will be opened on the first working day after death.</p> <p>Depending on demand, one or two books will be available for each location.</p> <p>The books will be in an easily accessible place.</p>
<p>6.4 A table and chair will be made available for members of the public to sign the book of</p>	<p>Deputy town clerk / town sergeant to ensure that tables / chairs / black</p>	<p>Downloadable images of the Royal Family are available from <a href="http://www.royal.gov.uk">www.royal.gov.uk</a> and</p>

<p>condolence. The books will be loose leaf black folders with a supply of gold edged paper. Table clothes and a framed photograph of the relevant person will be supplied.</p>	<p>table cloths / books of condolence / A4 photo frames / black pens / paper are available.</p> <p>Town clerk to source and provide colour A4 images of the relevant person.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.Instagram.com">www.Instagram.com</a></p>
<p>6.5 The town mayor will issue a statement via the town clerk expressing the sadness of Hythe Town Council and the people of Hythe at the news of the death. The statement will also appear on the home page of the website.</p>	<p>Statement to be issued by the town clerk and posted to <a href="http://www.hythe-tc.gov.uk">www.hythe-tc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>The town clerk will also make use of social and local media where possible.</p>	<p>Guidance on the content of the statement is set out in Appendix B.</p>
<p>6.6 The statement will confirm that flags will be flown at half-mast and will give details of the books of condolence. In the case of the death of the Sovereign or a member of the royal family it will mention any arrangements for an ebook of condolence on the royal website.</p>	<p>Town clerk to ensure a copy of the statement appears on the home page of the council's website.</p>	
<p>6.7 On the death of any other significant person, the town clerk will discuss with the town mayor whether an ebook of condolence should be opened on the council's website.</p>	<p>Town clerk</p>	<p>A working dummy ebook of condolence on the Hythe Town Council website has been created for rapid adaptation if necessary.</p>
<p>6.8 When the book of condolence has been closed, the deputy town clerk will arrange for the pages to be bound and make arrangements for the final bound version to be lodged.</p>	<p>Mayor's secretary / deputy town clerk</p>	<p>The books will contain personal information. No copies may be taken since that would breach their data protection rights.</p>

## 7 Focal point for grief

On the death of a member of the royal family or a senior national figure, members of the public may wish to visit a designated area as a focal point for grief. They might wish to lay flowers and other tributes or to reflect and remember.

Action required	Authorised by	Other notes
7.1 There will be a designated area for members of the public to lay flowers etc. at the Princess Diana memorial garden in Oaklands Park.	Town clerk	A map will be attached to the door of the town hall showing where the Princess Diana memorial garden is.
7.2 The location will be communicated to the public as part of the statement issued by the town mayor via the town clerk.	Town clerk	The location will be part of the news story on the front page of the council website.
7.3 The designated area will be monitored by the Deputy town clerk and the town sergeant.	Deputy town clerk / Town sergeant	People may wish to lay floral tributes at the war memorial. Folkestone and Hythe District Council will manage that situation as required.
7.4 Photographs of the floral tributes will be taken before they are removed.	Town clerk	
7.5 Tributes will be carefully removed the day following the state funeral.	Staff member under the direction of the Deputy Town Clerk	
7.6 Books of condolence will be removed and archived together with the photographs of the floral tributes.	Deputy town clerk	

## 8 Civic engagements

8.1 From the day of death until the day after the funeral, careful thought should be given to the type of events and activities the town mayor should host or attend.

8.2 Lunches, dinners and receptions may not fit in with the mood of the nation and as a mark of respect may need to be cancelled or postponed.

8.3 Where school visits are scheduled it might be helpful for the town mayor to spend time with the children to talk about the events that are unfolding. This should not be pressed upon a town mayor who is not comfortable with taking on such a role.

<b>Action required</b>	<b>Authorised /implemented by</b>	<b>Other notes</b>
8.4 Review the town mayor's programme of engagements to ensure it is appropriate at a time of national mourning and that it sits comfortably with the national mood.	The town mayor in conjunction with the town clerk and the mayor's secretary / town sergeant.	Consider working with local faith groups to arrange a service on the eve of the funeral.



## 9 Dress code

- 9.1 If a full council meeting falls during the period of mourning it would be appropriate for councillors to wear a black tie / scarf or black arm band.
- 9.2 Black arm bands will be provided by the council to councillors and council officers but will remain the council's property. Arm bands should be worn on the left arm.
- 9.3 Council members and officers will be required to supply their own black tie or scarf.
- 9.4 Councillors and council officers are recommended to wear suitable smart, dark formal clothing during the period of mourning whenever they are likely to be seen in public.
- 9.5 The town sergeant should wear formal dress during working hours.

Action required	Implemented by	Other notes
9.6 A stock of black armbands will be held in the council offices for use by councillors and council officers following the death of a senior figure.	The stock will be issued and maintained in good order by the town mayor's secretary.	At the time of the review of this protocol, consideration will be given to the number of items in stock, their condition and the need for cleaning, repair or replacement.
9.7 On the death of the Sovereign, the chains of office will not be worn by the town mayor or deputy mayor and instead badges of office will be worn on black neck ribbons. A black rosette will be added to the town mayor's robes.	Mayor's secretary	The black ribbon for the chains of office and the black rosette for the town mayor's robes to be held with black arm bands in the council offices.

## 10 Public observance of silence

Action required	Implemented by	Other notes
10.1 When the death of a senior member of the royal family is to be marked by a two minute silence, an announcement will be made by Buckingham Palace.	Town mayor working with the town clerk and town sergeant	
10.2 All those listed in Appendix C to be present. Councillors and council officers to wear black ties / scarfs / arm bands / rosettes.	Councillors	Black arm bands will be provided by the council.
10.3 The town mayor will lead a public silence outside the town hall. The death of an individual listed in Appendix D will be marked by a one minute silence.	Town mayor	Timing to be advised by Buckingham Palace / Folkestone and Hythe District Council following the announcement of the death.

## 11 Letter of condolence from Hythe Town Council

- 11.1 It is usual in the case of the death of a member of the royal family for letters to be sent to the private secretary of the deceased.
- 11.2 The letter from Hythe Town Council will ask that condolences be passed to the next of kin and other members of the family (except in the case of the Sovereign's death, in which case it will be sent to the new Sovereign's private secretary asking that condolences be passed to the new Sovereign).
- 11.3 Other than exceptional local circumstances, only one letter of condolence will be sent.

Action required	Implemented by	Other notes
11.4 As soon as practical, a letter of condolence will be drafted and circulated to the town mayor for approval before dispatch.	Town clerk	

## 12 Death of serving town mayor

12.1 Obtain maximum contact information from the person who informs you. Sensitivity to the feelings of the next of kin is of paramount importance.

- Name of informant
- Physical address of informant
- Email (to confirm details)
- Telephone (landline)
- Telephone (mobile)
- Next of kin (so that condolences can be given)
- Date of death
- (if appropriate) cause of death

Action required	Implemented by	Other notes
12.2 Current councillors informed by email	Town clerk	Use distribution list from website.
12.3 The seneschal / register of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports informed by email	Town clerk	
12.4 Former living town mayors informed by email	Deputy town clerk	Distribution list maintained by deputy town clerk.
12.5 A brief story should be placed on the website with confirmed and respectful details.	Town clerk	Current councillors should provide background information on the former mayor's life and achievements.
12.6 Local media should be briefed where appropriate	Town clerk	
12.7 As soon as practical, a letter of condolence will be drafted and circulated to the town mayor / deputy town mayor for approval before dispatch.	Town clerk	Only possible where next of kin detail is known.
12.8 The town flag will be flown at half-mast on day of the death until sunset on the day of the funeral. <sup>1</sup>	Town sergeant or in his/her absence, the deputy town clerk.	

<sup>1</sup> Civic Ceremonial, Waldram G N (Shaw & Sons) p97

### 13 Death of a former town mayor or current town councillor

13.1 Former town mayors sometimes leave the area or do not stay in touch, and it may not always be possible to mark their passing.

13.2 If a councillor or council officer becomes aware of the death of serving town councillor or former town mayor, then the information must be passed as soon as possible to the town clerk. Do not assume that someone else will already have passed the information on.

Action required	Implemented by	Other notes
13.3 Current councillors should be informed by email	Town clerk	Use distribution list from website
13.4 Past mayors should be informed by email	Deputy town clerk	
13.5 A brief story should be placed on the front page of the website with confirmed and respectful details.	Town clerk	Current councillors should provide background information on the deceased's life and achievements.
13.6 The town flag will be flown at half-mast on the day of the funeral until sunset. <sup>2</sup>	Town sergeant or in his/her absence, the deputy town clerk.	
13.7 Other actions	Town clerk in consultation with town mayor	Actions will depend on the profile of the deceased.

<sup>2</sup> Civic Ceremonial, Waldram G N (Shaw & Sons) p97

## 14 Death of a current mayor of a twin town

Action required	Implemented by	Other notes
All town councillors to be informed by email.	Town clerk / town council representatives on Hythe Twinning Association.	Use distribution list from website.  Hythe Twinning Association must be kept informed of all actions.
14.1 A brief story should be placed on the front page of the website with confirmed and respectful details.	Town clerk	Town councillors who knew the deceased mayor should provide background information on the former mayor's life and achievements.
14.2 As soon as practical, a letter of condolence will be drafted and circulated to the town mayor for approval before dispatch.	Town clerk	The letter will be addressed to the council and people of the twin town
14.3 Where appropriate, the town mayor should make arrangements to attend the funeral	Town mayor / town clerk / town sergeant	The proximity of Hythe's twin towns means that this could normally be achieved without an overnight stay. Should the town mayor wish to attend, travel costs would be borne by Hythe Town Council.

## Appendix A

- Authoritative information on flag flying can be found on the website of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the [College of Arms](#). Details can also be found on the website of the Flag Institute [www.flaginstitute.org](http://www.flaginstitute.org)
- The guidance given by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Flag Institute must be adhered to.
- Half-mast means the flag is 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. Flags cannot be flown at half-mast on poles that are more than 45° from the vertical but a mourning cravat can be used instead.
- When a flag is to be flown at half-mast, it should first be raised all the way to the top of the mast, allowed to remain there for a second and then be lowered to the half-mast position. When it is being lowered from the half-mast, it should again be raised to the top of the mast for a second before being fully lowered.

## Appendix B

- The statement should begin with a suitable expression of sadness of Hythe Town Council on hearing the announcement. It would go on to state that flags will be flown at half-mast.
- If it is an occasion when books of condolence will be opened, then reference could be made to that.
- When a decision has been taken on the council's programme of events and engagements, it might be stated that events are being cancelled as a mark of respect or that they will begin with a period of silence.
- If in doubt, do not rush out a statement which commits Hythe Town Council to action before that action has been discussed and has the necessary agreement from the town mayor and deputy mayor.

## Appendix C

- All members of the council
- Town clerk
- Current and past town mayors
- Current and former members of parliament

## Appendix D

Upon the death of those individuals listed below, the flag at the town hall will be lowered to half-mast and be marked by a one minute silence.

- The prime minister (time and place of silence to be directed by the Sovereign/government).
- A serving town mayor (time and place of silence to be directed by the town clerk in conjunction with the deputy town mayor).