

## Procedure to Mark the Death of a Senior National Figure



<b>Adopted by:</b>	Watton Town Council
<b>Date:</b>	June 2026

### Background

Guidance has been made available for a procedure to follow with the death of the Sovereign, other senior members of the Royal Family, senior national figures, or local holders of high office. This procedure is based on guidance issued.

This procedure should be implemented by the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk following instruction from the District Council.

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.

The day of the death of the Sovereign will be known as D-Day, then D+1, D+2 etc. through the ten days of National Mourning. The state funeral will be on D+10, except if this date falls on a Sunday, when the funeral will be on D+11.

It might also be appropriate to use elements of the procedure when responding to an incident which has led to many deaths, for example, a train crash or terrorist attack. This would apply if a National Day of Mourning was announced by 10 Downing Street.

### Protocol for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure or Local Holder of High Office

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

- HM The King
- HM The Queen
- HRH The Prince of Wales
- HRH The Princess of Wales
- 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 Sussex
- HRH The Duke of York
- HRH The Earl of Wessex

- HRH The Princess Royal
- HRH The Countess of Wessex
- HRH The Duchess of Sussex
- The Prime Minister
- The serving Member of Parliament for Watton Constituency
- A serving Town Mayor
- A serving member of the Council

This protocol was agreed by Council on 9.03.21.

It is due for review as and when required.

### **Book of Condolence – members of the Royal Family**

A quiet location for the book, which will be supplied by Breckland District Council, should be considered so that those signing the book 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 Mayor and others cannot be the first to sign the book; their signatures can be the first page of the bound book.

<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Implemented By</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
<p>On the day following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign or other senior member of the Royal Family a Book of Condolence will be opened at the Town Hall.</p> <p>Book of Condolence will be open from 0900hrs – 1630hrs Monday to Friday and will remain open until the day following the funeral.</p> <p>A table and chair should be made available to ease signing of the Book of Condolence.</p>	<p>Town Clerk/Deputy Clerk.</p> <p>Condolence book to be delivered to Wayland Hall by BDC.</p>	<p>The 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 Council on whether they should be permanently excluded.</p> <p>Books of Condolence should be opened on the first working day after death.</p> <p>Downloadable images of the Royal Family are available from</p>

		<p><a href="http://www.royal.gov.uk">www.royal.gov.uk</a>.</p> <p>Noted that St. Mary's Church would also be open and hold a Book of Condolence.</p> <p>WTC will provide a link to the Buckingham Palace e-book of Condolence: <a href="http://www.royal.gov.uk">www.royal.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>The Mayor will issue a statement via the Town Clerk expressing the sadness of the Council and people of Watton at the news of the death of [...]. The statement will also appear on the home page of the website.</p> <p>The statement will give details of the Book of Condolence. In the case of the death of the Sovereign or a member of the Royal Family it may also mention any arrangements for an e-Book of Condolence on the Royal Website.</p> <p>On the death of any other significant person, the Town Clerk will discuss with the Town Mayor whether an e-Book of Condolence should be opened on the Council's website.</p>	<p>Statement to be issued by the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Statement to be added to front page of TC website.</p>	<p>Floral tributes to be left at the Churchyard.</p>
<p>When the Book of Condolence has been closed it will be collected by BDC.</p>	<p>BDC to collect Book of Condolence.</p>	

## Civic Engagements

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. 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.

*Cancellation of festive events will also need to be considered.*

Action Required	Authorised/Implemented By	Other Notes
To review the programme of engagements undertaken by the Town Mayor to ensure it is appropriate in a time of national mourning and that it sits comfortably with the national mood.	The Town Mayor in conjunction with the Town Clerk.	The Council will be informed of Church services.

## Dress Code

If a full Council meeting falls during the period of mourning it might be felt appropriate for Councillors to wear a black tie or black arm band.

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
A stock of black ties and black armbands will be held in and available from the Council Office for use by the Councillors following the death of a senior figure.	The stock to be purchased issued and maintained in good order by the Town Council Office.	At the time of the annual 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.
On the death of the Sovereign, the main jewel of the Chain of office will be covered by a black jewellery bag if the chain is to be worn.	TC Office.	Black jewellery bag to be obtained and held at the Town Council Office.

## Public Observance of Silence

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
When the death of a senior member of the Royal Family is to be marked by a Silence, an announcement will be		On the death of the Sovereign there will be a two-minute silence at 1100hrs on the day of the

<p>made by Buckingham Palace.</p> <p>The Town Mayor will lead a Public Service at _____.</p> <p>All Councillors would be asked to be present. Councillors to wear black ties/arm bands/rosettes.</p>		<p>funeral, which will be a public holiday (unless D+10 is a Saturday).</p>
--	--	---

It may be that silence will be kept for other members of the Royal Family, perhaps on the day of the funeral as part of the funeral service. However, action on a silence for members of the Royal Family other than the Sovereign should await an announcement from Buckingham Palace.

The Chairman may wish to lead the silence in an appropriate public place and thought needs to be given as to location, who might be present and how the beginning and end of the silence will be marked (bugle call or similar). Information will be made public through the TC website and social media.

### **Town Council Website**

After any official announcement from Buckingham Palace, Watton Town Council may choose to activate a website holding page with a black background featuring:

- A photograph of the deceased
- The year of birth to the year of death
- Links to information such as Church Services, Condolence Books, where to lay flowers

The holding page can be closed, for visitors to access the main homepage. The mourning page should be drafted to be activated as soon as an official announcement is made.

### **The Proclamation**

The correct legal terminology for the death of the Sovereign is “Demise of the Crown”. The new monarch succeeds to the throne immediately on the death of, in this case, the King, and is then proclaimed as such after the Accession Council of Privy Councillors met at St James’ Palace.

In London, the proclamation of the new Sovereign is read from the balcony of St James' Palace. The Earl Marshall will raise his baton, and the state trumpeters will sound a fanfare. The Garter King of Arms will read the proclamation after this brief ceremony comes to an end. The proclamation will be followed by a salute of guns from Hyde Park and a peal of bells from Westminster Abbey. An escort of Household Cavalry in open carriages will go through the streets making the proclamation at Charring Cross, Temple Bar, and lastly from the steps of the Royal Exchange. Later in the day, proclamations will be made in Edinburgh, Windsor and York as well as at Guildhalls, Shire Halls and Town Halls throughout the country. At each city and town, the proclamation is made at several different spots according to either tradition or the decision of the relevant Councils. The Common Cryer and Sergeant of Arms to the City of London will follow suit with further proclamations from the Mansion House and Guild Hall.

Hopefully, the text of the proclamation will be easily available, and a watch should be kept on the Buckingham Palace website – [www.royal.gov](http://www.royal.gov) and the Privy Council website – [www.privycouncil.org.uk](http://www.privycouncil.org.uk) and the National Association of Civic Officers website – [www.nacouk.com](http://www.nacouk.com)

Proclamation Day takes place soon after the Sovereign's death, in 1952 it was 2 days after the King's death, and in 2022 it was 2 days after the Queen's death.

<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Implemented By</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
Proclamation to be read D+2.	The Town Crier is expecting to read the proclamation but in his absence the Mayor will undertake this.	Proclamation to be given outside the clock tower in the High Street.
Public to be informed that proclamation is to be read.	Town Council Office to place notices and use social media to inform of the proclamation.	
Invites to be sent to "platform party".	Town Council Office to contact "platform party".	