



Oulton Broad Parish Council

Operation London Bridge

Background

The Council's attention is drawn for the need to consider the protocol in the event of the death of her Majesty the Queen or the Duke of Edinburgh. There is a protocol to follow which, in her Majesty's case, was initially prepared in 1960 and is known as Operation London Bridge.

Implications for this council and community

While no one can be certain of the mood of the nation at such a time, a reign of this length is likely to make an impact on the nation. The Council, as a leader in the community, will wish to show its respects. This report summarises some plans which the Council may wish to consider in preparation for this event.

Implications for the Council to consider

Flowers – community members may wish to leave flowers. An appropriate place may be a designated area under a tree in Nicholas Everitt Park, or maybe a connection with the Lowestoft Museum. An agreed time for the removal of the flowers should be made. The public should be encouraged to lay flowers without cellophane as it is best to compost the flowers and to use this compost in the planting of a commemorative tree.

Flag – the community may wish to purchase a flag pole to fly the flag at half-mast and then to use the flag at events following, such as the coronation of the new sovereign.

Events – The Council meeting, if held during what is known as the 'D' days, should have a minute's silence before the start of the meeting; any events planned during those 'D' days should be cancelled as a mark of respect. The PC should liaise with the PCC regarding a Church Service. A book of condolence could be set up in the Church, or other venue for messages, for example the Pavilion in Nicholas Everitt Park. A suitable table with chair pens and vase of flowers should be available.

Councils web page – to have a page on the website with a portrait of the deceased and to detail what the council is planning in the community, e.g. the book of condolence and the flowers.

Council's budget – to agree a budget for activities agreed and for a coronation celebration.

Action for the Council to take

To consider delegated authority to the Events and Tourism Committee (Nicholas Everitt Park Trust), the implement the decisions made.

Protocol guidance regarding the death of the Sovereign

Background

- 1960 prepared for the Queen – Operation London Bridge – State Funeral
- 1960 Duke of Edinburgh – Operation Forth Bridge – Ceremonial State Funeral
- 1968 Prince Charles – Operation Menai Bridge – Ceremonial State Funeral
- Other members of the Royal Family would have a non-ceremonial Royal Funeral

Timeline (A proclamation is a statement read out to mark a significant event)

D Date of death

D + 1 Proclamation Day (London) (Sovereign only) St James Palace at 11am

D + 2 Proclamation Day (Edinburgh, Cardiff then Belfast). This will then be followed at 12.30pm by the Proclamation being read by the High Sheriff/Lord Lieutenant in each County. From 1.30 pm onwards being read by local leaders (Sovereign only)

D3 – D9 lying in state with the middle Sunday when Civic Services should be held

D10 Day of funeral (there will be a 2 minutes' silence at 11am on this day!)

Protocol guidance to consider

Your website: events you may be holding; flags/flowers/bell tolls; services – parish church or council civic service; condolence book; dress code.

1. Your council's website – have a web page ready to explain what the council will be doing. Change the front page to include a picture of the deceased with their birth and death date. Have a sympathetic message from the chairman; detail other things you may be doing, e.g. planned civic service.
2. It might be necessary to cancel events planned as a mark of request. Ask yourselves, "is it necessary for this event to go ahead?" Any civic events from the day of death until the day after the funeral should be cancelled or postponed.
3. The union flag if flown on a vertical flag pole should be flown at half-mast or flown with a cravat on it if on an angled pole. D Day – Flag at half-mast; D+1 – Flag half-mast until 11am (the proclamation) then full mast: D+2 – return to half-mast at 1pm until 8.00am on the following day. If there is a local proclamation, flags should return to full mast after this. On the day after the funeral, a flag should be flown at full mast or removed.
4. The council should detail where flowers can be laid. The chairman may wish to lay flowers first. They should have no plastic or cellophane wrappings as they should be composted and the compost used for the planting of a commemorative tree. The council should agree a date when the flowers are to be removed. All of these details will form part of your web page.
5. If your council has any portraits then they should remain with mourning ribbon for one month. A meeting should be opened with a moment of silence.
6. Find out from your parochial church council when they plan to hold a church service; a civic presence might be expected.
7. Condolence books should be considered – where, what type and when and what will be done with it afterwards. Loose leaf book has advantages. When completed it could be leather bound. The chairman/mayor should write the first page in the book. The council needs to decide when the book is closed – it would be usual to keep it open until the end of the day following the funeral. Such books are very much a local

record of the sentiments of the community and best held locally in a safe archive. A letter should be sent to the Private Secretary of the new sovereign detailing that a condolence book will be kept in the archive of the authority. The council might have an online book of condolence or it might be adequate to include a link to the Buckingham Palace website for the e-book of condolence.

8. Dress Code – consider what will be worn by councillors and officers, it is a local decision. A black tie or black arm band might be an example. If you have a mace then the head should be draped in black and the shaft should have a black bow; a chain should be in a black purse.

Other things to consider

1. Prepare a budget to include a coronation event – street party or something similar. This could well take place within 6 months of the death of the sovereign. Include in your budget the expenses relating to the death such as cost of hiring an address system, condolence book, binding loose leaf pages and so on.
2. Ensure everyone knows their roles and responsibilities, e.g. caretaker flies the flag. Council may need to delegate duties to the clerk.
3. It would be worth checking on records which you may hold and go back to the death of King George VI to see what formalities were followed then.
4. Allow some flexibility in your arrangements – knowing that some things will not be known until the actual time of death.
5. It is generally hoped that local events will be arranged – so easing the burden on London. It is more than likely that people will want to pay their respects and mark such a significant event in history.
6. Check what your District/Borough Council has planned, particularly the location of their condolence books.

Useful websites and contacts

www.royal.gov.uk Buckingham Palace's website

www.flaginstitute.org Advisory group on flag flying etiquette

mike@royalimages.co.uk Custodian of the official Royal Image Library of HM Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh for photos and frames

www.barnardandwestwood.com Black edge paper and binding

Pear Tree Bindery, 173 Unthank Road, Norwich, NR2 2PG 01603 501077

John Lewis for tablecloths and haberdashery

www.cherishedcondolences.co.uk for condolence and remembrance books