



2026

WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

Protocol for marking the death of a senior figure



3 Longden Close

Haynes

Bedfordshire

MK45 3PJ

Clerk@Wootton-PC.gov.uk

Tel: 07531 930788

Version History

Version	Reviewed at	Approved at
Version 1.00	Full Council Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 13 th May 2020	Full Council Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 13 th May 2020
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2022	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2022
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 8 th May 2024	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 8 th May 2024
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th May 2025	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th May 2025
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 13 th May 2026	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 13 th May 2026

To be reviewed at each Annual Council Meeting.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
PROTOCOL.....	3
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL.....	3
See Action A	3
PROCLAMATION DAY SCHEDULE	4
PROCLAMATION DAY	4
See Action Grid B	4
PROCLAMATION DAY PROTOCOL	4
READS THE PROCLAMATION	5
BOOKS OF CONDOLENCE	5
See Action Grid C.....	5
ONLINE BOOK OF CONDOLENCE.....	5
EVENTS DURING THE PERIOD OF MOURNING.....	6
CHURCH SERVICES	6
FLOWERS.....	6
MARKING A SILENCE	6
WEBSITE	6
See Action Grid H	6
LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE	7
See Action Grid I.....	7
ACTION GRIDS	8
A. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROTOCOL.....	8
B. PROCLAMATION DAY	8
C. BOOKS OF CONDOLENCE	8
D. EVENTS DURING THE PERIOD OF MOURNING	9
E. CHURCH SERVICES.....	9
F. FLOWERS	9
G. MARKING A SILENCE	9
H. WEBSITE.....	10
I. LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE	10
APPENDIX 1	11
PROTOCOL FOR MARKING THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE OR LOCAL HOLDER OF HIGH OFFICE.....	11
APPENDIX 2	12
CHAIRMAN’S STATEMENT.....	12
APPENDIX 3	13
Those who might be invited to be present at the reading of the Proclamation on the accession of a new Sovereign and at the Public Observance of a two-minute silence.	13

INTRODUCTION

These guidance notes have been produced from those issued by the National Association of Civic Officers (NACO). They set out the protocols to which local councils should follow and observe on marking the death of a senior national figure and to be observed on the death of the Sovereign, which involves the greatest number of ceremonial elements.

From this template, it is possible to select elements that are appropriate when marking the death of, for instance, another member of the Royal Family, a Prime Minister or former Prime Minister, or a serving Member of Parliament.

All parts of this protocol apply on the death of the Sovereign (and, of course, those sections around the Accession Proclamation arise only on the Monarch's death). Beyond that, implementation of the Protocol is a matter to be decided locally.

This protocol offers guidance on how to mark a death. It is down to the Chairman and Clerk to the Council to decide for whom the protocol is implemented and to what extent.

The following decisions will require determination:

- to read the Proclamation;
- to insert mourning front page to website;
- to cancel or reschedule meetings or events;
- to have designated flower laying area;
- to consider dress code;
- to open a Book of Condolence, or whether;
- to mark a silence (and how and where).

High Sheriffs have responsibility for reading the Proclamation at county level and the High Sherriff's office should be consulted. Alternatively, it may be appropriate to consult with the Lieutenant/Deputy Lieutenant's office.

It might also be appropriate to use elements from this guidance when responding to an incident which has led to a large number of deaths, for example: a train crash or terrorist attack.

It is important that plans include out-of-hours contact details for all those who will be called on to act.

PROTOCOL

This protocol document has been drawn up to prepare Wootton Parish Council (WPC) for the death of a senior national figure.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL

See Action A

Plans to mark a death should be implemented only when a formal announcement has been made. So, for instance, if news agencies are saying that *"reports are coming in of the death of ..."* it must be treated with caution. If possible, wait for a more definite announcement (perhaps along the lines that *"it has been announced by Buckingham Palace/Downing Street that..."*)

This protocol for WPC identifies those who are authorised to implement the plans. For the Sovereign or another senior member of the Royal Family the decision will be delegated to the Clerk to the

Council, with consultation with the Chairman. For other figures, there may need to be consultation at the time on the appropriate ways in which the death should be marked.

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

PROCLAMATION DAY SCHEDULE

In the case of the death of the Sovereign, the day following the death D+1 will be Proclamation Day, which is the day the new Sovereign is proclaimed.

D+1 - The Proclamation will be made at St James's Palace at 1100hrs (or 1400hrs if it is a Sunday). The Proclamation will then be 'cascaded'. At noon on Proclamation Day it will be read at the Royal Exchange in the City of London.

D+2 – At noon on D+2, it will be read: in Edinburgh by Lord Lyon King of Arms at Mercat Cross and at the drawbridge to Edinburgh Castle; in Cardiff by Wales Herald Extraordinary at Cardiff Castle and in Belfast by Norroy and Ulster King of Arms.

Once these Proclamations have been made it is appropriate for the Proclamation to be read at County, City, Borough and then at Parish level. High Sheriffs will read the Proclamation at County level along with Lord-Lieutenants. Most High Sheriffs are expected to make their readings at 1400hrs on D+2. It is suggested that local civic leaders should therefore make their readings at or after 1600hrs.

PROCLAMATION DAY

[See Action Grid B](#)

On Proclamation Day flags will, at the start of the day, be flying at half-mast. Wootton Parish Council does not have any facilities for the flying of flags.

(Information Only)

Flags are flown from 1100hrs on Proclamation Day (D+1) to coincide with the reading of the Principal Proclamation, until 1630hrs the following day, (D+2). This is due to the official schedule of the Proclamation (see below for more details), it will be read in London on Proclamation Day (D+1), then read at noon in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff on the day following Proclamation Day (D+2). Once those Proclamations have been made at 1400 hrs on D+2, High Sheriffs will then read the Proclamation at County level and Lord-Lieutenants will be alongside them.

PROCLAMATION DAY PROTOCOL

Reading of the Proclamation:

There is benefit in coordinating the reading of the Proclamation on D+2 after it has been read in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh. The High Sheriff's Association is encouraging its members to agree that High Sheriffs will read the Proclamation at 1400hrs on D+2. In some areas Mayors are being invited to be present at that reading so that they can then return to their areas and read the Proclamation within their own communities. It is strongly recommended that Mayors and Chairmen of Councils should therefore aim to read the Proclamation from 1600hrs onwards. It is recognised that in some large rural areas, it will not be possible for a civic leader

present at the County reading by the High Sheriff to return that swiftly and that is why that degree of flexibility has been included in the timings.

Form of Words:

The wording of the Accession Proclamation will be on the Buckingham Palace website and the Privy Council website soon after it has been read at St James's Palace on D+1, and that is probably the easiest way to get a copy for reading on D+2.

Suggested Words for the Ceremony (please note this will be amended to reflect the senior figure in question):

For the Chairman:

"We come together this afternoon following the passing of (name will be inserted here). Our sadness at this time is shared by people across the globe, as we remember with affection and gratitude the lifetime of service given. But the basis on which our Monarchy is built has ensured that through the centuries the Crown has passed in an unbroken line of succession. Today's ceremony marks the formal Proclamation to the people of Wootton and the beginning of our new King's reign.

Yesterday, the Accession Council met at St James's Palace to proclaim our new Sovereign. The flags which had flown at half-mast since (name will be inserted here) are raised briefly to their full height to mark the start of His Majesty's reign.

The Accession Council also made an order requiring High Sheriffs to cause the Proclamation to be read in the areas of their jurisdiction. It was that task which the High Sheriff of the County of Bedfordshire discharged earlier this afternoon. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Proclamation of the Accession."

READS THE PROCLAMATION

At the end of the Proclamation, the Chairman will say "God Save the King."

Official guests will repeat "God Save the King."

All present join in saying "God Save the King."

The Chairman will call for three cheers for His Majesty the King. Dispersal.

BOOKS OF CONDOLENCE

[See Action Grid C](#)

Books of Condolence will be opened on the first working day after the day of death D+1. These will be housed at St. Mary's Church, Church Road.

The Chairman may wish to agree a form of words for a message, expressing sorrow at the news of the death. This may be the form of words included in a press release, Twitter or Facebook message or on the home page of the website.

It is simply not feasible for every book from all sad occasions to form part of the Royal Archives. However, in a letter of condolence from the Chairman reference should be made to the Book of Condolence and its existence in the local archives. The letter will then be stored in the Royal Archives and act as an effective cross reference.

ONLINE BOOK OF CONDOLENCE

[See Action Grid C](#)

WPC will be accepting online submissions for the Book of Condolence through a contact form on our website: <http://wootton-pc.gov.uk>. The submissions will then be collated and included in the Book of Condolence. Alternatively, a link to the Buckingham Palace e-Book of Condolence will be included on the website: www.royal.gov.uk.

EVENTS DURING THE PERIOD OF MOURNING

See Action Grid D

From the day of the death until the day after the funeral, careful thought will be given to the types of events and activities which the Chairman should host or attend. Scheduled parish council meetings will be reviewed for postponement or rescheduling.

CHURCH SERVICES

See Action Grid E

Wootton Parish Councillors will be sent details of all Church services being held in the Parish.

FLOWERS

See Action Grid F

A designated area will be allocated as a place for residents and visitors to lay flowers during the period of mourning. Should residents wish to lay flowers during this time, they may do so adjacent/to the front of the War Memorial, Church Road. **It is important to note that all of the plastic wrap should be removed before laying them.** At the end of the mourning period, at 9am the day following the funeral, there will be a ceremonial removal of the flowers. All flowers will then be taken away to be composted, with the compost a tree will be planted in the vicinity of the War Memorial, Church Road, agreed by the council, in memory of the Sovereign.

MARKING A SILENCE

See Action Grid G

On the death of the Sovereign there will be a two-minute silence at 1100hrs on the day of the funeral (D+10). Which will be a public holiday (unless D+10 is a Saturday).

It may be that silence will be kept for other member 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 adjacent to the War Memorial, Church Road and thought needs to be given as to who will be present and how the beginning and end of the silence will be marked. It should also be established in the protocol how this information will be made public.

WEBSITE

See Action Grid H

After the official announcement from Buckingham Palace WPC will activate a website holding page with a black background featuring: a photograph of the deceased, the year of birth to the year of death, and links to the following information: Council Services, Condolence Books, Church Services and Flowers. The holding page can be closed, for visitors to then access the main homepage. Each of the links will lead to a website page with the relevant information. The website mourning page has been drafted with all the correct information but remains unpublished. The page will be activated as soon as an official announcement is made.

LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE

See Action Grid I

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, asking that condolences be passed to the next of kin and other members of the Royal Family. Except in the case of the Sovereign's death, in which case they should be sent to the new Sovereign's Private Secretary asking that condolences be passed to the new Sovereign. In each case, other than exceptional local circumstances, one letter of condolence only should be sent.

ACTION GRIDS

A. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROTOCOL

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
WPC's mourning protocol will be implemented on the formal announcement of the death of any one of those persons named in appendix 1.	Implementation will be authorised by the Clerk to the Council.	

B. PROCLAMATION DAY

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
In Wootton the Proclamation will be read as follows:	By the Chairman at 1600hrs on the day following Proclamation Day by the War Memorial, Church Road.	
All those listed in appendix 4 to be invited to be present.	Notification of the reading of the Proclamation to be given by the Clerk to the Council to those identified in appendix 4.	
Reading of the Proclamation to be publicised.	Facebook, website and local press.	

C. BOOKS OF CONDOLENCE

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
On the day following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign, Queen Consort, Prince of Wales, Princess of Wales, a Book of Condolence will be opened at St. Mary's Church, Church Road. 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.	St. Mary's Church.	

A contact form will be set up on the mourning pages of the website, for visitors to submit their condolences online.	Clerk to the Council.	
--	-----------------------	--

D. EVENTS DURING THE PERIOD OF MOURNING

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
To review the programme of engagements undertaken by the Chairman to ensure it is appropriate in a time of national mourning and that it sits comfortably with the national mood.	Clerk to the Council.	

E. CHURCH SERVICES

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
Council Members will be sent the details of any services in Wootton.	Clerk to the Council.	

F. FLOWERS

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
Allocate a designated area for residents to lay flowers during the period of mourning. WPC has allocated the War Memorial, Church Road.	Clerk to the Council.	Ensure there is enough space for the flowers, without impeding any access routes.

G. MARKING A SILENCE

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
Where the death of a senior member of the Royal Family is to be marked by a silence, an announcement will be made by Buckingham Palace.	Clerk to the Council.	Consideration will be given at the time of each death on whether a silence will be kept for other members of the Royal Family.

H. WEBSITE

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
Contact the website provider to design an appropriate hold page.	Clerk to the Council.	The hold page will have a black background featuring: a photograph of the deceased, the year of birth to the year of death, and links to the following information: Council Services, Condolence Books, Church Services and Flowers.
The information for the Condolence Books, Church Services and Flying of the Flags to be drafted for the content of the website.	Clerk to the Council.	

I. LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
As soon as is practical, a letter of condolence will be drafted and circulated to the Chairman and Clerk to the Council.	Clerk to the Council.	

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:

The King.

The Queen Consort.

The Prince of Wales.

The Princess of Wales.

Prince George.

Princess Charlotte.

Prince Louis.

The Earl of Wessex.

The Princess Royal.

The Countess of Wessex.

The Duke of Gloucester.

The Duchess of Gloucester.

The Duke of Kent.

Prince Michael of Kent.

Princess Michael of Kent.

Princess Alexandra.

The Prime Minister.

Any former Prime Minister.

The Member of Parliament for Wootton.

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

A statement will be issued by the Chairman on the announcement of the death of a senior national figure or other prominent figure.

The statement should begin with a suitable expression of the sadness of WPC on hearing the announcement. 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 upcoming WPC meetings and/or events it might be stated that meetings/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 the authority to action before that action has been discussed and has the necessary agreement from political leadership.

Those who might be invited to be present at the reading of the Proclamation on the accession of a new Sovereign and at the Public Observance of a two-minute silence.

- The Chairman and all Members of WPC.
- Wootton's Ward Councillor(s).
- Clerk to the Council.
- Deputy Lieutenant.
- Former Chairmen of WPC.
- Schools and pre-schools.
- Church Leaders and communities.
- Hanover Court/Wootton Vale Retirement communities.
- Other Community Groups, including (but not limited to) the scouting movement, football teams and WI.