

Operation London Bridge – COVID-19

Operation London Bridge is the code name which has been given to the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

This event will affect every community whether the largest city or the smallest parish. It is recommended that every council prepares itself. While you might feel that there will be no implications for your council another organisation within your community might come to you for advice. Following her departing and the official announcement from Buckingham Palace, a period of ten days state mourning follows. D Day is the date of the death and D10 the date of the full state funeral in Westminster Abbey, unless D10 falls on a Sunday then the funeral will be held on the D11 Monday.

Here are some things which you should bear in mind or you may need to do:

Cancel celebration events which are planned during the 10-day period. Pre-arranged council events may have to be cancelled during the 10-day period of mourning. You will not be able to insure against this so your council will have to bear the cost of cancelling any such events or the cost of rearranging them. All events, seen as a sign of celebration should be cancelled. Examples of this might be your Christmas Lights Switch On event or the Christmas Market; the Village Fete or Hog Roast and so on. Note that the day of the State Funeral will be a Public Holiday, unless D10 falls on a Saturday.

1. Inform Council, EWG and booked entertainment.

Flags. Where you have a vertical flag pole, the Union Flag should be flown at half-mast throughout the period of mourning, except for D2 Proclamation Day when the new King is proclaimed (Operation Spring Tide). If your flag pole is at an angle the Union Flag should be flown to full mast, with black cravats attached (you will need some black floral ribbon obtainable from a florist). A black cravat or ribbon is added to the top of the flag, at the hoist. All flags / flag poles should be returned to normal by 9.00 a.m. the day after the funeral. Remember that the Union Flag has a correct way up – in the half of the flag nearest the flagpole, the wider diagonal white stripe must be above the red diagonal stripe, as Scotland's St Andrew's Cross takes precedence over Ireland's St. Patrick's Cross. It is most improper to fly the flag upside down. As well, a flag should only be flown between sunrise and sunset.

Website. You will need to have some suitable words to put onto your website from the Mayor or Chairman of the Council. Advice given is that comments should not be “too corporate” and emotions can be expressed. So, it’s a good idea to agree this once you have your new Chairman elected in May. Your Council may also choose to have a black page on its home page carrying a portrait of Her Majesty the Queen. You may also choose to put onto this page associated tabs which might be needed during the period of mourning. Ensure that you detail here everything that might need to be mentioned during the period of mourning such as events which may have been cancelled or services which are being held.

1. Place on website Agreed wording from FC 27.1.20 on website

Portraits. Many councils have a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II in a Council Chamber or a meeting room. You may wish to consider if you need to replace this. The portrait should have a black ribbon placed diagonally across one top corner – use florist ribbon. This portrait should remain in situ with the black ribbon on it for a one-month period – being the period of Royal Mourning. After this time the portrait of the new King should be put in place, with an alternative position for the Queen’s portrait found.

1. Order photo and ribbon and place in office.

Condolence Books. You could use either a hard-backed book but using loose leaf pages has multiple advantages. Pre-printed loose leaf A4 (100gm) sheets can be taken to other places such as schools, or taken away and then collected in or returned. Following D11, the papers can be collated and bound. It would be usual to write to the Private Secretary at Buckingham Palace advising that a Book of Condolence is held in the Council Archives.

1. Order 2 books. One for the office and one for the church

Area to Lay Flowers. An area pre-designated for this purpose needs to be agreed in advance so that it does not block access routes. Flowers should be left unwrapped. Make it clear when those flowers will be removed i.e. on the morning after the State Funeral and what you intend to do with them. If the dead flowers are going to be deposited into brown bins in your cemetery then those bins might be unable to cope, if all the flowers are removed at one time. Alternatively, find an area where they could be composted.

1. Gold Park, High Street

Proclamation. The National Proclamation will be read in London (St James Palace and the Royal Exchange) along with county proclamations read normally by High Sheriffs. A proclamation could also be read by a Mayor or Chairman – but best to check with the Norfolk Lieutenancy Office for procedures they may have in place already. Flags for Proclamation reading must be at full mast.

www.norfolk.gov.uk/lieutenancy e mail lord-lieutenant@norfolk.gov.uk

Church Services. Each Diocese will arrange civic services in cathedrals and main churches on the mid Sunday of the 10-day mourning period with local parish churches encouraged to hold services on the eve of the State Funeral. A similar process will be followed for the death of HRH Duke of Edinburgh apart from the Proclamation. If both the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh pass away together, it is highly likely that there would be a full State Funeral for HM the Queen with a private service at St Georges Chapel at Windsor, later the same day for the Duke.

1. Rev Jones will inform members of the service and protocol

In the instance of this happening during the current COVID-19 Crisis the following protocols have been confirmed by District Council:

- An E-Condolence book will be place on NNDC website and a link to this will be put on Mundesley Parish Council Site.
- There will be no hard copy of a Condolence book to sign.
- NNDC will accept written copies of condolence for those who do not have the internet
- There will be no floral tributes, but members of the public can make a charitable donation in lieu of flowers.
- There will be no Memorial Services, as all places of worship are closed and social gatherings are not allowed at the current time.
- Flying the flag, where staff levels permit will be allowed.