

# Operation London Bridge

## Introduction

Operation London Bridge is the codename of the plan for what will happen in the days following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth the Second or another senior national figure.

Following the official announcement from Buckingham Palace, 10 days of state mourning will follow. D day is death day and D10 is the date of the full state funeral in Westminster Abbey, unless D10 falls on a Sunday in which case the funeral will be held on D11 Monday.

Work started on the plan in the 1960s, and nationally is a collaboration between the Royal Household, the Government, Armed Forces, Royal Parks, Church of England and Metropolitan Police Service

The plan has been cascaded down to local authorities through the Lord Lieutenants and the National Association of Civic Officers, to ensure local plans are in place. Guidance from these organisations/dignitaries forms the basis of local plans. They set out the protocols that 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.

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 document had been drawn up to prepare Sedgeford Parish Council for the death of a senior national figure. It will be reviewed quarterly to ensure that all the information remains relevant.

The following appendices are included:

Appendix 1 - Activity Checklist for the Implementation of the Protocol.

Appendix 2 - Senior National Figures included in Plan

Appendix 3 - Chair's Statement

## **Implementation of the Protocol**

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 Sedgeford Parish Council 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 Parish Clerk, in consultation with the Chair. 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.

The Chair of Sedgeford Parish Council will publish a statement (see Appendix 4) on the Sedgeford Parish Council website once the Proclamation has been read at District Level.

## **Books of Condolence**

Books of Condolence will be opened on the first working day after the day of death D+1.

All books will be placed in an easily accessible location – St Mary’s Church - though it is important the place is quiet enough to enable those signing the books a moment of privacy and quiet reflection.

Books will be placed on a good-sized table, covered with a suitable cloth, a chair, a supply of pens along with a suitable framed photograph on the table and a small arrangement of flowers.

A good supply of paper with a black border and wide left-hand margin, hole-punched to fit in a loose-leaf binder will be provided and kept well stocked. A loose-leaf folder offers an opportunity to act if the book is defaced or offensive comments included. Pages including any questionable comments should be quietly removed until such time as a decision can be taken by the Chair, on whether they should be permanently excluded.

The Chair 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 on the home page of the website. (See Appendix 4)

Dependant on local circumstances it is suggested that Books of Condolence should be closed at the end of the day following the day of the funeral (i.e. if the funeral falls on a Thursday, Books should close at 1700hrs on the Friday). Books of Condolence are essentially a local record of the sentiments expressed by local people on the death of a national figure. As such, they should form part of Sedgeford Parish Council's archive, so that future generations are able to gain access to them easily and find out the way in which national events were marked in the area.

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 Chair 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.

### **On-Line Book of Condolence**

A link to the Buckingham Palace e-Book of Condolence will be included on the website: [www.royal.gov.uk](http://www.royal.gov.uk)

### **Events During the Period of Mourning**

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 Chair should host or attend. Scheduled Parish Council meetings will be reviewed for postponement or rescheduling. Also, any Civic Lunches, dinners, receptions and so forth, may not fit with the mood of the nation and as a mark of respect may need to be cancelled or postponed. This is a local decision and one which need to be reached with great sensitivity.

### **Church Services**

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

### **Flowers**

The churchyard will be the designated area 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. 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. Any message cards will be kept with the Condolence Books as part of the local archive.

### **Dress Code**

A view will be taken locally on what is the correct dress in the event of the death of a senior national figure. It will be appropriate for black ties, ribbons and arms bands to be worn by Council members. A supply of armbands and ribbons for councillors will be held by the Parish Clerk.

### **Marking a Silence**

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 Chair will lead the silence in an appropriate public place – the churchyard. The information will be made public through our website and social media pages.

### **Website**

After the official announcement from Buckingham Palace the Clerk 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 page will be activated as soon as an official announcement is made.

### **Letters of Condolence**

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.

### **Budget items**

1. Books of Condolence - Loose Leafed
2. Flowers
3. Black armbands  
Black ribbons

## Appendix 1 - Activity Checklist

### Implementation of Protocol

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
Sedgeford Parish Council's mourning protocol will be implemented on the formal announcement of the death of any one of those persons named in Appendix 2.	Implementation will be authorised by Parish Clerk.	

### Proclamation Day

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
Reading of the Proclamation to be publicised.	Parish Clerk on website Proclamation to be read by Chair	

### Books of Condolence

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
On the day following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign or The Prince of Wales, a Book of Condolence will be opened at St Mary's Church. 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.	Parish Clerk	Parish Clerk to 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 at senior level on whether they should be permanently excluded.
A link will be set up on the mourning pages of the website, for visitors to submit their condolences online.	Parish Clerk	

### Events During the Period of Mourning

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

## Church Services

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
Council Members will be sent the details of any services in Sedgeford Parish	Parish Clerk	

## Flowers

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
Allocate a designated area for residents to lay flowers during the period of mourning – churchyard.	Parish Clerk	Ensure there is enough space for the flowers, without impeding any access routes.

## Dress Code

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
A stock of ribbons and black arm bands will be held in and available from the Parish Clerk	The stock to be issued and maintained in good order by the Parish Clerk	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.

## Marking a Silence

Action Required	Implemented By	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 – churchyard.	Parish Clerk	Consideration will be given at the time of each death on whether a Silence will be kept for other members of the Royal Family.

## Website

Action Required	Implemented By	Notes
	Parish Clerk	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 and Church Services to be drafted for the content of the website.	Parish Clerk	
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### Letter of Condolence

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

## Appendix 2 - Senior National Figures

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

The Queen

The Prince of Wales

## Appendix 4 - The Chair's Statement

A statement will be issued by the Chair 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 Sedgford Parish Council 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 the Chair'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 the Council to action before that action has been discussed and has the necessary agreement from other the Councillors.