



WHEATLEY PARISH COUNCIL - MARKING THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE

1. Purpose/Background

These notes offer guidance to Wheatley Parish Council (WPC) members and staff following the death of a senior national figure. The same notes could be followed in the event of a significant local figure or tragic event (terrorist attack or airplane/train crash).

Some information will only be relevant following the formal announcement of the death of our Monarch.

The Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire with support from Oxfordshire County Council will lead proceedings in this matter, these notes will support officers and councillors in marking the event within the community.

2. Commitment from Wheatley Parish Council

2.1 Flag flying – WPC have no flags or masts.

2.2 Book of condolence – WCP may choose to provide a book of condolence or support Oxfordshire County Council or St Mary's Parochial church council in signposting residents to books of condolences held in key village locations or online.

2.2.1 WPC provide a book of condolence

A book of condolence to be opened on the first working day after the death. The book of condolence to be available for signing during office/pre-arranged hours in the parish office, or other suitable location.

The book of condolence to be laid out on a table with black tablecloth, photograph or floral display, and a supply of pens.

The book of condolence should not be left unattended. Any defaced pages or offensive comments should be discretely removed.

The book of condolence will be closed at 17:00 on the day following the funeral. The comments included in the book are a local record of the sentiments expressed by the community and should be archived. Reference to the existence of such a book should be acknowledged with a short communication to the Royal Archives.

2.2.2 Online or other book of condolences

The parish council website will signpost the community to local venues hosting a book of condolence, or an online book of condolence.

Should there be members of the community without access to the internet, messages can be collected at the parish office and added online.

2.3 WPC's message of condolence

Members of WPC may agree for a representative of WPC to write/send a message on behalf of WPC.

- 2.4 Communications** – The council's website and social media accounts will publish an announcement from the Chair of the Parish Council as well as any official announcements. Any relevant links will be shared on the page too.

A draft statement will be made available in advance of such an event.

- 2.5 Local events during the period of mourning** - The parish council will work with the district and county councils to promote planned local events that allow residents to pay their respects.

Given the villages proximity to the A40 and subsequent transport links to London we may need to be prepared for increased traffic flow along local roads.

- 2.6 Laying of flowers**

Often people choose to express their sadness by laying flowers and the parish council may identify the memorial garden as a suitable location for this to take place.

Parish staff could monitor the site and after approximately one week remove/compost the flowers.

The parish council may also wish to consider planting a memorial tree or other memorial item at some point after the funeral.

- 2.7 Donations**

Should the members of the public wish to make donations to preferred charities, details of this will be shared via WPC's communication channels.

- 2.8 Church Services** – The parish council will support the communication of any church services arranged by the local churches. Members will be kept informed of these services and given the opportunity to attend.

- 2.9 Tolling of bells and lighting of St Mary's Church** - The parish council will work with members of St Mary's Church to discuss this.

- 2.10 Existing events** – The parish council should consider any parish council events taking place during this period. It may be appropriate to decide whether it is necessary for such events to go ahead.

Clerk and Chair of the council will decide on cancellation/postponement of parish council meetings.

- 2.11 Resources**

The parish council should have resources available. Condolence books, if required should be replenished and stored in the parish office.

A black tablecloth and armbands are available from the parish office.

2.12 Statement – to be adapted accordingly.

It is with great sadness that Wheatley Parish Council has learnt of the death of XXX.

Wheatley Parish Council will be opening a book of condolence in the parish office from 09.30-15:00 from (if applicable)

As a mark of respect, the council has cancelled XXX OR will begin with a period of silence.

Should you wish to express your sadness by laying flowers please visit the memorial gardens.