

# Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Full Council 14/07/2022 22-041 7.0

## Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure

**Agenda item 22/041 7.0: To receive report 22-041 7.0 on Operation London Bridge and resolve the recommended actions and commemorations.**

### BACKGROUND

The Clerk recently attended an information session on marking the death of a senior national figure. In particular, this was in relation to Operation London Bridge which is the code name given to the passing of Her Majesty The Queen.

The Council may choose how it wishes to mark the occasion of her Majesty's passing, but nothing must happen until the official announcement is made by Buckingham Palace.

The passing of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh occurred during Covid and to mark that occasion, the Council's website was overwritten with a black page carrying a portrait of HRH The Prince Philip. Cllr. Dennett, in his position as Chairman, also wrote some words which were posted to the website.

However the Council chooses to mark the occasion, there is a strict timetable that must be adhered to. The details of the timetable are given in the SLCC advice note: document 22-041 7.1 (supplied for the Council's use only).

It should be noted that the 10 days (or 11 depending on where the death occurs) of public mourning are, by Local Government Act 1972, s 243, excluded from the calculation of the three clear days' notice of a council meeting. Therefore, Council meetings may need to be cancelled or postponed. Other events which are considered to be celebrations i.e. National Beacon Lighting should be cancelled or postponed.

If relevant, elections and the taking of office of new councillors may also be affected, but further instructions will be given by West Berkshire Council (WBC). If the period of mourning includes Remembrance Sunday, Remembrance Sunday will go ahead but with additional prayers.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS/COMMEMORATIONS

1. **Website:** Overwrite the Council's website with a black page carrying a portrait of Her Majesty The Queen along with appropriate words from the Chairman. A copy of the official portrait has already been downloaded.
2. **Book of Condolence:** have an online Book of Condolence available via the Council's website. This will require staff time as the content will need reviewing prior to approving posting.

3. **Alternative Book of Condolence and donations:** The Council's website can also signpost members of the public to WBC's hard copy versions, the closest of which will be held in Theale library and to the Buckingham Palace website where there should also be a book of Condolence and the opportunity to make a donation.
4. **Council Meetings:** proceed with any meetings that have already been called which are taking place during the mourning period but commence these with a 2-minute silence. Black arm bands may also be worn but these would need to be purchased now in preparation. The Clerk and Chairman of the Council to reschedule other meetings, which are unable to be called with 3 clear days, as soon as possible.
5. **Celebratory events:** Council events, which are classed as celebratory, will be postponed.

The office is currently liaising with the Benefice Office and is seeking confirmation as to how the Stratfield Mortimer Benefice will be marking the event. There may be areas where the two authorities can work together i.e. if the Church is having a hard copy book of condolence and/or an area for laying flowers. Where relevant, the office would be able to signpost members of the public to events being held to mark the occasion i.e. services, bell ringing.

## **COST**

There is no additional charge for the online Book of Condolence. Black armbands can be obtained for £20.00 + VAT & postage.