

LAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure

This procedure is for marking the death of any prominent national figure such as the Monarch or other member of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister, a serving Member of Parliament or other prominent person.

The Monarch will be given a State Funeral.

The Prince of Wales will be given a Ceremonial Royal Funeral.

Other members of the Royal Family will be given Non-Ceremonial Royal Funerals.

Plans to mark a death should only be implemented when a formal announcement has been made.

Proclamation after the death of the Monarch

High Sheriffs have responsibility for reading the Proclamation within their county and will work closely with the county Lord-Lieutenant.

The Proclamation will be announced in London on the day after the death (D+1) then county Proclamations will be read by the High Sheriffs and other Civic Officers on D+2. Councils may have the proclamation read by the High Sheriff (if available), a deputy Lieutenant, the Mayor / Chairman of the Council or the Clerk.

Should the village wish to hold a Proclamation event, it will take place by the War Memorial. The Church and Parish Council will liaise. The new National Anthem should be sung.

Bells

If the Royal death is announced before 12noon on D Day, every church will toll one bell for each year of the Monarch's life (if the announcement is after 12noon, the bell will be tolled the following day). The Council will liaise with the Church.

Flags

As there is no flag pole on the Church it will not be possible to fly a flag. However, if there were, it should be lowered to half-mast from the time of the announcement until 8am on the day following the funeral, apart from Proclamation Day when it will be raised.

Book of Condolence

Any Book of Condolence should be opened on the first working day after the day of death. The Parish Council will provide a folder and paper for the Book of Condolence and it will be available in St Mary's Church where a good-size table covered with a suitable cloth, a chair and a supply of pens will be provided. If a suitable photograph is available, that may be in a frame on the table, or a small flower arrangement could be provided.

The Book of Condolence should be closed at the end of the day following the day of the funeral and is a record of the sentiments expressed by local people on the death of the national figure. It will form part of the Parish archive and will be sent, once bound, to the County Archive in Oxford.

The Church may also wish to hold a service or have volunteers available in church while the Book of Condolence is available.

It will be likely that Buckingham Palace will have an online book of condolence available which will close at 5pm on the day after the funeral.

Website

The home page of the Parish Council website will be overwritten with a black page carrying a portrait of the Monarch together with appropriate wording.

Events and Activities

From the day of the death until the day after the funeral, careful thought should be given to the types of events and activities which should take place.

From a Parish Council meeting perspective, all days of mourning are counted as 'Sundays' and all meeting summons will be suspended until after the funeral.

All events should consider 'why is it really necessary and appropriate for this event to go ahead'. For instance, if the Village Fete were to be due to take place during the time of mourning, it may not be appropriate, nor will it be possible to hold any Parish Council meetings.

Dress Code

Councillors will be encouraged to dress soberly on official business. The Councillors and the Clerk will be provided with black arm bands.

Letters of Condolence

The Parish Council will decide whether to send a letter of condolence to the Private Secretary of the deceased or the new Monarch's Private Secretary as appropriate.

Further Reference

Additional information can be found in the National Association of Civic Officers Guidance.

Previously adopted at a Parish Council Meeting on 8 January 2026 (Minute reference 8/1/26 7.d.i) to be reviewed in two years or sooner should the Council wish or legislation dictate.