

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet

**MEETING DATE:** 12 May 2015

**BY:** Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

**SUBJECT:** Flag Flying and Mourning Protocols

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To regularise the Council's position in relation to the flying of flags and books of condolence and the steps to be taken in the event of the death of the reigning Sovereign and other senior members of the Royal Family and National Figures.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the Protocol on Flags and Books of Condolence and the Protocol for marking the death of the reigning Sovereign and other senior members of the Royal Family and National Figures as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council's current flag flying protocol was developed some time ago by the then Provost and the Communications Manager and is published on the Council's website. It recognises the fact that East Lothian is the birthplace of Scotland's flag and that the Saltire will be flown at all times apart from on specifically listed occasions.
- 3.2 The Council continues to recognise East Lothian's special association with the Saltire. However, because Haddington Town House flagpole was recently reinstated following prolonged repair work to the building, this now means that two Saltires are currently being flown in close proximity to each other in Haddington with each being lowered and raised on several specified days throughout the year. The Protocol at Appendix 1 proposes that the Saltire now be flown permanently at Council Headquarters at John Muir House, Haddington, and at the Brunton Hall in Musselburgh, apart from only three occasions in a year to mark the Queen's birthdays and Remembrance Sunday. It proposes that

the Union Flag be flown permanently at the Town House in Haddington apart from on Commonwealth Day, Europe Day and Armed Forces Day, when the appropriate flags will be flown to mark those occasions. The Union Flag will also be lowered when it is felt more appropriate to fly other flags to mark significant occasions such as a twinning event, a VIP visit etc.

- 3.3 Consultation on the new Protocol has taken place with the Saltire Society and, while they have expressed disappointment at any reduction in the number of Satires being flown permanently, they have no objection to the new Protocol.
- 3.4 The Protocol at Appendix 2 is new to the Council. It specifies the steps to be taken in the event of the death of the Reigning Sovereign, senior members of the Royal Family and certain other National Figures. The protocol also deals with the role of the Lord Lieutenant, who has been consulted, and who has indicated that he is content with the Protocol so far as it relates to him. It goes on to deal with those occasions when flags should be flown at half-mast, the deployment of books of condolence, events during the period of mourning, dress code, marking by silence and letters of condolence. This will provide clarity and guidance to those officers responsible for these tasks on occasions such as this and will ensure that the Council is prepared to react quickly and efficiently as events unfold.

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 These protocols will form the Council's practice and policy in relation to the flying of flags and the steps to be taken in the event of the death of the Reigning Sovereign, senior members of the Royal Family and certain National Figures

#### **5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

#### **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial – small outlay to purchase a stock of arm bands and black ties, books of condolence etc. This can all be met from within current budgets.
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other - None

## 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

### 7.1 Current flag flying protocol

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<b>DATE</b>	16 April 2015

## APPENDIX 1

### Protocol for Flags and Books of Condolence

In recognition of East Lothian's place as the Birthplace of Scotland's Flag, East Lothian Council will fly the Saltire permanently from John Muir House, Haddington and Brunton Hall, Musselburgh. The Union Flag will fly from the Town House, Haddington.

On the occasions listed below (2015 dates), the appropriate flag will be flown.

Date	Event	Flag	Location(s)
9 March	Commonwealth Day	Commonwealth Flag	Town House, Haddington
21 April	Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen	Union Flag	John Muir House, Haddington Brunton Hall, Musselburgh
9 May	Europe Day	European Flag	Town House, Haddington
13 June	Official Celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday (Trooping the Colour)	Union Flag	John Muir House, Haddington Brunton Hall, Musselburgh
22 - 27 June	Armed Forces Day (27th)	Armed Forces Day Flag	Town House, Haddington
8 November – 11 November	Remembrance Day (2nd Sunday) /Armistice Day	Union Flag	John Muir House, Haddington Brunton Hall, Musselburgh

By special request, and with the approval of the Provost and Chief Executive, other flags may be flown at the appropriate location (usually the Town House, Haddington) to mark a significant occasion, such as: the visit of a foreign delegation or a town twinning event, VIP visit, royal occasion or other key event. On St Andrew's Day, the Saltire will take precedence over any request to fly other flags.

*Flags are raised in Haddington by John Muir House Mail Room Staff and in Musselburgh by Brunton Hall Caretaking Staff.*

## **Flying of Flags at Half-mast**

The occasions on which flags are to be flown at half-mast are:

*(‘Half-mast’ actually means that the flag is flown two-thirds up the flag pole)*

- from the announcement of the death until the funeral of the Sovereign, both days inclusive (except on Proclamation Day, when the flag will be flown at full mast from the time the Principal Proclamation of the New Sovereign is read in London until after Proclamations have been read in all the devolved administrations the following day. Official flags will then revert to half-mast until the funeral)
- the funerals of foreign rulers, subject to special commands in each case
- from the announcement of the death until the date of the funeral (inclusive) of:
  - senior members of the Royal Family (Union Flag)
  - Prime Minister of UK or past holder of that Office (Union Flag)
  - First Minister of Scotland or past holder of that Office (Saltire)
  - A serving Provost or Leader of the Council
  - A serving member of the Council
- In the event of an act of terrorism or other human tragedy involving multiple fatalities within the United Kingdom the Provost, in conjunction with the Chief Executive, will make the decision as to what is appropriate.

## **Books of Condolence**

In certain circumstances the Provost and Chief Executive may deem it appropriate to make Books of Condolence available in council offices (typically, John Muir House, Haddington & Brunton Hall, Musselburgh) to allow members of the public to record their respects.

Completed Books of Condolence are a local record of the sentiments expressed by local people on the death of a national figure. As such, they should form part of the Authority’s archive so that future generations are able easily to gain access to them and find out the way in which national events were marked in the area.

## APPENDIX 2

### Protocol for Marking the Death of the Reigning Sovereign, Senior Members of the Royal Family and Certain National Figures

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

The Reigning Sovereign  
Senior Members of the Royal Family  
The Prime Minister  
The First Minister  
A serving Provost or Leader of the Council  
A serving member of the Council

#### PART 1 Implementation of the Protocol on hearing of the death

Action Required	Authorised by	Notes
This Protocol will be implemented on the formal announcement of the death of any one of those persons named above.	Implementation will be authorised by the Head of Council Resources or in his/her absence by the Chief Executive or either of the Depute Chief Executives	

#### PART 2 Lord- Lieutenant

Action Required	Authorised by	Notes
Lord-Lieutenants observe both national and Royal mourning. In both instances, a black crape band is worn on the left arm of the uniform coat above the elbow. Black or dark colours should be worn in civilian dress (men wearing black ties) and the same mourning band may also be worn. Official engagements may be fulfilled.  Social engagements (as Lord-Lieutenant) are not accepted and those entered into beforehand are cancelled.		Stock of arm bands to be held in Lieutenancy Office for Lord-Lieutenant and Deputy Lieutenants

**PART 3      Flag Flying**

<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Implemented by</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<p>Immediately at the request of the Head of Council Resources or in his/her absence the Chief Executive or either of the Depute Chief Executives, flags will be lowered to half-mast.</p>	<p>At Haddington by Mailroom staff and Musselburgh by the duty caretaker</p>	<p>Half-mast means the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole.</p> <p>When a flag is to be flown at half-mast it should first be raised all the way to the top of the mast, allowed to remain there for a second and then lowered to the half-mast position. When being lowered from half-mast, it should again be raised to the top of the mast for a second before being fully lowered.</p>
<p><b>Applicable only following the death of the Sovereign:</b></p> <p>On Proclamation Day (D+1) (the day following the death of the Sovereign, when the new Sovereign is proclaimed) flags will – at 1100 – be raised to full mast and flown throughout the day at full mast. On the day following Proclamation Day (D+2) they will be returned to half-mast at 1300.</p>	<p>At Haddington by Mailroom staff and Musselburgh by the duty caretaker</p>	
<p><b>On subsequent days:</b></p> <p>Following the death of the Sovereign or other senior member of the Royal Family, flags will continue to be flown at half-mast until 0800 on the day following the funeral.</p> <p>For all others identified in the list on page 1, flags will fly at half-mast on the day of the announcement of the death. On subsequent days the usual local arrangements will</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>The funeral of the Sovereign will take place 10 days after the day of death. For other senior members of the Royal Family the number of days will be fewer.</p> <p>The phrase ‘usual local arrangements’ should be read as meaning that where a flag is usually flown it can, on the day following the funeral,</p>

resume ( <i>see note opposite</i> ) until the day of the funeral when they will again fly at half-mast.		again be flown at full mast.
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#### **PART 4 Books of Condolence**

<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Implemented by</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
<p>On the day following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign, or other senior member of the Royal Family, a Book of Condolence will be opened at John Muir House, Haddington and Brunton Hall, Musselburgh.</p> <p>Books of Condolence will be open from 0930–1630, Monday – Friday, and will remain open until the day following the funeral.</p> <p>An online Book of Condolence will be posted on the Council Website.</p> <p>A framed photograph of the relevant person will be put in place on the table with the Book of Condolence.</p>	<p>Democratic Services Assistant or in their absence by the Team Manager - Democratic Services or Service Manager – Licensing, Administration and Democratic Services</p> <p>Web Manager</p> <p>Democratic Services Assistant or in their absence by the Team Manager – Democratic Services or Service Manager – Licensing, Administration and Democratic Services</p>	<p>A stock of Books of Condolence is kept in the Provost’s office.</p> <p>Suitable frames will be purchased and kept with books of condolence. Suitable photographs of the Royal Family are available to download from <a href="http://www.royal.gov.uk">www.royal.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>The Provost will issue a statement via the Press Office, expressing the sadness of the Council and people of East Lothian at the news of the death. The statement will also appear on the home page of the Council website.</p>	<p>Statement to be issued by Communications &amp; Marketing.</p>	<p>The statement should also state that flags will be flown at half-mast and will inform where Books of Condolence will be available.</p> <p>It may also state if any events are being cancelled as a mark of respect or that they will begin with a period of silence.</p>



When the Books of Condolence have been closed arrangements will be made to have these stored in the Council archives.	Democratic Services Assistant or in their absence by the Team Manager – Democratic Services or Service Manager – Licensing, Administration and Democratic Services	
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## **PART 5 Events during the period of Mourning**

<b>Action required</b>	<b>Implemented by</b>	<b>Other notes</b>
To review the programme of engagements undertaken by the Provost to ensure it is appropriate in a time of national mourning and that it sits comfortably with the national mood.	The Provost in discussion with the Leader and Chief Executive.	Consideration will also be given to arrange some sort of Service on the eve of the funeral.

## **PART 6 Dress Code**

<b>Action required</b>	<b>Implemented by</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
A stock of black ties and black arm bands will be held in the Provost's Office for use by Councillors and senior officers if required.	Democratic Services Assistant	
On the death of the Sovereign, the chain of office will not be worn by the Provost. From the day of death until and including the day of the funeral the Provost should wear a black tie.		

## **PART 7 Marking by Silence**

<b>Action required</b>	<b>Implemented by</b>	<b>Other Notes</b>
Where the death of a senior member of the Royal Family is to be marked by a Silence, an announcement will be		

<p>made by Buckingham Palace.</p> <p>The Public Observing of the Silence to be publicised.</p>	<p>Communications &amp; Marketing to ensure that the public are informed by way of a press release and item on the Council's website.</p>	
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**PART 8      Letters of Condolence**

<b>Action required</b>	<b>Implemented by</b>	<b>Other notes</b>
<p>As soon as practical, a letter of condolence will be drafted and circulated to the Provost, Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive before dispatch.</p>	<p>Communications &amp; Marketing</p>	