
Date:	17 July 2018
Title:	Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure
Contact Officer:	Andrea Oughton, Committee Services Officer

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide background on the updated procedure and action plan to be followed in the event of the death of a senior national figure.

Background

2. South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Emergency Planning team has requested details of Thame Town Council's procedure on "Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure", to fit in with their publicity responsibilities (e.g. with regard to books of condolence / flower laying) in that eventuality.
3. At a recent Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils meeting, there was a presentation from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), in their capacity as Secretariat to the Lieutenancy, on the same topic. This included specific definition of the only authorised supplier of the condolence book subsequently also confirmed by SODC.
4. The Town Council receives separate guidance on the same topic from the National Association of Civic Officers (NACO), which is referred to by both SODC and OCC. This sets out the protocols to be observed on the death of the Sovereign (which involves the greater number of protocols to consider), another member of the Royal Family, a Prime Minister or Former Prime Minister, a serving Member of Parliament, a Mayor, Council Leader or other prominent person. It is up to each local authority to decide for whom the protocol is implemented and to what extent.
5. The Town Council has always had its own procedure (sometimes referred to as Operation Lion), but the opportunity has been taken to bring it up to date with latest guidance and advice, along with a supporting action plan. This covers specific defined requirements, including timings, and the potential for out of hours activity. Both the Procedure and the Action Plan are attached.

Risk Assessment

6. With no agreed procedure or action plan in place there is a risk of incorrect decisions under time pressure, or that the Town Council would not be prepared or have clear instructions on the protocols required, staff requirements or expectations of the residents.

Resource Appraisals

7. As part of their guidance, NACO also provide etiquette for equipment considerations for enabling the residents to convey messages of sympathy by opening a book of condolence, room layout, pictures, dress code and staffing. It is critical that appropriate protocol and decorum expected of a public body is in place. Costs for these requirements are in the region of £900, which has already been committed from (and nearly used up) the Corporate Image budget. There will be additional staffing costs for any out-of-hours activities.

Legal Powers: General Power of Competence

Recommendation:

- To review and adopt the Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure procedure and action plan***