

Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

Title:	Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
Date:	25 October 2022
Contact Officer:	Cassie Pinnells, Community Services Manager

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on the events held to commemorate the Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Update

2. On the evening of 8 September 2022, the Town Council learnt of the news that HM Queen Elizabeth II had sadly passed away. Relevant actions were taken that evening in line with the procedure with regards to website / social media and flag-flying.
3. From 9 September, the Information Centre was used for the Book of Condolence, with around 300 people signing it here during the mourning period. Thanks are given to the Councillors who enabled this to be open during the weekend of 10-11 September. Additional books were available to sign at St Mary's Church and the library.
4. As well as progressing preparations for the Proclamation on Sunday 11 September, Officers also arranged a meeting that weekend with Councillors to consider whether to hold the September Fair during the mourning period, as Government guidance placed the decision on the event organiser. It was agreed that the Fair would go ahead with suitable provisions to respect the Queen including, images of the queen, wreath laying and quieter music.
5. Thame's Proclamation ceremony took place outside the Thame Town Hall, on Sunday 11 September 2022 at 2.15pm. To mark the Proclamation of King Charles III, and following royal protocol, flags were raised to full mast outside the Town Hall and at the Memorial Gardens from 9.30am on Saturday 10 September 2022 and remained at full mast until 3pm on Sunday, 11 September, when they returned to half-mast until the morning of Her Majesty's funeral. Thame's Proclamation of King Charles III was announced by Deputy Lieutenant, Bernard Taylor. Following opening words from Deputy Mayor, Cllr Adrian Dite. Rev Mike Reading of St Mary's Church, Thame closed with prayers for Queen Elizabeth II and blessings for King Charles III. Thame Concert Band played Thame's first public rendition of our National Anthem 'God Save the King' at the event.
6. The proclamation event was well-attended and supported by Officers, Councillors and the community, although it highlighted the need for provisions for short-notice / emergency closure of the car park and associated risk assessments.
7. The state funeral was held on Monday 19 September 2022. Given the operational requirements of the weekend of the September Fair, it was agreed that a one-minute silence would not be formally held outside the Town Hall and the community were encouraged to observe it at home. The book of condolence was removed at the end of 20 September 2022. The Union Flag was flown for the rest of the week. Floral tributes were removed from Thame and Moreton war memorials in early October.

Review

8. The action plan provided a comprehensive guide for Officers but a few matters have been highlighted within the action plan and procedure for marking the death of a Senior National Figure. These documents will be brought to a future Policy & Resources Committee for review in due course.
9. The National Association of Civic Officers have informed members there is no central collection point for Books of Condolences, the idea being that they should be deposited in your most relevant archives, so local people, at any point in the future, can refer to them. It has been suggested that binding the pages and covering them in Arbelave Black faux leather cloth is approx.. £150 - £190 +VAT (175sheets). Officers would like to investigate costs to formally bind the Book of Condolence sheets in preparation for archiving at Oxfordshire County Archives.
10. Officers would also like the committee to consider planting two oak trees in memorial of HM Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip on 20 November 2022, on what would have been their 75th wedding anniversary. This requirement would be investigated to find a suitable location, costs, maintenance requirements and seek professional advice within the Thame Trees/Green Living Plan Community Partnership. Once the information has been collated, this will be presented to the Open Spaces Working Group for their approval with estimated costs of not more than £200.

Legal Powers

- Local Government Act 1972, Section 145.
- General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, ss.1-8

Action required:

- i) To note this report.*
- ii) To authorise the Community Services Manager to investigate costs to bind the Book of Condolence sheets in preparation for archiving at Oxfordshire County Archives at a cost not more than £200.*
- iii) The Town Council considers planting two oak trees at a suitable location approved by the Open Spaces Working Group and at a cost of not more than £200.*