

Community Services Committee

Date:	11 November 2025
Title:	Flag Flying Policy
Contact Officer:	Cassie Pinnells, Community Services Manger

Purpose of Report

1. To ask the council to **consider** a request to fly the Union Flag as the default flag on the Town Hall flagpole and to review additional proposed amendments to the Flag Flying Policy attached which includes flying the pride flag for (most of¹) the month of June.

Background

2. The Flag Flying Policy was first adopted at the Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee meeting on 25 October 2016. The policy has made several amendments and is attached with the latest suggested changes highlighted.
3. In 2016, a competition was run by the council to design a Town Flag, the aim of which was to provide a town identity and to fly this flag as the default flag ensuring that the Union Flag was flown on the legally required and special days.
4. The Union Flag is recognised as the national flag of the United Kingdom and stands as a powerful symbol of national unity, heritage, and pride. UK government guidance encourages government buildings—and by extension, councils—to display the Union Flag all year round except when other flags are warranted, noting that an empty flagpole is actively discouraged. Flying the Union Flag reinforces civic identity and represents the Town Hall's connection to the United Kingdom, its democratic institutions, and national values.
5. The council also fly the Union Flag as default in the memorial gardens
6. Other local authorities across the UK utilise the Union Flag as the default on council buildings, replacing it with special flags for local, ceremonial, or commemorative occasions. This approach provides clear, recognised representation aligned with national protocol and is supported by official guidelines on precedence and flag etiquette.
7. Flying the Rainbow Flag in June, which is widely recognised as Pride Month, acts as a visible sign of respect, support, and solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community. It communicates the Town Council's stance on equality, diversity, and inclusion, sending a welcoming message to all residents and visitors. This action is particularly meaningful as the town now celebrates its own Pride event, fostering a sense of community and reinforcing civic pride in local initiatives

¹ During Pride Month (June), the Pride Flag should be flown to mark the month and in celebration of the town's Pride event, except on Armed Forces Day and other designated national occasions, when the relevant flags take precedence.

Legal Powers and Flag-Flying Policies

8. Town Councils have discretion over which flags are flown from council-owned buildings, subject to compliance with planning regulations and government guidance. There is no statute directly regulating which flags councils must fly; however, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 apply to flag flying, treating certain flags (including the Union Flag and local authority flags) as exempt from planning consent if displayed according to prescribed rules.
9. The Union Flag does not require formal consent to be flown, provided it adheres to size and location restrictions. The Council can set its own policy for flag flying frequency and occasions, ensuring both national protocol and local representation as appropriate.
10. Decisions about which flag to fly and when is designated to the Town Council and delegated to the Mayor and the Clerk.

Suggested Occasions to Fly the Town Flag

11. If the council decide to fly the Union Flag as the default, the following are suggestions for when the Council could fly the town flag:
 - a. Civic events unique to the town (e.g., annual town celebrations, local festivals, town anniversaries)
 - b. The day marking the town's founding or other significant historic milestones
 - c. During the winners' announcement week of the original town flag competition (to celebrate local identity)
 - d. On occasions directed by the Town Council to mark notable local achievements or community awards
12. This balanced approach ensures national identity is respectfully represented, while local heritage and civic pride continue to be celebrated through the town flag.

Legal Powers: Highways Act 1980, s 144; DCLG – Plain English Guide to Flying Flags Nov 2012

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- i) The amended Flag Flying Policy be adopted.***