

# **THE FLYING OF FLAGS FROM COUNCIL BUILDINGS, TOWER LIGHTING AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR BOOKS OF CONDOLENCE**

**REVISED NOVEMBER 2023**

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## **General Notes**

National flags are flown from local government buildings to mark certain set occasions. They are also flown at half-mast as a mark of respect following the death of a member of the Royal Family and of current or past holders of high political office. In certain circumstances it is judged appropriate to make books of condolence available in council offices to allow members of the public to record their respects.

This protocol attempts to standardise the flying of flags and to set out responsibilities in relation to books of condolence.

It should be noted with regard to flag flying that some compromises have been made between the formal rules of etiquette and what has become accepted practice.

This protocol has also been updated to reflect the recent practice of lighting the tower at Council HQ at various times upon request as a mark of recognition, solidarity, commemoration, or respect.

From time-to-time decisions in relation to a particular set of circumstances will require to be taken. In such instances the Chief Executive will communicate the decision, after consulting the Convener, or the Vice Convener, and if appropriate the Lord Lieutenants and the Lord Chamberlain's office.

All expenditure occasioned by a period of national mourning should be debited to the Civic Recognition Budget administered by the Chief Executive's Department.

<b>Occasions on which flags will be flown from Scottish Borders Council Buildings:</b>			
Date	Occasion	Flag	Remarks
1 <sup>st</sup> February	Start of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month	Rainbow Flag	To be flown at HQ only.
March	Commonwealth Day	Commonwealth Flag	Flag to be flown at HQ only. Flag to be raised at 10:00am
17 May	International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia	Rainbow Flag	To be flown at HQ only.
14 November	Birthday of His Majesty the King	Union Flag	Not to be confused with the Monarch's official Birthday which falls during June
June	Kings Official Birthday	Union Flag	See <a href="http://www.royal.gov.uk">www.royal.gov.uk</a> to confirm date
27 <sup>th</sup> June	Armed Forces day	Armed Forces day Flag	The Flag should be flown for 7 days commencing on the Monday before the 27 <sup>th</sup> June
3 September	Merchant Navy Day	Red Ensign	To be flown at HQ only.
Between 11 November (Armistice Day) and Remembrance Sunday	Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday	Union Flag	Flag to be flown Fully up throughout
30 November	St Andrews's Day	Saltire	

#### Notes

1. Requests from other special interest groups to have their flags flown from council buildings will generally be refused.
2. Lord Lieutenants each have an Armed Forces Day Flag and can be allowed the facility to fly it from a council flagpole within their lieutenancy.

3. In the event of a visit by an official delegation from a foreign country it may be appropriate to mark the occasion by flying the national flag of the visitor(s) in which case the Council Flag will be replaced for the duration of the visit.

**Occasions on which Flags will be flown at half-mast:**

From the announcement of the death until the funeral of the Monarch, except on Proclamation Day, when they are hoisted right up from 11am until sunset, unless otherwise advised.

The day of the funeral of a foreign ruler, subject to special commands from the Monarch in each case.

From the announcement of the death until the day of the funeral of:

- Members of the Royal Family. (Union Flag)
- Prime Minister of UK or past holders of that Office. (Union Flag)
- First Minister of Scotland or past holders of that Office. (Saltire)
- Presiding Officer of Scottish Parliament or past holders of that Office. (Saltire)

In the event of an act of terrorism within the United Kingdom, involving multiple fatalities. (Union Flag)

In the event of any other disaster, which has occurred within the United Kingdom, involving multiple fatalities. In such cases the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Convener/Vice Convener of the Council, will make the decision as to what is appropriate.

## **FLAGS & FLAG FLYING RULES**

**Saltire:** The flag of St Andrew and the recognised National Flag of Scotland. It is correct to fly with or instead of the Union Flag. By protocol it should not be flown at half-mast but this has become accepted practice in recent times as a mark of respect on the occasion of the death of a prominent Scot holding a post for which half-mast flag flying would be appropriate.

**Union Flag.** The official flag of the United Kingdom and should be used on all occasions associated with the Royal Family. A common error is to hoist the Union Flag the wrong way up. The correct way is with the broader white diagonals uppermost as outlined below.

**Royal Standard:** The Royal Standard signifies the physical presence of the Sovereign and can only be flown when the Sovereign is actually in that building.

**The Rampant Lion:** Is not a National Flag and cannot be used by citizens or corporate bodies. It is the exclusive property of the Sovereign and its use is restricted to only a few Great Officers who officially represent Scotland, including the Secretary of State for Scotland.

**Half Mast Position:** The flag should be flown in a position two thirds of the way up the flagpole and not half-way as the name suggests.

The "half-masting" of a flag indicates respect and part of that respect is the act of lowering the flag to half-mast position. For that reason the flag should be fully hoisted then, after a pause for a few seconds, lowered to the correct position.

Before lowering the flag should again be returned to the fully hoisted position.

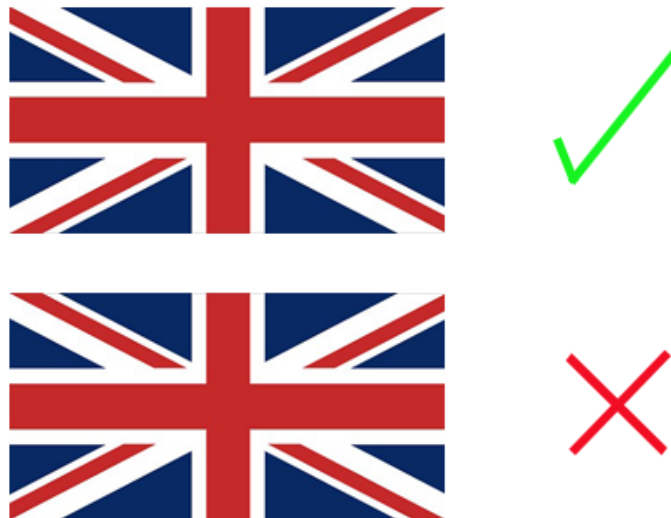
## Flag Flying Instructions on the death of the Monarch

- On receipt of confirmation of the death of the monarch (D Day) from the Property Manager you must, as soon as possible.
  - Lower all flags fully
  - Pause for a moment
  - Hoist all to "half-mast" (*two-thirds of the way up the flagpole*)
  - Please note the Union Flag MUST be flown.

In the event Property Manager is not available contact Chief Officer – Estates Environment & Infrastructure

- At **11am on D Day +1** you must:
  - Raise all flags fully
  - Then immediately lower all flags
  - Then hoist flags to **full mast**
  - Please note the Union Flag MUST be flown.
- At **1pm on D Day+2** you must:
  - Lower all flags fully
  - Pause for a moment
  - Hoist all to "half-mast"
  - Please note the Union Flag MUST be flown
  - Flags should then remain at "half-mast" until 0800 on D+11.

Please ensure the Union Flag is hoisted the correct way up - this is with the broader white diagonals uppermost on the left – closest to the flagpole (Pictured below)



**It is important to note that the Union Flag must always be flown in the superior position which is either:**

- **The highest flagpole in a location**
- **The centre flagpole where there is an odd number of poles of the same height, at council HQ accepted practice is to fly the Union Flag on the Left of centre flagpole, or**

- **The left of centre flagpole viewed from the front of the building, where there is an even number of poles of the same height.**

**Flag flying locations: SBC Buildings**

1. Council Headquarters
2. Council Offices, Paton Street, Galashiels
3. Council Offices Duns
4. War Memorial Eyemouth (Pending Review)
5. Town Hall, Hawick
6. Town Hall, Jedburgh
7. Town Hall, Kelso
8. Town Hall, Lauder
9. Town Hall, Melrose
10. Chambers Institute, Peebles
11. Victoria Hall, Selkirk

The Council Property Services and Estates Section will be responsible for ensuring that flags are flown on Flag Days and Half Mast Occasions. They are responsible for ensuring that supplies of appropriate flags are available for each of the buildings listed above.

## **BOOKS OF CONDOLENCE**

General: The Communications Manager is responsible for arranging the issuing of Books of Condolence and must liaise with the Procurement Officer in relation to the provision of the books.

Completed Books of Condolence are forwarded to an address supplied by the Lord Chamberlain's Office at the time of closure. Failing this they should be stored in the Council Archive in Hawick.

Locations for Books of Condolence

1. Council Headquarters
2. Library, Coldstream
3. Council Offices, Duns
4. Council Contact Centre, Eyemouth
5. Town Hall, Hawick
6. Library, Innerleithen
7. Council Contact Centre & Library, Jedburgh
8. Council Contact Centre & Library, Kelso
9. Melrose Town Hall, Melrose
10. Borders General Hospital, Melrose
11. Council Offices, Peebles
12. Chambers Institute, Peebles
13. All Mobile Libraries

## **Emergency Contact**

Circumstances leading to the need to arrange Books of Condolence can arise at short notice and can necessitate action at weekends or during holiday periods. In such circumstances the necessary telephone numbers can be accessed via the Council Out of Hours Contact Centre on 01896 752111

## SBC HQ Tower Lighting

- A request to have the Council HQ Tower at Newtown St Boswells lit should be made via the Property Management mailbox [propertymaintenance@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:propertymaintenance@scotborders.gov.uk) by email.
- The decision to accept a request will be made by the Chief Executive of Scottish Borders Council and the Convener of Scottish Borders Council with reference to the following purposes.

The tower will be lit on request for the following purposes.

- In support of a UK charitable organisation, particularly local initiatives, – the tower will be lit in the colour/s used to represent the charity.
- In support of an equalities group, - the tower will be lit in the colour/s used to represent the charity.
- In support of, or to show solidarity with, a UK public body or to mark an event of national commemoration e.g. in support of the NHS through Covid, the tower was lit blue.
- In support of an international body providing assistance or relief e.g. the Disasters Emergency Committee.
- In addition to the above - if the Council are requested to, or voluntarily wish to, show support:
  - For all the victims of an act of international terrorism – the tower will be lit white.
  - In the event of a natural disaster e.g. famine, an earthquake or flooding, and if technically possible, where one country is affected - the tower will be lit in the colours of the country's flag.
  - In the event the natural disaster affects more than one country the tower will be lit white.
  - In the event of a significant loss of life through an accident e.g. a passenger aircraft crash or an industrial accident the tower will be lit white.
- On acceptance of the request to light the tower an instruction, including the colour and how long the building will be lit, should be given to the Property Manager, Electrical Technician, and Caretaker mailbox for information. [caretaker@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:caretaker@scotborders.gov.uk)
- **Requests not in line with the above purposes will normally be refused.**