

Biddulph Town Council



FLAG FLYING PROTOCOL

WRITTEN BY:

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REVIEWED:

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APPROVAL DATE:

Finance, Strategy & Management Committee – 25 March 2025

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REVIEW DATE:

March 2026

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Union Flag is the national flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Crown Dependencies and the Overseas Territories. It is a symbol of national unity and pride.

The Union Flag is a combination of the cross of St George (the patron saint of England), the cross of St Andrew (the patron saint of Scotland) and the cross of St Patrick (the patron saint of Ireland), as shown below:

Union Flag	
St George (England National Flag) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cross Gules in a field (red cross on a white background)	
St Patrick <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saltire Gules in a field Argent (red diagonal cross on a white background)	
St Andrew (Scotland National Flag) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saltire Argent in a field Azure (white diagonal cross on a blue background)	

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

2.1 To formalise the protocol for the flying of flags at Biddulph Town Hall.

2.2 To identify those pre-arranged occasions, known in advance, on which specific flags will be flown.

PROVISIONS

3.1 Biddulph Town Council recognises the importance of flying flags as a means of marking important events, honouring people and strengthening local and national identity and community cohesion.

3.2 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has underlined that Councils have discretion to fly whichever flags, and at whatever frequency, Councils deem appropriate. The choice of which flags are flown on a daily basis is at the discretion of the Council.

3.2 The Union Flag will be flown at full mast every day all year at the Biddulph Town Hall site.

3.3 Pre-Arranged Dates:

Flag	Dates	Comments
Commonwealth	2 nd Monday in March	To show support for the values set out in the Commonwealth Charter and as a symbol of the ties and affinity with the worldwide Commonwealth community.
Rainbow	17 th May or nearest working day	To mark International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, commemorating the day in 1990 when the World Health Organisation took the decision to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder.
Armed Forces	June – usually the Monday prior to the national Armed Forces Day	To mark both Armed Forces Day and National Reservists Day to show their support for the serving and ex-serving forces and reservists.

3.4 In England, it is now possible to fly more than one flag on the same flagpole if there is enough space. If so, the Union Flag should always fly on top ('in the superior position'). (*The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, which came into*

force on 24 June 2021, allows for two flags to be flown from the same flagpole, provided certain conditions are met).

3.5 The Council occasionally receives requests to fly the flags of other local and national organisations, charities and community groups. Such requests will not be met although the Council will continue to offer support to such groups where appropriate.

FLYING THE UNION FLAG AT HALF-MAST

4.1 Half-mast means the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole, with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the flagpole.

The Union Flag will be flown at half-mast on the following occasions:

- from the announcement of the death until the funeral of the Sovereign, except on Proclamation Day, (the day after the Death of a Sovereign), when flags are hoisted to full mast from 11am to sunset.
- in response to any Special Commands by the Sovereign – for example, the funerals of members of the Royal Family, Prime Ministers or Ex-Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom or Foreign Rulers and any other occasions.
- the death or funeral of a current or former Town Mayor of Biddulph and Fusignano, a serving or former Biddulph Town Councillor, a current or former Member of Parliament for Staffordshire Moorlands, or a serving or former Staffordshire County Councillor representing Biddulph or a notable person in the town.
- at the discretion of The Mayor or Chief Officer or after guidance from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport at times of national mourning due to a major incident where British lives are lost (for instance, a terrorist attack, a train or air crash or a major incident on British soil or abroad)
- at the discretion of The Mayor or Chief Officer.

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 be lowered to the half-mast position.

When it is being lowered from half-mast, it should again be raised to the top of the mast for a second before being fully lowered.

When there are events that may require the flying of the Union Flag at half-mast or the flying of other national flags, the Council will follow official guidance issued from the Department of Communities & Local Government which sets out flag arrangements for national and local government buildings. The guidance generally sets out from when flags should be flown and when they should be taken down. It is however always the case that, by special command of The King, the Union Flag may be flown at half-mast. The Council's Operation Menai Bridge Protocol fully outlines the procedures and arrangements in the event of the death of the Sovereign.

ORIENTATION

4.1 The correct orientation of the Union Flag when flying is with the broader diagonal band of white uppermost in the hoist (i.e. near the pole) and the narrower diagonal band of white uppermost in the fly (i.e. furthest from the pole).

MANAGEMENT OF THIS PROTOCOL

6.1 The day to day management of the flying of flags at Biddulph Town Hall will be overseen by the Chief Officer.

6.2 Any change from the Policy as stated, will be subject to consideration and approval by the Town Council.

FUTHER INFORMATION

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flying-flags-a-plain-english-guide>