



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Flag Flying Protocol

Date	Version	Author	Origin of change e.g. change in legislation	Changed by

This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

Date policy adopted	March 2026
Approved by	For approval by Full Council 23 rd March 2026
Review cycle	Annually
Review date	March 2027

Contents

Introduction.....	4
Context.....	5
Flags that can be flown without consent of the local planning authority.....	5
Flags which require consent (express consent).....	6
Pre-Arranged Dates for Flying flags.....	7
Flags at Half Mast.....	9
Flag flying request	9
General Principles	10

Introduction

Flags are traditionally flown by the Town Council for a variety of reasons – to show allegiance, support, respect or to celebrate. The Town Council will always be sensitive to the views of all sections of our community and will never use flags for political purposes.

- 1.1. Weston-super-Mare Town Council recognises the meaning and significance attributed to flags. They are emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities and strengthen community cohesion. They are ways for communities to express feelings of joy, pride and loyalty.
- 1.2. Like all symbols, flags are open to wide-ranging interpretation and therefore also have the potential to cause controversy and create tension between community groups whose opinions may differ. The flying of any flag must be viewed in the context in which it is flown or displayed. Factors affecting the context include the manner, location and frequency with which flags are flown. The Council has a responsibility to carefully consider the potential impact upon its communities of flying flags and how that action may be interpreted.
- 1.3. Following protocol is crucial to maintaining the value that flag flying represents. This protocol is written as clear guidance for the responsible service areas to ensure that relevant flags are flown on the correct days, at the correct times and to ensure a consistent approach.
- 1.4. This protocol reflects guidance from Central Government and is intended to provide a modern approach, reflecting today's society. It also seeks to maintain the dignity of national flags and avoid these flags being the subject of political controversy by:
 - Providing context and established precedents
 - Outlining the council's usual arrangements for the displaying of flags
 - Clarifying the protocol and procedure for flying flags
 - Clarifying the appropriate procedure should a request for the flying of a specific guest flag or flags be received
- 1.5. This protocol aims to identify those pre-arranged occasions, known in advance, on which specific flags will be flown. The protocol also seeks to clarify the process for dealing with any ad hoc requests for flags to be flown. The practical arrangements and responsibilities are also covered in general terms.

Context

1.6. Under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, for planning permissions, flags are normally treated as a form of advertising. Therefore, some flags require formal consent from the local planning authority before they may be displayed. The following of this protocol will ensure that Weston-super-Mare Town Council adheres to the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and in 2021).

1.7. Subject to compliance with standard conditions set out in 'Flying Flags: A Plain English Guide', there are three categories of flag outlined below. These are outlined in more detail in Appendix 1.

1) Flags that can be flown without consent of the local planning authority

- Any country's national flag, civil ensign or civil air ensign.
- The flag of the Commonwealth, the European Union, the United Nations or any other international organisation of which the United Kingdom is a member.
- A flag of any island, county, district, borough, burgh, parish, city, town or village within the United Kingdom.
- The flag of the Black Country, East Anglia, Wessex, any part of Lincolnshire, and Riding of Yorkshire or any historic county within the United Kingdom.
- The flag of St David.
- The flag of St Patrick.
- The flag of any administrative area within any country outside of the United Kingdom.
- Any flag of His Majesty's forces.
- The Armed Forces Day flag.

2) Flags which do not need consent provided they comply with further restrictions (deemed consent)

- House flag – flag is allowed to display the name, emblem, device or trademark of the company (or person) occupying the building, or can refer to a specific event of limited duration that is taking place in the building from which the flag is flown.
- Any sports club (but cannot include sponsorship logos).
- The horizontal striped rainbow flag, such as the 'Pride' Flag.
- Specified award schemes.

3) Flags which require consent (express consent)

- Any flag not identified above requires express consent from the local planning authority before it can be flown.

1.8. Recognised flags flown by Weston-super-Mare Town Council

 WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL	
	
	
	
	
	

	
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Pre-Arranged Dates for Flying flags

1.9. The flag bearing the logo of Weston-super-Mare Town Council shall be flown except when superseded by another designated flag.

1.9.1 The Union Flag must always be flown in accordance with guidance notes from the Flag Institute.

1.9.2. Weston-super-Mare Town Council has also chosen to fly other flags on dates throughout the year, as set out below.

Date	Event	Flag	Duration
9 th March	Commonwealth Day (second Monday in March)		1 day
10 th March	Anniversary of Granting of the freedom of the Town.		1 day
9 th April	Wedding Anniversary of HM The King		1 day
23 April	St George's Day		1 day
6 th May	Coronation Day of HM The King		1 day

11 th May	Somerset Day		1 Day
June	Pride		Weekend of Pride Event
14 th June	Official Birthday of HM The King		1 day
21 st June	Anniversary of Granting of the freedom of the Town.		1 Day
28 th June	Armed Forces Day		Weekend of Armed Forces Event
17 th July	Birthday of HM The Queen		1 day
8 th September	Accession Day of HM The King		1 day
8 th November	Remembrance Day & Armistice Day		For approx. 2 weeks Remembrance Sunday.

During a visit from the Oberburgermeister	Hildesheim		Duration of Visit
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Flags at Half Mast

1.10. When setting a flag at half-mast, it must be hoisted to the top of the pole with a pause once it reaches the top before then lowering it into half-mast position.

1.10.1 It is recommended the flag is lowered to a third the way from the top of the flagpole as half-mast positioning, as this is a more recognisable placement of the flag.

Serving Town Councillor	From day of death until sunset on day of funeral. Check with Town Clerk & Mayor for clarification.
Former Town Councillor	On day of funeral until sunset. If recently served
Former Mayor	On day of funeral until sunset
Current Mayor	From day of death until sunset on day of funeral
Sovereign	As per current Government guidance

11.1 Flag flying request

The Town Council receives occasional requests to fly the flags of national and local organisations which are not on the Council's Approved List.

1: The approved list will be recommended by the Civic Matters Consultative Group and adopted by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

1 The Town Council will only permit the flying of flags on its official flagpole which reflect the guidance of H.M. Government and / or are on the Council's approved list

2 Flags will be flown for a specified time, usually a commemorative day or week.

3 Requests to fly other flags will generally not be approved unless, in exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Civic Matters Consultative Group

4 Unless occupied by an otherwise approved flag, the Council's official flag pole will display either the Town Council's Flag or the Union Flag.

General Principles

1.12. Where possible, all flags flown should be consistent in size 10ft x 5ft and should be made with a headband, rope and toggle. Hand woven flags are preferred over digitally printed flags.

1.12.1. All flags, regardless of category, must be maintained in a condition which does not impair the overall visual appearance of the site and should be kept in a safe condition. Flags can wear out, especially if they are flown in adverse conditions. Therefore, regular monitoring should be undertaken as to the condition of the flags. Guidance states “National flags should never be flown in a worn or damaged condition, or when soiled. To do so is to show disrespect for the nations they represent.”

1.12.2. Flags should be stored carefully and respectfully in the robing room at 32 Waterloo Street.

1.12.3. The acquisition and replacement of official flags will be borne by the Town Council's Civic Regalia budget. Other flags will be provided appropriate organisations.

1.12.4 The Flags will be changed by the Civic Officer or a member of the Democratic Services team.