

Guidance following the death of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh

Following the death of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh church communities across the Church in Wales may wish to pay tribute to him and give thanks for his life of dedicated service to the nation and Commonwealth. Below are a few areas of information which may be helpful. In the preparation of this information, advice has been sought from the Cabinet Office, Welsh Government and the Church of England.

We are currently in a period of national mourning which will last until after the late Duke's funeral.

This document will be updated as required during the period of national mourning. The late Duke's funeral will be held at St. George's Chapel, Windsor on Saturday 17 April at 15.00. A national one-minute silence will take place at 15.00 on that day. Further information can be obtained via the following websites which will be updated as necessary:

www.royal.uk

www.gov.wales

www.gov.uk

General overview

The late Duke's wishes were that public events following his death were to be modest but the COVID-19 pandemic and the regulations and restrictions this has necessitated will affect local communities' responses.

The advice provided by the government for use during the period of public mourning is not prescriptive. Therefore, decisions concerning how to pay tribute to the late Duke and mark his death are left up to local church communities who may wish to make arrangements appropriate to their local areas. Obviously, any arrangements must adhere to COVID-19 regulations and guidelines.

COVID-19

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the regulations and restrictions this has necessitated, **no books of condolence** will be opened in public places. **Books of condolence should not therefore be opened in church buildings.**

An online book of condolence is available at the [Royal website](#).

The laying of floral tributes will not be encouraged as it is felt to be inappropriate during the pandemic and local authorities will make no official provision for this. It is possible churches may become focuses for the laying of floral tributes – if this happens, please remove them to discourage others.

If there is to be any access to church buildings during this period of public mourning – for private prayer or for particular services - careful reference should be made to the provisions required to allow church buildings to open during the pandemic, advice which is available [here](#). Any access to church buildings must be planned in line with churches' risk assessments and must ensure compliance with all current hygiene and social distancing requirements. Face coverings must be worn by all those entering church buildings and the

number of people admitted must be in line with the risk assessment for the church building concerned.

Liturgical resources

The Church in Wales has prepared some simple prayers for use which can be accessed [here](#).

In line with the late Duke's wishes, and in view of the current pandemic, memorial services are not expected to be widely held, but a liturgy has been prepared should it be needed and can be found in both English and Welsh below.

[Memorial service liturgy](#)

[Litwrgi Gwasanaeth Coffa](#)

Flags

While public mourning advice is not prescriptive there are protocols for the flying of flags and flying them at half-mast. Flags should be flown at half-mast until 08.00 on Sunday 18 April, the day after the late Duke's funeral.

(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. More detailed, helpful information about the protocols of flags at half-mast can be found via the [Flag Institute's](#) website.)

Bells

During this period of national mourning church bells should be tolled only, or rung half or full muffled.

Other arrangements

In line with the late Prince Philip's wishes of there being a discreet response to his death any other arrangements should be discreet and in line with COVID-19 regulations and guidelines.

Parochial activities

As this is now a period of national mourning it would be appropriate for normal parochial activities to be considered in the light of this and it may now be appropriate to consider postponing such events or amending arrangements accordingly. But this is a decision to be taken locally and the views of those involved should be sought and the implications of change considered before making firm plans to rearrange.

It is possible occasions such as weddings, funerals or baptisms are due to take place during this time. Again, decisions about postponing these events must be made locally following consultation with those involved – it may be that rearranging events such as these at short notice will not be possible. Where events do go ahead a mindfulness of the sombre national context would be appropriate.

Websites and social media

Parishes or ministry/mission areas may have their own websites and social media presences. These can of course proceed as normal, but it would be appropriate to ensure any such activity is sensitive to the period of mourning. Some announcements may not be appropriate during a period of national mourning and may need to be postponed until national mourning is over.

Websites may have a temporary black border added to them, but there is no requirement for this.