

FLAG FLYING PROTOCOL

A) INTRODUCTION

1. Nottinghamshire County 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.
2. 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 for funding and arranging the flying of flags (and any accompanying events) are also covered in general terms.

B) FLAGS FLYING ON A DAILY BASIS

3. 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.
4. The choice of which flags are flown on a daily basis is at the discretion of The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

C) PRE-ARRANGED DATES FOR FLAG FLYING

5. The County Council has previously agreed to fly flags on the following occasions:-

Flag	Date	Comments
Commonwealth Flag	March – 2 nd Monday in March	This flag is flown 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 Flag	17th May – or nearest working day	This flag is flown 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 Flag	June – usually the Monday prior to the national Armed Forces Day.	This flag is flown to mark both Armed Forces Day and National Reservists Day to show their support for the serving and ex-serving forces and reservists.

Historic County Flags day	23 rd July	In 2019, the Government flew all County Council flags in Parliament Square on this day and requested that each County Council flew its own County Flag at its main headquarters. It is anticipated that this will be an annual event.
Merchant Navy Flag	3 rd September – or nearest working day	This flag (also known as the Red Ensign or Red Duster) is flown to commemorate the sinking in 1939 of the first merchant ship in World War 2, SS Athenia.

6. Further events can be added into this annual list at the discretion of The Leader, in consultation with the Chief Executive where appropriate.
7. The Council will, as a minimum, fly the Union Flag on the occasions contained within the Government's guidance - 'Designated days for Union Flag flying'. However, the Council may also choose to fly this flag on other days and accompany this with other flags such as the Flag of St. George (the national flag of England) and the County Council's Flag.

D) AD HOC OCCASIONS

8. At the discretion of the Leader and the Chief Executive, the Council may also choose to fly flags (at full mast or half-mast) to mark ad hoc events.
9. The County Council's Flag may be flown at half-mast on other occasions at the discretion of the Leader and the Chief Executive. Such occasions will usually be in response to specific requests from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
10. In line with Government guidance, the Council will fly the Union Flag at half-mast on the following occasions:-
 - a) From the announcement of the Death up to the Funeral of the Sovereign except on Proclamation Day on which they are hoisted full mast from 11am until sunset.
 - b) In response to any Special Commands by the Sovereign – for example, the funerals of members of the Royal Family or Foreign Rulers and other occasions.
11. N.B. If any other flags are flying alongside the Union Flag at half-mast then they must also be lowered to at least half-mast (ensuring that no flag is raised above it).

E) OTHER REQUESTS FOR FLAGS TO BE FLOWN

12. 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.

F) HOSPITALITY OFFERED AT FLAG FLYING EVENTS

13. Should an event requiring hospitality be arranged to accompany the flying of a specific flag then the costs of the hospitality will be funded from the hospitality budget of the Chairman of the Council. Such costs do not require Committee approval but will be reported to the Governance & Ethics Committee as part of the ongoing Use of Resources by Councillors update reports.

14. These events will be organised by Democratic Services, with support from departmental colleagues including Facilities and Communications officers.

G) GENERAL PRINCIPLES

15. The purchase of flags will be funded through joint contributions from the relevant budgets of Democratic Services and Central Facilities.

16. In arranging the flying of flags, officers will give due consideration to relevant Government guidance and the 'Flying Flags in the United Kingdom – A Guide to Britain's Flag Protocol' issued by the Flag Institute and the Flags and Heraldry Committee.