

SPENNYMOOR TOWN COUNCIL



FLAG FLYING POLICY

Author of Policy:	Town Clerk
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In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this document will be posted on the Council's Website www.spennymoor-tc.gov.uk and copies of this document will be available for inspection on deposit in the Council Offices, Town Hall, Spennymoor. Costs are as per the model publication scheme.

1. Introduction

Flags are a very British way of expressing joy and pride – they are emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities and strengthen community cohesion. The Government has recently made some changes to regulations which widen the types of flags which can be flown in England.

Flags are treated as advertisements for the purposes of the planning regime and some require formal permission from the local planning authority, whereas others do not. The detailed controls over flag flying are set out in amended regulations which are administered by local planning authorities.

2. Background

Spennymoor Town Council has 2 flagpoles near the main public entrance. This is the only flag flying point for the Town Council. Flags are traditionally flown by the Town Council for a variety of reasons (e.g. to show allegiance, support, respect or to celebrate). The Town Council will always be sensitive to the views of all sectors of the community and will never use flags for political purposes.

Although the Council is free to fly the Union Flag at its discretion, it will as far as is appropriate follow national guidance.

3. Standard Conditions

All Council-owned flags will be:

- Maintained in a condition that does not impair the overall visual appearance of the site;
- Kept in a safe condition;
- Have the permission of the owner of the site on which they are displayed (this includes the Highway Authority if the sign is to be placed on highway land);
- Not obscure or hinder the interpretation of official road, rail, waterway or aircraft signs, or otherwise make hazardous the use of these types of transport; and,
- Removed carefully.

Subject to compliance with the standard conditions, there are 3 categories of flag:

- Flags which can be flown without consent of the local planning authority
- Flags which do not need consent provided they comply with further restrictions
- Flags which require consent

4. Flags which do not need consent

The recent changes allow a wider range of national, sub-national, community and international flags. The full list of flags that do not require consent are:

- 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, country, 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 Saint David
- The flag of Saint Patrick
- The flag of any administrative area within any country outside the United Kingdom
- Any flag of Her Majesty's forces
- The Armed Forces Day flag

The above flags or their flagpoles must not display any advertisement or subject matter additional to the design of the flag, but the Regulations now highlight that a black mourning ribbon can be attached to either the flag or flagpole where the flag cannot be flown at half-mast, for example when flying a flag on a flagpole projecting at an angle from the side of a building.

The flags of St George and St Andrew are recognised as the national flags of England and Scotland, but the flags of St David and St Patrick are listed separately as they do not necessarily fall into the category of a country's national flag.

5. Other Flags which do not require consent provided they comply with restrictions

A number of categories of flags may be flown without consent, subject to certain restrictions regarding the size of the flag, the size of characters on the flag, the number and location of the flags.

Categories of flags that can be flown by the Council without planning consent:

- The Town Council flag.
- A flag representing a sports club (but cannot include sponsorship logos)
- The horizontal stripe rainbow flag, also known as the 'Pride' flag
- Flags representing specified award schemes e.g. Eco-Schools, Queens Awards for Enterprise and Investors in People

The restrictions on flying this second category of flags relates to where the flagpole is located on a building or within the grounds of a building.

6. Flying the Union Flag

The following list identifies the dates that the Union flag will be flown but the list is not exhaustive and staff will react accordingly as situations dictate.

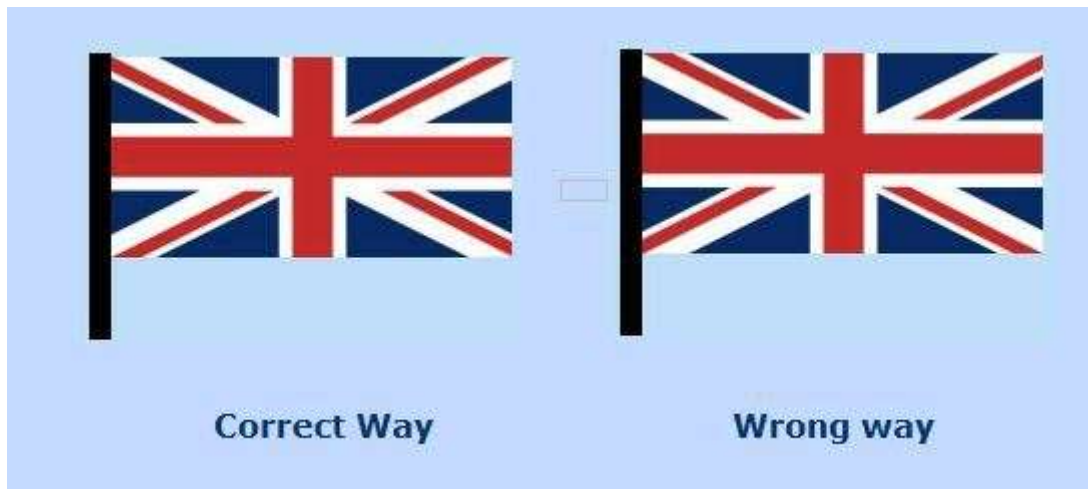
Date	Occasion
9 January	Birthday of the Duchess of Cambridge
20 January	Birthday of the Countess of Wessex
6 February	Her Majesty's Accession
19 February	Birthday of Prince Andrew
1 March	St David's Day
Second Monday in March	Commonwealth Day

10 March	Birthday of the Earl of Wessex
21 April	Birthday of her Majesty the Queen
23 April	St George's Day
8 May	V E Day
June (date varies)	Official Celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday
June (date varies)	Armed Forces Day
2 June	Coronation Day
6 June	D Day
10 June	Birthday of the Duke of Edinburgh
21 June	Birthday of Prince William (Duke of Cambridge)
17 July	Birthday of the Duchess of Cornwall
15 August	Birthday of Princess Anne and V J Day
15 September	Birthday of Prince Harry
21 October	Trafalgar Day
Second Sunday in November	Remembrance Day
11 November	Armistice Day
14 November	Birthday of the Prince of Wales
20 November	Her Majesty's Wedding Anniversary
30 November	St Andrew's Day

The Town Council has the discretion to fly the Union Flag at other times:

- To celebrate and support sporting events of significance
- In recognition of a royal visit in consultation with the Lord Lieutenant
- In recognition of a formal visit by another significant dignitary
- Formal Civic occasions
- By request from other Parish bodies

7. How should the Union Jack be flown?



The correct way up for the Union Flag when flying is with the broader diagonal white stripe at the top left hand side of the flag nearest the flagpole.

8. When and how should flags be flown at half-mast?

When flags are to be flown at half-mast they should be two-thirds up between the top and bottom of the flagstaff with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the flagpole.

When raising the flag it should always be hoisted right up and then lowered back down to half-mast. Likewise before it is lowered at sunset, it should first be hoisted right up and then lowered back down.

Flags should be flown at half-mast on the following occasions:

- The announcement of the death up to the funeral of the Sovereign, except on Proclamation Day (the Day of the announcement of the Accession of the new Sovereign), when the flags are hoisted right up from 11:00am to sunset
- In the event of the death of a member of the Royal Family, flags should be lowered from the day of death to the day of the funeral, subject to special commands from Her Majesty in each case
- The funerals of foreign rulers, subject to special commands from Her Majesty in each case
- The funerals of Prime Ministers and ex-Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, subject to special commands from Her Majesty in each case. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport will inform of any other occasion where Her Majesty has given a special command
- When flag flying days coincide with days for flying flags at half-mast, flags should be flown right up: although a member of the Royal Family, or a near relative of the Royal Family, may be lying dead, unless special commands are received from Her Majesty to the contrary, and although it may be the day of the funeral of a foreign ruler
- On the death or funeral of a servicing officer in the Armed Forces from the Town
- At the discretion of the Town Clerk, or by a decision of Council to commemorate local civic and community dignitaries who have recently passed away

9. Other Flags

The Armed Forces Day Flag will be flown by the Council on and before Armed Forces in accordance with advice from the Chief of the Defence Staff. Dates vary, but usually fall during the last week in June.

The Town Council flag can be flown for civic occasions in the Town or to celebrate local events at the discretion of the Town Clerk. The Town Council flag will be flown at half-mast on the death of:

- A serving or past Town Mayor
- A serving or past Town Councillor
- A serving or past County/District/Borough Councillor representing a ward within the Town Council area

- A serving or past local Member of Parliament of a constituency which includes the Town Council area
- The death of another Parish dignitary, at the Town Clerk's discretion, in consultation with the Chairman of the Facilities and Recreation Committee

On St George's Day, 23 April, the Flag of St George should be flown. Under the flag flying guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government, the Cross of St George may be flown on St George's Day from any UK Government building in England with two or more flag poles.

At the Town Clerk's discretion, or by a decision of Council, the Flag of St George may be flown to celebrate or support sporting events of significance of an England Team.

At the discretion of the Town Clerk, or by a decision of Council, the Cross of St George may be flown to commemorate local civic and community dignitaries who have recently passed away

10. Other Considerations

Flags will not be flown during severe weather warnings, adverse weather conditions or planned maintenance.

Flags will only be erected by authorised employees of Spennymoor Town Council in order to comply with health and safety and insurance requirements.

Flags will be maintained by the Facilities Assistants and the keys to the flagpole will be kept securely.