

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL
FLAG POLICY IN RELATION TO THE COUNTY HALL

The Council's policy is detailed in various Council minutes.

The current practice adopted in March 2008 is as follows:

The County Hall only has one flag pole and therefore only one flag may be flown at a time.

The Union Flag is flown all year round but two other flags are currently flown.

a. *The St George's Cross*

This is generally hoisted on the Friday before St George's Day (April 23), to cover the Sunday of the Scouts' parade, and is flown for one week following St George's Day.

b. *The Abingdon Town Flag*

This is generally hoisted the day before the annual Mayor Making and Annual Meeting of the Town Council in May each year, and is flown for a week afterwards, and also hoisted the day before the Mayor's birthday and again flown for approximately a week afterwards.

In relation to flying various flags at half-mast it was noted that there are government rules in relation to the Union Flag these being as follows:

- i. From the announcement of the death up to the funeral of the sovereign, except on Proclamation Day when they are hoisted at full mast from 11.00 a.m. to sunset.*
- ii. The funerals of members of the royal family, subject to special command from Her Majesty in each case.*
- iii. The funerals of foreign rulers, subject to special command from Her Majesty in each case.*
- iv. The funerals of prime ministers and ex prime ministers of the United Kingdom*
- v. On other occasions by special command of Her Majesty.*

In relation to the Town Flag, the practice is that this is flown at half mast on the following occasions:

- i. From the announcement of the death through to the day of the funeral of a serving Town Councillor or Freeman of Abingdon.*
- ii. From the announcement of the death through to the day of the funeral of a former mayor of the town.*

It should also be noted that there was a further recommendation in March 2008 "that the European Union flag should be flown from the working day before 5 May, which is European Day, and to allow the flag to fly for one week, and that any other suitable

occasions should be identified by Members. If the Council does not have a European Union flag, then costs should be explored before purchasing.” Whilst this was approved by the Council it was subsequently not enacted by the Council as government guidance states: “Where the European flag is flown on this day (Europe Day), the Union Flag should fly alongside the European flag and, on UK government buildings that only have one flagpole, the Union Flag should take precedence.”

Other flags

Since the adoption of the original policy in March 2008 the Council has approved the flying of three further flags:

1. Armed Forces Day flag. At its meeting in November 2008 the Council resolved: *“Following the announcement on the 30th October by the Government that June 27th 2009 would be 'Armed Forces Day', this Council proposes to celebrate and honour the achievements of the personnel based at Dalton Barracks, which was granted the Freedom of Abingdon in 2006, and wishes to work with the Barracks to help and support them to find an appropriate way to mark this auspicious occasion and set aside £1,000 in its civic budget towards such an event.”* Subsequently at its meeting on 9th June 2009 the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee record that *“the Project and Technical Manager presented a paper to the Committee detailing the arrangements for the national Armed Forces celebrations on 22nd June (Flag raising) and 4th July (Family Day at Dalton Barracks). The Committee **resolved** to accept the paper and the contents therein.”* The paper itself states: *“The Government have announced that the first ever national Armed Forces Day to honour the United Kingdom’s Service personnel, past, present and future will be held on Saturday 27th June 2009 with a special Armed Forces Flag will be raised at a short ceremony on the roof of the County Hall, Abingdon at 10.30am on Monday 22nd June.”* Consequently the flag was subsequently added to the annual schedule of flags to be flown, being flown for a week each June, from the Monday before Armed Forces Day.
2. Commonwealth Day Flag. The minutes of the Council meeting of 29th January 2014 state that: *“Cllr Michael Badcock as Chairman of the Vale of White Horse District Council invited the Mayor, on behalf of Abingdon-on-Thames, to fly the Commonwealth Flag on Commonwealth Day from the roof of County Hall Museum. The Mayor relayed her agreement to this proposal.”* At the Finance and General Purposes later that year (9th September 2014) the Committee then recommended: *“that the Council register for the Commonwealth Flag and agree its continued flying on appropriate occasions.”* Consequently the flag was subsequently added to the annual schedule of flags to be flown, being flown for a week from the second Monday in March.
3. Rainbow flag. At its meeting on 21st May 2019 the Council resolved *“that the Rainbow flag was to be added to the list of flags which may be flown from the town flag pole at the County Hall, with immediate effect and that this would stand until the next review of the flag policy. It was further resolved that the dates on which the Flag may be flown should be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader.”*

Finally, although not detailed in the policy, it has been the Council's long-standing practice to fly the appropriate royal standard in the event of a royal visit. This is standard practice across the country but obviously is not a frequent occurrence.

22nd May 2019.