

Flag Flying Policy

1. Summary

- 1.1 This policy relates to the flying of flags from the Town Council's administrative headquarters, the Town Hall, Ferryhill.
- 1.2 It outlines which flags the Council recognises, when recognised flags will be flown and the Council's approach to responding to requests to fly non-recognised flags.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The government wants to see more flags flown, particularly the Union Flag, the flag of the United Kingdom. It is a symbol of national unity and pride. The government has recently issued guidance encouraging the flying of the Union Flag on all UK government buildings throughout the year, alongside other national and local flags. The government is encouraging local authorities and other local organisations to follow suit.
- 2.2 In England, the flying of flags is treated as advertisements for the purposes of the planning regime to ensure the flags do not impact on safety or amenity. Some flags require formal consent (permission) from the local planning authority, whereas others like the Union Flag do not. The detailed controls over flag flying are set out in detailed regulations.

All flag flying is subject to some standard conditions

- 2.3 All flags must be:
 - be maintained in a condition that does not impair the overall visual appearance of the site
 - be 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
 - be removed carefully where so required by the planning authority
- 2.4 Subject to compliance with the standard conditions, there are 3 categories of flag:
 - a. flags which can be flown without consent of the local planning authority
 - b. flags which do not need consent provided they comply with further restrictions (referred to as "deemed consent" in the Regulations)
 - c. flags which require consent ("express consent")

a. Flags which do not need consent

The full list of flags that do not require consent are:

1. Any country's national flag, civil ensign or civil air ensign

2. The flag of the Commonwealth, the United Nations or any other international organisation of which the United Kingdom is a member
3. A flag of any island, county, district, borough, burgh, parish, city, town or village within the United Kingdom
4. The flag of the Black Country, East Anglia, Wessex, any Part of Lincolnshire, any Riding of Yorkshire or any historic county within the United Kingdom
5. The flag of Saint David
6. The flag of Saint Patrick
7. The flag of any administrative area within any country outside the United Kingdom
8. Any flag of His Majesty's forces
9. 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 use of the word "country" in 1 and 7 of the list above, includes any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and any British Overseas Territory. 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.

b. Flags which do not require consent provided they comply with certain restrictions

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

Categories of flag that can now be flown:

- 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 Rainbow flag (6 horizontal equal stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet).
- specified award schemes – Eco-Schools, Queen's Awards for Enterprise and Investors in People
- the NHS flag
- certain environmental awards (Blue flag, Green flag)

c. Flags which require consent

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

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The policy sets out the circumstances in which the Council will fly flags from the flagpole attached to the Town Hall and the freestanding flagpole situated in the Town Hall Garden.
- 3.2 The policy draws a distinction between flags that fall within categories a and b above, which will be recognised by the Town Council, and flags that fall within category c above, which will be 'non-recognised' flags, where the Council would not normally agree to fly a flag, unless in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.3 The following flags are recognised by the Council:
- a. Union flag;
 - b. St George's Cross;
 - c. Commonwealth flag;
 - d. County Durham flag;
 - e. Armed Forces Day flag;
 - f. Pride flag;
 - g. NHS flag.
- 3.4 In addition, the Council will recognise the national flag of any country participating in a civic visit to the Town, when this is known in advance.
- 3.5 All other flags will be treated as non-recognised flags and will require specific permission to be flown from a Council premises.

4. Recognised flags

Appendix 1 contains illustrations of the main flags recognised by the Council.

4.1 Union flag

In line with government advice, the Union flag should be flown from Council premises on the flagpole attached to the Town Hall, unless special circumstances apply.

The Union flag will also be flown from the freestanding flagpole on days designated by the government. (See 27 – 29)

4.2 St George's Cross

The flag of St George's Cross will be flown from the freestanding flagpole on St George's Day, which is 23rd April, each year.

4.3 Commonwealth flag

The Commonwealth flag will be flown from the freestanding flagpole on Commonwealth Day, which is on the second Monday in March, each year.

4.4 County Durham flag

The County Durham flag will be flown from the freestanding flagpole on St Cuthbert's Day (sometimes known as 'County Durham Day'), which is 20th March each year.

4.5 Armed Forces Day flag

The Armed Forces Day flag will be flown from the freestanding flagpole on Armed Forces Day, which takes place on the last Saturday in June, each year.

Where possible, the flag will be flown from the Monday of the week leading up to Armed Forces Day itself.

4.6 Pride flag

The Pride flag (sometimes known as the 'Gay Pride flag' or 'Rainbow flag') will be flown from the freestanding flagpole during Durham Pride Week, which normally takes place during the month of May each year.

The Pride flag will also be flown on International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) which is held on 17 May each year.

4.7 NHS Flag

The NHS flag will be flown from the freestanding flagpole on the NHS birthday, which takes place on 5th June each, each year.

4.8 Flags of visiting countries

The national flags of countries involved in official civic visits to the town, whether local or national administrations, are also recognised and will be flown from the freestanding flagpole to coincide with the visit when it is known in advance.

4.9 Weekends

Where a designated flag flying day occurs on a weekend the appropriate flag may be flown from Friday to Monday.

5. Non-recognised flags

As a general principle, the Council will not fly any flag, which under government guidance and planning policy, would require specific planning consent to be flown.

6. Designated flag flying days on UK government buildings

6.1 The Government publish guidance in relation to designated days for flying the Union flag, which can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/designated-days-for-union-flag-flying>

6.2 This guidance is aimed at UK government buildings, however, local authorities, including town councils, and other local organisations are encouraged to follow suit where they wish to fly flags.

6.3 Ferryhill Town Council will therefore adopt the designated flag flying days within the government's guidance, which is reviewed annually.

7. Flying flags at half mast

From time to time, the Council will fly flags at half-mast from the freestanding flagpole as a mark of respect following the death of an individual or group of people. Where a

particular flag is flown at half-mast, other flags should be removed from the flagpole attached to the Town Hall.

7.2 Union flag

The Union flag will be flown at half-mast from the freestanding flagpole in line with government advice and special command from the Sovereign to do so.

The normal circumstances in which the Union flag would be flown at half-mast are outlined in the guidance issued by the Flag Institute.

Where the Union flag is being flown at half-mast, other flags should be removed from the flagpole attached to the Town Hall.

7.3 Ferryhill Town Council Flag

The Ferryhill Town Council flag should be flown at half-mast from the freestanding flagpole to mark the death of a serving Member of the Council (a serving Councillor).

The flag should be lowered to half- mast on notification of death and should remain at half-mast until the end of the day of the funeral.

The flag should also be flown at half-mast from the freestanding flagpole to mark the death of an Honorary Burgess of the Council. The flag should be lowered to half-mast on notification of death and should remain at half-mast until the end of the day of the funeral.

Where the Ferryhill Town Council flag is being flown at half-mast, other flags should be removed from the flagpole attached to the Town Hall

7.4 Other flags

In exceptional circumstances, the Council will consider requests to fly other recognised flags on the freestanding flagpole, as a mark of respect following the death of an individual or group of people. This would normally relate to national and international events and periods of mourning.

Requests will be determined following a discussion between the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk, who will also determine how long the flag should be flown at half-mast, if the Council agrees to do so. This would normally coincide with recognised periods of mourning.

8. Exceptions

8.1 As stated in paragraph 2.4c and 5, as a general principle, the Council will not fly a flag that would require specific planning consent to be flown.

8.2 In exceptional circumstances, where following a discussion between the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk, the Council is minded to fly such a flag, it may agree to do so, so long as the appropriate planning conditions are complied with and any necessary consents obtained by the organisation requesting that the flag be flown, wherever possible.

8.3 Exceptional circumstances could include:

- a. specific instructions or requests from the government to fly a specific flag;
- b. demonstrating support for campaigns which would benefit the county, for example economic or cultural promotions or host city bids;
- c. recognising notable anniversaries or events of local significance.

8.4 In addition, in exceptional circumstances and following a discussion between the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk, the Council may confer the honour of flying the Ferryhill Town Council flag at half-mast as mark of respect for a notable individual who has passed way.

8.5 This could include flying the flag at half-mast during the mourning period from notification of death through to the funeral service; or on the day of the funeral service.

9. Other ways of acknowledging significant occasions

9.1 The Council may wish to acknowledge a significant occasion where there is not an appropriate flag, or where the flag would require planning approval.

9.2 It may be possible to acknowledge these significant occasions by:

- a. Lighting the building an appropriate colour for the organisation, event or campaign
- b. Changing the Council's Facebook header to show support for the organisation, event or campaign.

9.3 These occasions should be limited in number so as not to diminish the impact of the statement being made.

10. Review

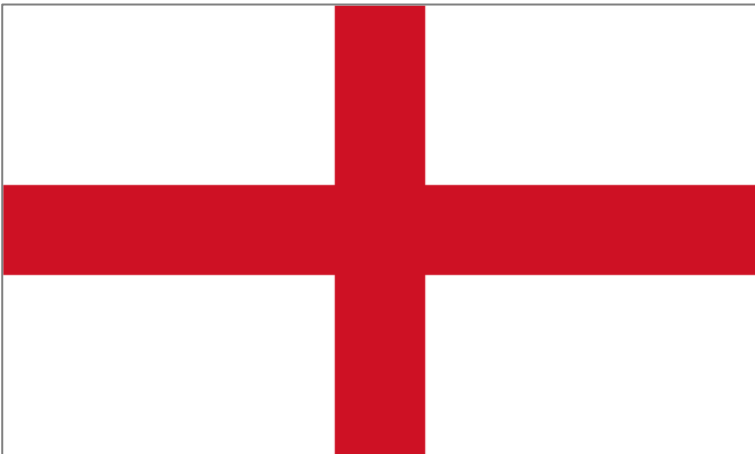
The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in order to ensure that it takes account of any changes to flag flying policy issued by the government and / or the Flag Institute.

Main flags recognised by the Town Council

Union flag



St George's Cross



Commonwealth flag



County Durham flag



Armed Forces Day flag



Pride flag



Designated days for flying the Union Flag on UK government buildings 2023

The following dates have been designated by the Government for flying the Union flag, or other recognised flag. (Marked ¹).

See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/designated-days-for-union-flag-flying>

The list also identifies when other recognised flags have been agreed to be flown by the Council. (Marked ²)

Date	Occasion	Flag
13 March 2023	Commonwealth Day (second Monday in March) ¹	Commonwealth Flag
20 March 2023	St Cuthbert's Day (County Durham Day) ²	County Durham Flag
9 April 2023	His Majesty's Wedding Day ¹	Union Flag
23 April 2023	St George's Day ¹	St George's Flag
6 May 2023	Coronation Day ¹	Union Flag
17 May 2023	International Day Against Homophobia ²	Pride Flag
22 May – 30 May 2023	Durham Pride Week ²	Pride Flag
5 June 2023	NHS Birthday ²	NHS Flag
17 June 2023	Official Birthday of His Majesty The King ¹	Union Flag
21 June 2023	Birthday of The Prince of Wales ¹	Union Flag
19 - 24 June 2023 (Apart from 21 June)	Armed Forces Day ²	Armed Forces Day Flag
17 July 2023	Birthday of The Queen Consort ¹	Union Flag
8 September 2023	His Majesty's Accession ¹	Union Flag
12 November 2023	Remembrance Day (second Sunday in November) ¹	Union Flag
14 November 2023	Birthday of His Majesty The King ¹	Union Flag