



CESHIRE WEST & CHESTER COUNCIL

FLAG FLYING PROTOCOL (Updated and approved January 2025)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This protocol identifies when flags should fly from Cheshire West and Chester Council Buildings, it highlights special occasions when different flags fly and the standard to which the Council's flags should be kept in. It also outlines the roles and responsibilities needed to coordinate and implement this protocol.

Flags are a symbol of national unity, respect, and honour and therefore following this protocol is crucial to maintaining the value that flag flying represents. The Union Flag is the national flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Crown Dependencies and the Overseas Territories. It is a symbol of national unity and pride. The first Union Flag was created in 1606 and combined the flags of England and Scotland; the present Union Flag dates from 1801.

The UK government buildings including Local Authorities, are encouraged to fly the Union Flag all year around as well as on specific designated days, see Appendix 1. Other flags to commemorate/celebrate other national and local events/days may also be flown, provided that they comply with the Council's Protocol and are also listed in the Council's Flag Flying Calendar, see Appendix 1.

The Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) may issue ad-hoc guidance encouraging UK government buildings to fly a specific flag for specific reason.

The decisions and approvals relating to Cheshire West and Chester's Flag Protocol and Designated Flag Flying Calendar are the responsibility of its Chief Executive.

2.0 SCOPE

Cheshire West and Chester Council's Flag Protocol covers the following flagpoles:

Chester

Town Hall – 1 flagpole

HQ – 1 flagpole

Ellesmere Port

Civic Way – 2 flagpoles

Winsford

Wyvern House – 2 flagpoles

Northwich

Northwich Town Council – 1 flagpole

The **Union Flag** will be the default flag flown on the above flag poles, apart from where there is more than one flagpole.

At Wyvern House, Winsford and Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, on the second flagpole, the Cheshire West and Chester Council House flag will also fly. However, this will be replaced on certain occasions during the year with another designated flag – See Appendix 1.

An additional flagpole has been added to the Protocol in January 2025 at the **Blacon Crematorium site**. This flagpole will follow the Council's Flag Protocol, in that the Union Flag will be the default flag. It will not follow the approved designated flag calendar, apart from when the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government informs the Council that the Union flag is to be flown at half-mast. However, on request and with the prior agreement of the Council's Cemeteries and Crematorium team, the Union Flag may be temporarily replaced with a flag of His Majesty's forces at the funeral of serving or retired Military personnel. The flag of His Majesty's forces Military flags will be flown at half-mast for the duration of the funeral service.

The Flagpole at Northwich Town Council Offices is owned and managed by Northwich Town Council. However, as there is no other flagpole in Northwich Town Centre, which Cheshire West and Chester Council can use at times of national morning or commemoration events, they have agreed to adopt Cheshire West and Chester's Flag Protocol and fly flags in accordance with the Designated Flag flying Calendar.

3.0 MAINTENANCE OF FLAGPOLES

The flagpoles at Chester Town Hall, Chester HQ Building, Ellesmere Port Civic Way and Winsford Wyvern House are the responsibility of Qwest to maintain, in accordance with their contract – See Appendix 2.

The flagpole at Northwich Town Council Offices is the responsibility of the Town Council to maintain.

The new flagpole at Blacon Crematorium is the responsibility of the Blacon Cemeteries and Crematorium team to maintain, in conjunction with the Council's Building Maintenance Contract.

4.0 CONDITION OF FLAGS

The condition of the flags will be monitored by Democratic Services and Qwest Services. This is to ensure that any wind damaged flags are replaced or repaired. National flags should never be flown in a worn or damaged condition, or when soiled.

Qwest Building Support Officers will store the flags in a suitable location and undertake an annual audit of the flags to ensure that they are in a good condition and that they are all present and in accordance with the Flag Flying Calendar, see appendix 1.

The Blacon Cemeteries and Crematorium team are responsible for monitoring the condition of their own onsite flags and also for purchasing any them.

5.0 THE UNION FLAG

The national flag of the United Kingdom, the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories is the **Union Flag**, which may also be called the **Union Jack**.

In March 2021, all Councils received a request that they fly the Union flag every day from all UK government/corporate buildings as a sign of national identity and unity. Where UK government buildings have multiple flagpoles, the Union flag must always be flown in the superior position:

- The highest flagpole
- The centre flagpole where there is an odd number of poles of the same height
- The left centre flagpole views from the front of the building, where there is an even number of poles of the same height.

The exception is where there is a Royal visit, in which the Royal Standard will take precedence.

6.0 OTHER FLAGS

There are a number of other flags which may be flown from Corporate Buildings, and Cheshire West and Chester Council will endeavour to mirror the approach and priorities of His Majesty the King, Central Government and nationally recognised flags.

The Council will not fly political or commercial advertising flags from its Corporate Buildings

The default flag to be flown from Corporate Buildings is the Union Flag. However, throughout the year, there are a number of reoccurring occasions and special days when other flags may also be flown, see Appendix 1. The Flag Flying Calendar will be updated at the beginning of each calendar year by Democratic Services. These other flags must comply with the following three categories listed below:

Flags which do not need consent:

- Any country's national flag, civil ensign or civil air ensign
- The flag of the Commonwealth, United Nations or any other international organisation of which the United Kingdom is a member
- A flag of any island, county, 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, any Riding of Yorkshire or any historic county within the United Kingdom
- The flag of Saint George
- The flag of Saint David (different to the flag of Wales)
- The flag of Saint Patrick (different to the flag of Ireland)
- The flag of any administrative area within any country outside the United Kingdom
- Any flag of His Majesty's forces
- The Armed Forces Day flag

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.

- 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
- Sports club flags - but cannot include sponsorship logos
- Pride Flags - The horizontal striped rainbow flag, such as the "Pride" Flag or Pride Progressive flag
- Specified award schemes - Eco-Schools, Kings Awards for Enterprise and Investors in People

Flags which require consent

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

Other adhoc flags to be flown

There may be occasions when the Council's receives requests for alternative/additional flags to be flown. The Protocol and Designated Flag Flying Calendar are for the Chief Executive to consider and approve such requests in line with the three categories listed above.

Green and blue environmental award scheme flags

The Council may fly the Green Flag Award scheme or Green Flag Community Award scheme at its parks and gardens in the borough.

7.0 WHEN SHOULD THE FLAG FLY AT HALF-MAST?

There may be occasions when the Union Flag is to be flown at half-mast. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will inform Cheshire West and Chester Council when such a national event occurs. The Union Flag will not be flown at half-mast without instruction from national government.

The Chief Executive will then inform Democratic Services, who will then liaise with Qwest Services/BSOs to implement this request. The occasions when the Union Flag can fly at half-mast is as follows:

Death of the Sovereign	Union Flag	Refer to Operation London Bridge Plans and the directions for flag process' within that protocol document (Available from Democratic Services)
Death of a Senior Member of the Royal Family	Union Flag	Refer to Operation Bridge Plans for marking the death of a senior member of the Royal Family. (Available from Democratic Services)

Death of the Prime Minister or former Prime Minister	Union Flag	On the day of the funeral only unless otherwise informed by national approach
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There maybe occasions for Cheshire West and Chester Council's House Flag is to be flown at half-mast.

Death of serving Local Member of Parliament	CWAC House Flag	On the day of the announcement of the death and the day of the funeral (In the Town in which they served)
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Death of a former Local Member of Parliament	CWAC House Flag	On the day of the funeral only (In the Town in which they served)
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Death of the Leader of the Council (serving)	CWAC House Flag	On the day of the announcement of the death and the day of the funeral
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Death of the Chairman of the Council (serving)	CWAC House Flag	On the day of the announcement of the death and the day of the funeral
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Death of the Chief Executive of CWAC (serving)	CWAC House Flag	On the day of the announcement of the death and the day of the funeral
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Death of an Honorary Freeman of CWAC	CWAC House Flag	On the day of the Funeral only
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Death of an Honorary Alderman of CWAC	CWAC House Flag	On the day of the funeral only
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Death of a serving Councillor	CWAC House Flag	On the day of the announcement of the death and the day of the funeral
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There may be occasions when the Cheshire Flag is to be flown at Half-mast.

Death of HM Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire (serving)	Cheshire Flag	From the day of death until sunset on the day of the funeral
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Death of the High Sheriff of Cheshire (serving)	Cheshire Flag	On the day of the announcement of the death and the day of the funeral
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There may be occasions when a local Civic/Mayoral flag is to be flown at half-mast

Death of a Lord Mayor/Town Mayor/Sheriff (serving)	Local Civic/Mayoral flag	On the day of the announcement of the death and the day of the funeral
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*Flag to be flown at their local Town Hall/Civic Office only.

Death of a Lord Mayor/Town Mayor (Former/Ex Civic)

Local Civic/ Mayoral Flag

On the day of the funeral only

*Flag to be flown at their local Town Hall/Civic Office only

BLACON CREMATORIUM ONLY

A flag of His Majesty's Forces at the funeral of serving or retired Military personnel may be flown at half-mast. The flag of His Majesty's forces may be flown at half-mast for the duration of the funeral service and then replaced with the Union Flag at the head of the mast.

Death of a serving or retired Military personnel

The flag of His Majesty's forces Military flags

During the duration of the funeral

8.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are number of key roles required to coordinate and implement this Flag Protocol

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Democratic Services will coordinate, review and implement the Council's Flag Protocol. They will also be responsible for updating annually the Designated Flag Flying Calendar. They will receive notifications regarding the announcements of any requirements to change the flags flying at Council Corporate Buildings outside the designated flag flying dates.

Democratic Services will liaise with Qwest/Building Services to inform them of the Designated Flying Days and any changes needed.

The decisions and approvals relating to Cheshire West and Chester's Flag Protocol and Designated Flag Flying Calendar are the responsibility of its Chief Executive.

Democratic Services are also responsible for arranging the annual audit for the maintenance of flags and arranging the purchase of any for Corporate Sites (apart from Blacon).

QWEST/BUILDING SUPPORT OFFICERS

Qwest is responsible for ensuring that all flags are flown at Chester HQ and Town Hall; Ellesmere Port Civic Way and Winsford Wyvern House, in accordance with the Flag Protocol and Designated Flag Flying Calendar. They are also responsible for storage, the annual audit of flags and will notify Democratic Services if any need replacing.

NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Northwich Town Council are responsible for ensuring that all flags are flown at their Town Council Office, in accordance with the Flag Protocol and Designated Flag Flying Calendar. They are also responsible for storage, the annual audit of flags and will notify Democratic Services if any need replacing.

BLACON CREMATORIUM TEAM

The Blacon Cemeteries and Crematorium team are responsible for ensuring that the flags flown at their site are in accordance with the Flag Protocol. They are also responsible for storage and the annual audit of flags and ensuring that the flagpole is safe and working effectively.

QWEST - MAINTENANCE OF FLAGPOLES

Qwest are responsible for the maintenance, on an adhoc, chargeable and reactive basis of the Council's Corporate Flagpoles at the following sites: at Chester HQ and Town Hall; Ellesmere Port Civic Way and Winsford Wyvern House, to ensure that they are safe and working.

NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL - MAINTENANCE OF FLAGPOLES

Northwich Town Council is responsible for the maintenance of its Flagpole.

BLACON CREMATORIUM - MAINTENANCE OF FLAGPOLES

The Blacon Cemeteries and Crematorium team is responsible for the maintenance of its flagpole. This will be in conjunction with the Council's Building Maintenance Contract.

Maintenance of Flagpoles Appendix 2

Raising the flags is in the Qwest contract, and they maintain on a reactive chargeable basis if any issues occur. This is part of the Business Operations duties and listed in the new FM Contract. The Corporate FM/Maintenance contract will cover the cost of any reactive chargeable repairs or maintenance to flagpoles.

5	Flag raising and lowering	<p>Qwest will provide a flag raising and lowering service in line with the agreed schedule (Appendix B).</p> <p>Additional ad-hoc flag raising and lowering will be provided to the Town Hall for civic functions and to the Hub buildings where specifically requested by CWAC.</p> <p>Subject to emergency requests, the normal notification lead time for ad-hoc events will be 2 days. CWAC will nominate a lead representative to authorise and instruct flag raising activity.</p> <p>All flag flying will be in accordance with the protocol and schedule attached in Appendix B.</p> <p>CWAC will be responsible for the cost of procuring flags or their replacements.</p>
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