

GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Flag Flying Policy

This policy was formally adopted by the Town Council at the Town Council meeting held on 17 November 2022

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Cllr Richard Taplin

TOWN MAYOR

1. Background Flag flying comes under three main headings: Regulation – which flags may be flown, as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, amended on 12 October 2012; Protocol - when and how flags should be flown; and Policy – how Godmanchester Town Council wish to apply this guidance.
2. Regulations The Government made changes to the 2007 Regulations which widen the types of flags which you may fly in England. Flags are treated as advertisements for the purposes of the planning regime and come under three categories:
 - 2.1 Those for which no consent is required. These are: the Union Flag (plus Commonwealth flag), the flags of UK-national saints (Saints Andrew, David, George and Patrick), the Armed Forces Day flag and HM forces ensigns, and current and historic UK area flags¹.
 - 2.2 Those for which deemed consent is given. These now include official environmental award flags² and the Gay Pride flag, in addition to ‘house flags’ and sports club flags. However, neither of the latter may carry any advertising or sponsorship details, and they must be flown from the building to which they relate.
 - 2.3 Any other flag requires express consent from the local planning authority.

All flags must:

- 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, and
- be removed carefully where so required by the planning authority.

3. Protocol Having ascertained that a flag may be flown, there are then certain conventions concerning the manner in which they are presented, as detailed in [British flag protocol](#). This covers, *inter alia*, the correct presentation of the Union Flag, and the manner by

¹ The category for current and historic UK area flags has been more clearly defined as:

- The flag of any island, county, district, borough, burgh, parish, city, town or village within the United Kingdom; and
- 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.

² These are Eco-Schools; the Queen’s Awards for Enterprise; Investors in People; the Green Flag Award and Green Flag Community Award schemes; and Blue Flags (for beaches/bathing water and marinas).

which a flag should be flown at half-mast³. Flags are normally flown from 0800 - sunset but they may also be flown at night, in which case they should be illuminated.

4. Godmanchester Policy

- 4.1. Flags may be flown on every day of the year. Government and local authority buildings in England, Scotland and Wales are encouraged to fly national flags every day of the year. Godmanchester will fly the Town Flag on a daily basis, with the exception of those days when it is stipulated that the Union or other flag should be flown.
- 4.2. The Town Council will fly:
 - a. the St George's flag on 23 April to commemorate St George's Day;
 - b. the Union flag to celebrate The Sovereign's actual and official birthdays⁴;
 - c. the Union flag on the designated National Armed Forces Day;
 - d. the Union flag (at full-mast) on Remembrance Sunday;
 - e. The Union flag on the day of Godmanchester Civic Service.
- 4.3. The Town Council may fly:
 - a. the Merchant Mariners' Flag on Merchant Mariners Day (3 September);
 - b. the Gay Pride flag on the day designated as National Gay Pride Day, or the Saturday of National Gay Pride Week if a specific day is not so identified;
 - c. the national flag of the appropriate country when a foreign delegation is making an official twinning visit to the town: France (Salon), Germany (Wertheim), Hungary (Szentendre) and Italy (Gubbio).
 - d. the Union or Town Flag on other days as indicated on the <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/> website.
- 4.4. The Union Flag should be flown at half-mast on the following occasions:
 - a. From the announcement of the death until the funeral of the Sovereign, except on Proclamation Day when flags are flown at full-mast following the proclamation.
 - b. From the announcement of the death until the funeral of a member of the Royal Family styled 'Royal Highness', subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case.

³ Half-mast means the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole, with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the flagpole.

When a flag is to be flown at half-mast, it should first be raised all the way to the top of the mast, allowed to remain there for a second and then be lowered to the half-mast position. When it is being lowered from half-mast, it should again be raised to the top of the mast for a second before being fully lowered.

⁴ HM King Charles' actual birthday is on 14 November , and his official birthday is on 17 June.

- c. On the day of the announcement of the death and on the day of the funeral of other members of the Royal Family, subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case.
- d. The funerals of foreign rulers, and of current and ex-prime ministers of the United Kingdom, subject to special commands from the Sovereign in each case.
- e. Any other occasions where the Sovereign has given a special command.
- f. The Town Flag to be flown at half-mast on the day of announcement of the death until the funeral of an Honorary Freeman, former Town Mayor, serving town Councillor or Town Officer.
- g. Events nationally recognised as worthy of respect (e.g. the 2017 Manchester bombing). In these cases, the flag will be flown at half-mast on that day generally identified as being one of mourning.
- h. Other local occasions so designated by the Mayor, with the support of the Town Council.
- i. This policy may be amended from time to time as agreed by Godmanchester Town Council.

Amendment History:

Paragraph	Detail	Approval Date
Original	Initial Version	January 2018
Review	Review and Re-adopted	May 2018
Review	Review and Re-adopted	June 2021
Review	Review and Amended	November 2022
Review Due		November 2025