



Flag-Flying Policy

1. Introduction

This Policy sets out Witney Town Council's approach to the flying of flags.

The Town Council flies flags to demonstrate allegiance, respect, celebration, and support for causes or occasions that reflect the values and identity of Witney in the local, national, and international communities.

2. General Information

- Witney Town Council owns one designated flagpole, located on top of the Town Hall, Market Square opposite the Buttercross.
- Flags may only be flown from the above flagpole. No other Town Council-owned buildings or facilities are authorised for flag flying.
- The Witney Coat of Arms will be flown year-round at the Town Hall unless another flag is raised in its place.
- Flags may be displayed in the Council's reception window and on the balcony at the Corn Exchange to highlight national events and occasions.
- A designated Town Council officer will raise the appropriate flag before 10:00 a.m. on recognised flag-flying days. Flags will normally remain in place until the following morning unless otherwise specified.
- When a recognised flag-flying day falls on a weekend, the flag will be raised before 5:00 p.m. on the preceding Friday and lowered before 10:00 a.m. on the following Monday, unless otherwise directed.
- The Town Council may arrange flag-flying ceremonies for any flag raising where appropriate and will publicise these in advance.
- Flags will not be flown during periods of high winds or adverse weather, particularly when wind speeds are expected to exceed forty mph.
- Flag may only be flown at the Town Hall by resolution of the Town Council and any relevant planning legislation – please see *section 6. Requests to fly other flags*.

3. Union Flag Flying Days

The Union Flag will be flown at Witney Town Hall in accordance with national flag-flying days published on www.gov.uk to preserve the significance of these occasions.

In addition, the Union Flag will be flown on the following commemorative days:

- **Armistice Day** 11 November
- **Battle of Britain Day** 15 September

The St George's Flag will be flown on:

- **St George's Day** 23 April

The Town Clerk (or their representative), in consultation with the Leader of the Council, has discretion to fly the Union Flag or St George's Flag on other occasions, including:

- To celebrate or support significant national (England) or local sporting events.
- In recognition of a Royal Visit (in consultation with the Lord-Lieutenant).
- To mark an event of success or importance to the town including an RAF Brize Norton Freedom Parade.
- On formal civic occasions, where appropriate.

4. Flying the Union Flag at Half-Mast

In line with guidance from the College of Arms, the Union Flag will be flown at half-mast in the following circumstances:

- From the announcement of the death of the Sovereign (H.M The King) until the funeral.
- On the death or funeral of a member or near relative of the Royal Family (see below):
 - H.M The Queen
 - H.R.H The Prince of Wales
 - H.R.H The Princess of Wales
 - H.R.H The Princess Royal
 - H.R.H The Duke of Edinburgh
 - H.R.H The Duchess of Edinburgh
- On the death or funeral of a current or former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.
- On any other occasion commanded by the Sovereign or the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS).

Witney Town Council may fly the Town flag at half-mast to mark local losses or commemorations as follows:

- On the death or funeral of a serving Town Councillor or Member of Parliament.

Half-mast means the flag is positioned two-thirds up the flagpole, leaving at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the pole.

When raising or lowering a flag to half-mast, it should first be hoisted to the top of the flagpole before being lowered. When removed, it should again be raised to the top before being fully lowered.

If a flag-flying day coincides with a period of mourning, flags will normally be flown at full-mast unless a special command dictates otherwise.

5. Other Flags

Following Council resolutions, Witney Town Council also fly's the following flags from the Town Hall throughout the year:

- **Commonwealth Flag** Second Monday in March (Commonwealth Day)
- **United Nations Flag** United Nations Day, 24 October
- **Red Ensign** Merchant Navy Day, 3 September
- **Armed Forces Flag** Armed Forces Day, last Saturday in June
- **NHS Flag** NHS Anniversary Day, 5 July
- **Rainbow Flag** Witney Pride Day (usually last Saturday in May)
- **Refugee Nation Flag** World Refugee Day, 20 June
- **Twinned Town Flags** When required (as appropriate)

6. Requests to Fly Other Flags

Witney Town Council welcomes engagement from the community and will consider requests to fly or display other flags in line with the following:

1. Requests must be submitted in writing to the Council and approved by the relevant Committee and/or Full Council through a formal resolution. Please note, many flags require planning consent from the local Planning Authority to fly.
2. The Council reserves the right to refuse any request associated with political parties, groups, or organisations, or any request that may bring the Council into disrepute. The Council must remain politically neutral, and its decision is final.
3. The Council will not purchase flags on behalf of third parties. Successful applicants may provide their own flag to the specified size, and donations will be acknowledged in Council minutes.
4. The Council will store donated flags safely but cannot accept responsibility for wear, damage, or replacement.
5. Flags will normally be displayed for a single day corresponding with the relevant campaign or commemoration, subject to staffing availability.

7. Reference

The complete Witney Town Council Flag Flying Policy, including the official list of recognised flags and flag-flying dates, is attached as **Appendix A**.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by legislative or strategic changes.

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance (minute no. F682)

Review Date: July 2027