

OXSPRING PARISH COUNCIL

FLAG FLYING POLICY

Flag flying is under the jurisdiction of the Department for Culture, Media and Sports. Government Guidance recognises that flags are a very British way of expressing joy and pride – they are emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities and strengthen community cohesion. Flags are also symbols that are often open to interpretation and have the potential to create tension between community groups whose opinions may differ. Flags are also treated as advertisements for the purposes of the Planning Regime and, as a result, some require formal consent.

The following sets out Oxspring Parish Council's Flag Flying Policy which, where possible, is based on Government guidance.

Standard Conditions

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.

The Proper Disposal of Flags

When a flag becomes tattered or defaced and is no longer in a suitable condition for use, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, for example by burning, tearing or cutting into strips that no longer resemble the original flag.

Flag Categories

There are three categories of flag:

1. Flags which can be flown without consent of the local planning authority;
2. Flags which do not need consent provided they comply with further restrictions;
3. Flags which require consent.

Oxspring Parish Council will only fly flags that can be flown without consent of the local planning authority. The full list of flags that do not require consent is as follows:

1. Any country's national flag, civil ensign or civil air ensign;
2. The flag of the Commonwealth, the European Union, 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 George;
6. The flag of Saint David;
7. The flag of Saint Patrick;
8. The flag of any administrative area within any country outside the United Kingdom;
9. Any flag of Her Majesty's forces;
10. The Armed Forces Day flag.

The Union Flag

There is no Flag Act in UK law and the Union Flag is the national flag by long established custom and practice, rather than by statute. Oxspring Parish Council reserves the right to fly the Union Flag every day, however the Union Flag is usually flown in particular on the following days:

- 1 March St David's Day (in Wales only)
- 13 March Commonwealth Day (second Monday in March)
- 17 March St. Patrick's Day (in Northern Ireland only)
- 9 April His Majesty's Wedding Day
- 23 April St George's Day (in England only)
- 17 June Official Birthday of His Majesty The King
- 8 June Official celebration of Her Majesty's birthday
- 21 June Birthday of the Prince of Wales
- 17 July Birthday of the Queen Consort
- 8 September His Majesty's Accession
- 12 November Remembrance Day (second Sunday in November)
- 14 November Birthday of His Majesty The King
- 30 November St Andrew's Day (in Scotland only)

The Union Flag will be flown the correct way up.

On the days that the Union Flag is not recommended to be flown, Oxspring Parish Council policy is to fly the St George's Cross or the Yorkshire Rose. The Parish Council reserves the right to not fly a flag on any given day if the Parish Council agrees that it is not appropriate to fly a flag on that day.

Flags that are not specifically included in the above Flag Policy will not be flown without the prior approval of Oxspring Parish Council, and will only be flown if they do not require planning consent (see list above).

At present the only flags owned by Oxspring Parish Council are:

The Union Jack

The St Georges Cross

The Yorkshire Rose

The Union Flag at Half Mast

Oxspring Parish Council reserves the right to fly the Union Flag at half mast on the following occasions:

1. From the announcement of the death of The Sovereign, except on Proclamation Day, when they are flown at full mast from 11am until sunset;
2. The funeral of members of the Royal Family, subject to special commands from His Majesty in each case;
3. The funeral of foreign rulers, subject to special commands from His Majesty in each case;
4. The funeral of members of Prime Ministers and ex-Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, subject to special commands from His Majesty in each case;
5. Any other occasions where the Sovereign has given a special command.

Half mast means the flag is flown two-thirds up between the top and bottom of the flag staff.

Policy Review

Oxspring Parish Council will review this Policy every two years or when there are changes in Government guidance