

Gloucestershire County Council

Flag Flying Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Policy seeks to formalise arrangements for the flying of flags from Shire Hall, Gloucester and provide guidance for other council buildings.

1.2 Gloucestershire County Council recognises the meaning and significance attributed to flags. They are emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities and strengthen community cohesion. They are ways for communities to express feelings of joy, pride and loyalty.

1.3 On 25 March 2008, the Department for Culture Media and Sport announced that UK government buildings in England, Scotland and Wales have the freedom to fly the Union Flag at all times, if they wish to do so. This policy reflects [Flying flags: a plain English guide - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flying-flags-a-plain-english-guide)

1.4 Flags not included in this policy should not be flown from council buildings without first gaining approval from those named in 1.5.

1.5 The Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council can agree to flags being flown, in addition to those listed in 3.1.

1.6 It should be established whether the proposed date for the flying of any additional flag would conflict with that of other flags already listed and if there is the capacity to fly an additional flag at that time.

1.7 In response to a significant event/s affecting a country with whom Gloucestershire and its residents have a strong connection, their national flag should be flown, for a suitable period, from Shire Hall and other council buildings, in agreement with those listed at 1.5.

1.8 Flags shall not be flown during severe weather conditions or planned maintenance.

1.9 Flags should not be flown in a worn, damaged or soiled condition as that could be perceived as a sign of disrespect to the nations that they represent.

1.10 Flags incorporating the emblem of any religious group or political party, whether it is a party within the UK or abroad, or any flag containing any emblem or device designed to affect support for a religious group or political cause, shall not be flown from council buildings.

1.11 The council shall not allow the use of flags for the purpose of advertising.

2. THE UNION FLAG

2.1 In line with national custom, Gloucestershire County Council will fly the Union Flag from Shire Hall every day. The Union Flag must always be flown in accordance with guidance notes from the [Flag Institute](#)

The Union Flag will be flown to mark the following occasions (a sub list of the [guidance from the DCMS](#)):

- **Second Monday in March:** Commonwealth Day
- **23 April:** St George's Day (in England) (Alongside The Cross of St George Flag, where there are two poles)
- **6 May:** Coronation Day
- **15 June:** Official Birthday of His Majesty the King
- **17 July:** Birthday of Her Majesty the Queen
- **Second Sunday in November:** Remembrance Day
- **14 November:** Birthday of His Majesty the King

Any changes to the advice from DCMS should be reflected in GCC's approach.

2.2 The Union Flag shall normally be flown at half-mast for a period to be agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader on council buildings to mark the following occasions:

- On the death of a serving or former Local Member of Parliament
- On the death of a serving or former Gloucestershire County Council Councillor
- On the death of a serving Gloucestershire County Council employee
- On the death / funeral of the Sovereign
- On the death / funeral of another member of the Royal Family
- On the death / funeral the Prime Minister (or ex-Prime Minister)
- On Holocaust Day on 27 January
- The death / funeral of any other dignitary as advised by the DCMS.
- At the discretion of those identified in 1.5 or after guidance from DCMS, the Union Flag may also be flown at half-mast at times of national mourning due to a major incident where British lives are lost (for instance, a terrorist attack or a major incident on British soil or abroad).
- At the discretion of those identified in 1.5 or after guidance from DCMS, the Union Flag may be flown at half-mast in order to show respect and support to other nations who are in periods of national mourning. Also see 1.7.

2.3 When flying the Union Flag at half-mast it will be 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.

2.4 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. 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.

2.5 When the Union Flag is at half-mast, other flags will also be at half-mast or should not be flown at all. Flags of foreign nations will not be flown, unless their country is also observing mourning.

2.6 When the Union Flag is flown on designated days which coincide with days for flying at half-mast the Union flag will be flown at full mast all day although a member of the Royal Family, or a near relative of the Royal Family, may be lying dead, unless special commands are issued by HM the King to the contrary.

3. DATES/OCCASIONS WHERE FLAGS OTHER THAN THE UNION FLAG WILL BE FLOWN FROM SHIRE HALL

3.1 Other flags may also be routinely flown at Shire Hall throughout the year to mark annual events and celebrations as follows:

Date	Date/occasion	Flag
1 February	LGBT+ History Month LGBT history month is a month-long annual observance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history, and the history of the gay rights and related civil rights movements. LGBT history month provides role models, builds community, and represents a civil rights statement about the contributions of the LGBT community	The Pride Flag
The second Monday of March	Commonwealth Day Commonwealth Day is the annual celebration of the Commonwealth of Nations (Flag to fly for one week)	The Commonwealth Flag
8 March	International Woman's Day Global day recognising the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women, while also advocating for gender equality and women's rights.	International Woman's Day Flag
31 March	International Transgender Day of Visibility Dedicated to celebrating transgender people and raising awareness of	The Transgender Pride Flag

	discrimination faced by transgender people worldwide, as well as a celebration of their contributions to society	
23 April	St George's Day (flown 24/7 365 days) Commemorates England's patron saint and is a day of national pride, often marked by flying the Cross of St George and celebrating English heritage and traditions.	The Cross of St George Flag
Throughout June	Pride month Global celebration of LGBTQ+ communities, promoting visibility, equality, and the ongoing fight against discrimination and injustice.	The Progress Pride Flag
Late June (for the week) (week commencing 23 June in 2025)	Armed Forces Day National occasion to honour the service and sacrifice of the men and women in the British Armed Forces, past and present.	The Armed Forces Flag
9 September	Emergency Services Day UK-wide event that honours the dedication of NHS and emergency service personnel, promotes responsible use of emergency services, and encourages public awareness of lifesaving skills and volunteering opportunities.	The Emergency Services Flag
14 September (date may vary)	Gloucestershire Pride weekend Celebration of the LGBTQ+ community and its allies, featuring a pride march through Gloucester city centre followed by a day of festivities in Gloucester Park with performances,	Progress Pride Flag

	community zones, and inclusive activities.	
21 September	<p>Gloucestershire Day Commemorates the historic lifting of the Siege of Gloucester in 1643 and is a day of civic pride, celebrating the county's resilience, heritage, and community spirit.</p> <p>The Gloucestershire Flag will also be flown at Shire Hall on County Council days</p>	The Gloucestershire Flag
Throughout October	<p>Black History Month Time to honour and reflect on the achievements, contributions, and history of Black people in Britain, while promoting awareness of racial equality and cultural diversity.</p>	Black History Month Flag
1 November	<p>Field of Remembrance Service Tribute where thousands of personal messages and poppy crosses are planted to honour those who lost their lives in service to the UK Armed Forces, fostering national remembrance and reflection</p>	Union Flag (flown 24/7 365 days)
20 November	<p>World Children's Day Global observance dedicated to promoting and protecting the rights, welfare, and voices of children everywhere, as established by the United Nations.</p>	United Nations Flag
25 November to 10 December	<p>16 Days of Action (Domestic Abuse) An international campaign aimed at raising awareness, challenging attitudes, and encouraging action to end</p>	The White Ribbon Flag

	domestic abuse and support survivors.	
1 December	World Aids Day Global day of awareness and remembrance that unites people in the fight against HIV, honours those who have died from AIDS-related illnesses, and supports those living with HIV while challenging stigma and discrimination.	The World Aids Day Flag
3 December	International Day of Disabled Persons Promotes the rights and well-being of people with disabilities and raises awareness of their contributions and challenges in all aspects of political, social, economic, and cultural life.	Disability Pride Flag

3.2 Where awareness days fall during an awareness week/month, the awareness week/month flag will be replaced by the awareness day flag for the associated 24-hour period/s, before being return for the remainder of the week/month.

3.3 If any of the dates/occasions set out in sections 2.1 and 2.2 coincide with dates set out in 3.1, the Union flag will be flown.

4. FLAG FLYING REQUESTS

4.1 The council shall reasonably consider any request for the flying of a flag not already provided for in this protocol.

4.2 Before approval to fly a guest flag is granted, the council will establish whether the proposed date for the guest flag to be flown would conflict with that of other flags.

4.3 When determining whether or not to fly a flag the council will be sensitive to the views of all sectors of its community and borough and any request will need to demonstrate the unity and diversity of the county and symbolise the values associated with the council.

4.4 The council will not allow the use of flags for party political purposes or for the purposes of commercial advertising.

4.5 Any decision regarding the flying of flags outside of this protocol will be made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

- 4.6 The council may in certain circumstances choose to deviate from this policy in circumstances where it is important to convey sympathy and support with a city, country or locality which Gloucestershire has a particular and established relationship with.
- 4.7 Other arrangements in response to requests from external organisations to fly flags or events requiring expressions of sympathy and support, such as books of condolence, will be discussed on a case by case basis and agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

5. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

- 5.1 The policy will be reviewed periodically and/or in respect of any future revisions to Government guidance.

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jo Walker".

Jo Walker, Chief Executive

Date: 11 August 2025