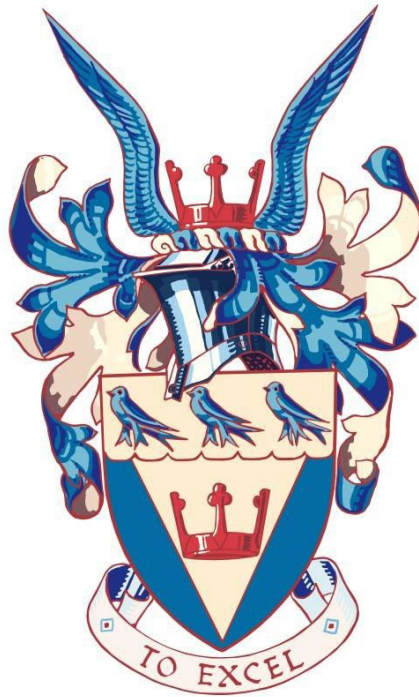




BOGNOR REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

FLAG-FLYING POLICY

Adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on 6th July 2026

Introduction

Flags are symbolic and visible expressions of civic identity, respect, celebration, mourning and community recognition.

This policy sets out how Bognor Regis Town Council will manage the flying of flags from Council-owned or Council-managed flagpoles. It is intended to ensure that flag-flying decisions are made consistently, lawfully, respectfully and in a way which reflects the Council's civic role, political neutrality and commitment to the whole community.

The flying of any flag must be considered in the context in which it is displayed. Flags can be positive symbols of unity and recognition, but they may also be interpreted differently by different sections of the community. The Council will therefore take a careful and proportionate approach to flag-flying.

Scope

This policy applies to all flags flown from Council-owned or Council-managed flagpoles, including those at the Town Hall and any other Council premises or civic locations.

This policy applies to Councillors, Officers and any person or organisation making a request for a flag to be flown by the Council.

Who is Responsible for this Policy?

The Town Clerk has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor where appropriate, may authorise routine flag-flying in accordance with this policy.

Requests outside the scope of this policy will be referred to the relevant Committee or Full Council unless urgent circumstances require a decision to be taken under delegated authority.

General Principles

The Council will fly flags in a manner which is dignified, respectful and appropriate to the Council's civic status.

The Union Flag, national flags and civic flags must not be flown in a damaged, faded or inappropriate condition.

Flags must be flown in accordance with relevant legislation, planning requirements, national guidance and accepted flag protocol.

The Council will not fly any flag which:

- Promotes a political party or party-political campaign;
- Promotes hatred, discrimination or unlawful activity;
- Is likely to bring the Council into disrepute;
- Is inconsistent with the Council's duties under equality legislation;
- Is likely to compromise the Council's political neutrality;
- Is commercial in nature or primarily for advertising purposes;
- Is contrary to national flag protocol or relevant planning controls.

Flags Normally Flown by the Council

The Council may fly the following flags as appropriate:

- The Union Flag;
- The St George's Flag;
- The County Flag of West Sussex, where appropriate;
- The Town Council's civic flag or crest-bearing flag, where available;
- The Armed Forces Day Flag;
- The Commonwealth Flag;
- Flags agreed by the Council, including those recognising exceptional national or international circumstances;

The default position is that the Union Flag and/or Town Council crest-bearing flag will be flown unless replaced in accordance with this policy.

Designated and Civic Occasions

The Council may fly flags to mark designated national occasions, royal events, civic events, commemorative days and other occasions of local significance.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- Accession Day;
- Coronation Day;
- Official birthday of His Majesty the King;
- Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day;

- St George's Day;
- Commonwealth Day;
- Armed Forces Day;
- Merchant Navy Day;
- Sussex Day;
- Significant local civic events;
- Events formally recognised by the Council.

The Town Clerk shall maintain a list of annual flag-flying dates, to be reviewed periodically.

Half-Masting

Flags may be flown at half-mast as a mark of respect or mourning.

The Union Flag or other appropriate flag may be flown at half-mast following:

- The death of the Sovereign or another member of the Royal Family, in accordance with national protocol;
- The death of a serving or former Mayor of Bognor Regis;
- The death of a serving Councillor;
- The death of a Freeman or Honorary Freeman of the Town;
- The death of a serving member of staff, where appropriate;
- A national tragedy or act of remembrance;
- Any other occasion agreed by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor.

Where a flag is flown at half-mast, other flags should either also be flown at half-mast or not flown, unless protocol requires otherwise.

Special Requests to Fly Flags

Requests must be submitted in writing to the Town Clerk and include:

- Applicant details;
- The flag and proposed dates;
- The purpose of the request;
- Confirmation that the flag is lawful, non-commercial and not party-political;
- Any relevant supporting information.

The Council will consider requests having regard to:

- The Council's statutory role and political neutrality;
- Equality, community cohesion and potential for divisiveness;
- Whether the request relates to a recognised national or local event;
- Practical considerations (e.g. flagpole availability, staffing and weather);
- Any precedent that may be created.

Approval of a request on one occasion does not create an automatic right for the same or similar request to be approved in future.

Equality, Inclusion and Community Cohesion

The Council recognises that flags may be used to show respect, support or recognition for communities, causes or commemorative events.

Where a request relates to equality, inclusion, community safety or recognition of a protected characteristic, the Council will consider the request carefully and in accordance with its public sector equality duties.

The Council must also ensure that decisions are balanced, proportionate and consistent with its role as a politically neutral public body serving the whole community.

Political Neutrality

The Council will not fly flags associated with political parties, party-political campaigns or election campaigning.

The Council may, however, consider flags associated with nationally recognised civic, charitable, commemorative or community events, provided that doing so is consistent with this policy and does not compromise the Council's political neutrality.

Planning and Legal Compliance

The flying of flags may be subject to advertisement control and planning regulations.

Some flags may be flown without express consent, while others may require consent from the Local Planning Authority or must comply with specific restrictions.

The Council will not fly any flag unless it is satisfied that doing so is lawful and compliant with any relevant planning, health and safety or property requirements.

Operational Arrangements

The Town Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that approved flags are flown on the relevant dates, subject to staff availability, safe access, weather conditions and operational practicality.

Flags shall not be flown where doing so would present a health and safety risk.

The Council reserves the right to remove or decline to fly any flag where:

- The flag is damaged or unsuitable;
- Weather conditions make flying unsafe;
- The flag is found to be inconsistent with this policy;
- National or civic protocol requires another flag to take precedence;
- The Council considers that continued display is no longer appropriate.

Precedence

Where more than one flag could appropriately be flown on the same day, precedence will normally be given in the following order:

- Royal or national mourning;
- National flag-flying requirements or guidance;
- Remembrance and Armed Forces occasions;
- Civic occasions of the Town Council;
- Other approved commemorative or community occasions.

Where only one flagpole is available, the Union Flag or Town Council crest-bearing flag, or other nationally required flag will normally take precedence.

Review

This policy shall be reviewed periodically, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, national guidance, Council practice or local circumstances.

The Town Clerk may make minor administrative amendments to this policy where necessary, provided that such amendments do not alter the substance of the policy.

Monitoring

The Town Clerk will monitor the application of this policy.

All Councillors and Officers must observe this policy when considering, approving or arranging the flying of flags on behalf of the Council.