

# Medway Council Flag Flying Protocol – Council Buildings

## **Introduction**

This Protocol will cover Council buildings where flags may be flown, specifically, Gun Wharf, Rochester Castle and Upnor Castle.

The Council will follow guidance issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the College of Arms, as reflected in this Protocol, with regards to flag flying.

The Council will ensure it has any necessary planning consents in place to facilitate flag flying from Council buildings.

Flags flown should be kept in good condition. Torn or soiled flags should be replaced at the earliest opportunity.

Flags shall be flown on Council buildings in accordance with the following principles:

- To mark key awareness days, months and cultural celebrations.
- To foster civic pride.
- To respond to national and global events.
- To promote inclusion, visibility, and belonging for all communities.
- To demonstrate organisational commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- To foster a culture of respect and understanding.

The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, has delegated authority to determine which flags shall be flown on Council buildings, when to fly the Union Flag at half-mast to mark local commemorations or losses and when to remove flags in the event of poor weather and/or forecast poor weather.

The Council's Democratic Services team, in conjunction with the Communications and Marketing team, and Facilities Management team shall have operational responsibility to ensure compliance with this Protocol.

## **Union Flag flying guidance**

The Union Flag (the national flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) shall be flown at Gun Wharf, Rochester Castle and Upnor Castle. The Union Flag is flown at Upnor Castle during the period it is open to the public (1 April-31 October).

The College of Arms advises that in the upper corner of the flag nearest the flagpole, the wider diagonal white stripe should be above the red diagonal stripe. If the red is above the wider white stripe the flag is upside-down.

In the case of two identical height poles, which is the position at Gun Wharf, the Union Flag shall be flown on the leftmost pole, which is the superior position as advised by the College of Arms. As such, the Union Flag shall be the first flag on the left of an observer facing the main entrance of Gun Wharf.

## Lowering flags (half-mast)

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. If more than one flag is flown, they should all be raised at half-mast or not flown at all.

The College of Arms has advised that the Union Flag shall be flown at half-mast on the following occasions:

Occasions on which the Union Flag is to be flown at half-mast:

- from the announcement of the death of the Sovereign until the funeral, except on Proclamation Day when flags are flown at full-mast following the proclamation.

In the following cases, half-mastings will be **by special command** from His Majesty:

- the death of a member or near relative of the Royal Family or the funeral of members of the Royal Family;
- the funerals of foreign Rulers;
- the funerals of Prime Ministers and ex-Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom;
- the funerals of First Ministers and ex-First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (unless otherwise commanded by the Sovereign, this only applies to flags in their respective countries);
- any other occasions as commanded.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport will inform Government departments of any other occasions when His Majesty has given a special command. The College of Arms will also publish details of half-masting instructions for the information of local and national government and any other interested bodies or individuals.

In such cases, Medway Council will follow the specific guidance issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the College of Arms.

In addition, local government bodies, such as Medway Council, are permitted to fly the Union Flag at half-mast to mark local as well as national commemorations or losses.

## Flag flying at Gun Wharf

Gun Wharf has two flag poles, situated on the left-hand side of the front of the building to the main entrance.

The Union Flag shall be the first flag on the left of an observer facing the main entrance of the building. The other flagpole shall ordinarily be used to fly the Medway Council flag or other flags, i.e. celebratory or commemorative flags, which are detailed elsewhere in this Protocol.

In the case of flying other flags, there may be flag raising ceremonies, which will ordinarily be led by the Mayor of Medway or the Deputy Mayor, to which Councillors and guests will be invited. Such ceremonies shall be organised by the Council's Democratic Services team, in conjunction with the Communications and Marketing team, who will liaise with the Facilities Management team as required.

## Poor weather

In the event of poor weather and/or forecast poor weather, flags may be removed from Council buildings.

## Disposal of flags

When a flag is no longer in a suitable condition for use, it should be destroyed in a dignified way to ensure that it no longer resembles the original flag.

## Other flags

The Medway Council flag will ordinarily be flown at Gun Wharf, alongside the Union Flag.

Other flags, including celebratory or commemorative flags may be flown in place of the Medway Council flag on specific days or for a specified period. Other flags may be flown at Rochester Castle and Upnor Castle on specific days or for a specific period.

The Chief Executive will consider and determine any requests for flag flying on Council buildings, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

A list of flags, which is not intended to be exhaustive, is set out below.

Reason	Flag required
Armed Forces Day	Armed Forces flag
Battle of Britain Day	Battle of Britain flag
Commonwealth Day	Commonwealth flag
D-Day	D-Day Anniversary flag
Disability Pride Month	Disability Pride flag
Kent Day	Kent County flag
Merchant Navy Day	Merchant Navy flag
Pride Month	Progress pride flag
Remembrance Day	Union Flag
Roma Holocaust Remembrance Day	Romani flag
St George's Day	St George's flag
Transgender Day of Remembrance	Transgender flag
Ukrainian Independence Day	Ukrainian flag
United Nations Day	UN flag
Victory in Europe (VE) Day	VE Day flag
Victory in Japan (VJ) Day	VJ Day flag
White Ribbon Day	White Ribbon flag
Windrush Day	Windrush flag