



Rutland  
County Council

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# Flag Flying Policy

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## **Summary**

This policy outlines the procedures and arrangements for the flying of flags at Rutland County Council, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6HP.

## Contents

		Page
1.0	Introduction	4
2.0	Background	4
3.0	Union Flag	5
4.0	Other Flag Flying Days	6
5.0	Requests For Additional Flag Flying Days and Illuminating Catmose	6

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council can receive requests to fly flags at, or illuminate, Catmose. This policy provides a clear protocol on existing and future flag flying to guide decisions.
- 1.2 The policy is implemented by the Governance Team under instruction from the Chief Executive or Director of Law and Governance in consultation with the Leader and Chairman of the Council.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council displays flags on the flagpoles outside of the Rutland County Council offices, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6HP. The Council will also on occasion fly flags at Oakham Castle, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6DR and Oakham Library LE15 6HW. An arrangement is in place that Oakham Town Council may use the flagpole outside the Library.
- 2.2 As detailed in 3.0 below, the Union Flag will fly from the principal flagpole at Catmose at all times except during a visit by the Sovereign.
- 2.3 The secondary flagpole at Catmose is to the left of the principal flagpole when viewing Catmose from the front. (See figure 1). This flagpole will fly the County Flag throughout the year except on days detailed in 4.0 or when a request has been granted as detailed in 5.0
- 2.4 The purpose for flying flags at Catmose is to symbolise the county's support for important local, national and international days and events. Like all symbols, flags are highly emotive and can be open to interpretation therefore the Council needs to ensure careful consideration is given to flag flying days and requests for the illumination of Catmose to encourage community cohesion and acknowledge the feelings of the County's residents.
- 2.5 At the beginning of each calendar year, a list of flag flying days is produced based on the dates outlined in this policy, guidance from the Government on designated days for flying the Union Flag and advice from the National Association of Civic Officers (NACO) on special events taking place during the year, such as anniversary events. We also develop a list of additional flag flying days for commemorative and celebratory activities relevant in support of our civic programme and community support.

- 2.6 All flag flying commitments are subject to the weather, safe access to the flagpoles and the availability of suitably trained staff.
- 2.7 Flags should not be flown in a worn, damaged or soiled condition. Staff responsible for flying the flags, namely the Premises Officers, will report any damage or wear and tear to the Civic Office as soon as practicable. There is a small budget available for the upkeep of Civic Regalia which covers the basic maintenance of flags. Spend on new or additional flags must be approved by the appropriate budget manager.

### 3.0 UNION FLAG

- 3.1 Since 2008, councils have had the discretion to fly the Union Flag at all times if they wish. New guidance was issued by the [Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in March 2021](#) that called for all UK Government buildings to fly the Union Flag every day. All local authorities and other local organisations were encouraged to follow this guidance. In addition, the UK Flag Protocol, produced by the Flag Institute<sup>1</sup>, encourages all local authority buildings in England, Scotland and Wales to fly national flags every day of the year and this practice is being seen more frequently across the country.
- 3.2 The Union Flag will therefore be flown all year round at Rutland County Council Catmose in accordance with government guidance.
- 3.3 The only exception to the Union Flag being flown would be during a visit from the Sovereign, in which case the Royal Standard would be flown on the flagpole but only after consulting with the Lord Chamberlain's Department or the Sovereign's private secretary. No non-UK national flags will be flown on the other flagpoles.
- 3.4 The Union Flag should be flown at half-mast on the following occasions:
- On the announcement of the death of the Sovereign (refer to separate protocol for the arrangements for the Proclamation)
  - On the announcement of the death of a Principal member of the Royal Family
  - On the announcement of death of a prominent National or Local figure
  - On the day of the funeral of members of the Royal Family, subject to special commands from the Sovereign or the UK Government in each case.

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<sup>1</sup> UK Flag Protocol "<https://www.flaginstitute.org/wp/uk-flags/british-flag-protocol/>"

- 3.5 In the event of a national or international incident, the advice of the UK Government will be followed in respect of how and when flags will be flown at Catmose.

## **4.0 OTHER FLAG FLYING DAYS**

- 4.1 There are other dates during the year where additional flags will be flown to show support for certain causes or organisations. These flags will be flown on the flagpole to the left of the principal flagpole when viewing Catmose from the front. *(See figure 1)*
- 4.2 The additional flag flying dates currently include, but are not limited to:
- LGBT History Month - February
  - Commonwealth Day (second Monday in March) – Commonwealth Flag
  - Armed Forces Day (Monday to Saturday, normally the last week in June) – Armed Forces Day Flag
  - Merchant Navy Day (3<sup>rd</sup> September) – British Merchant Navy (red) Flag.
  - County Flag flown on Rutland Day – 13<sup>th</sup> September
  - The Rutland County Council Flag may be flown at the instruction of the Leader/Chief Executive
- 4.3 Additional flag flying days may be agreed by the Director of Legal and Governance in consultation with the Leader and Chairman of the Council.
- 4.4 On the occasion of the death of a serving Councillor, the County Flag should be flown at half-mast from the day of death to sunset on the day of the funeral.
- 4.5 The flagpole at Oakham Castle will usually fly the County flag except on designated days, i.e., AFD Flag Raising, Merchant Navy Day etc.

## **5.0 REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL FLAG FLYING DAYS AND ILLUMINATING CATMOSE**

- 5.1 Consideration will be given to one-off additional requests by Members of the Council, Members of the public, or any other organisation for flag flying.
- 5.2 Council may also resolve by resolution to fly a flag at the secondary flagpole except on designated flag flying days set out in 4.0.
- 5.3 Requests to illuminate Catmose will be declined as they do not support the Council's Climate Change agenda and add additional resource strain in terms of budget, staff time and equipment
- 5.4 Requests by members of the public or non-Council bodies must be made at least 6 weeks before the event in writing to the Civic Officer, Rutland County Council, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6HP.
- 5.5 These requests will be assessed by the Chief Executive or Director of Legal & Governance, in consultation with the Leader and Chairman of the Council and should reflect the vision and priorities of the Council, be sensitive to the views of communities and be made in the spirit of displaying allegiance, support or respect or to celebrate or mark a significant international, national or local occasion.

Figure 1: Examples of flag flying on additional flag flying days.



**A large print version of this document is available on request**



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