

## **AGENDA ITEM 5**

### **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**4<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

#### **BRIEFING NOTE**

#### **OPERATION LONDON BRIDGE**

##### **1. BACKGROUND**

As the Committee will be aware, Tavistock Town Council had an Operation London Bridge (OLB) Plan in place for a considerable length in time, in preparation for the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This was reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

On Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022, shortly after 6.30pm, it was announced that the Queen had passed away. This meant that key staff involved in Operation London Bridge returned to work, to put the Plan in place. This involved the Town Clerk, Assistant to the Town Clerk, Office Administrator (Financial) and the Town Hall & Events Manager.

##### **2. WEBSITE**

The Council's website was changed to the planned black background, with a photograph of the late Queen, together with links through to provide information with regard to:

- where the Council's Book of Condolence would be, and the times of availability;
- a link to Buckingham Palace's website for the online version of the Book of Condolence, for those who were not able to attend in person to sign (as soon as it became available);
- where flowers could be laid;
- details of the Commemorative Church Service in St Eustachius' Church on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2022;
- where and when the Town Council's Proclamation would be read.

The website was updated by 7.15pm that evening, which was understood to be one of the first in Devon, or maybe even the first one to be completed.

##### **3. FLAGS**

The Union Flag was hoisted to half mast on the Town Hall by the Town Clerk and Town Hall & Events Manager, shortly after 7pm that evening. The flag was then raised, and lowered, over the mourning period in accordance with the OLB Plan.

#### **4. LETTER TO THE PALACE**

A letter of Condolence from the Mayor on behalf of the Town and the Council was sent to the King's Private Secretary to convey the sympathy of the Council and the people of Tavistock to the King, and the entire Royal Family, on the sad news of the passing of the Queen.

The letter was also uploaded to the official Book of Condolence on the Palace website.

#### **5. RE-ARRANGMENT OF THE COUNCIL AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT & LICENSING COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

As protocol does not allow for an Agenda to be issued during the national mourning period, and the statutory 3 days had not elapsed from the issuing of the Agenda for the Council Meeting previously scheduled for 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022, it was necessary to delay both Meetings. The Council Meeting was deferred until Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September (at which a minute's silence was observed), and the Development Management & Licensing Committee Meeting was re-arranged to Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2022. All Council and Committee Meeting dates have now returned to the dates as previously arranged.

#### **6. ARM BANDS**

A supply of black armbands for staff and Councillors to wear during the mourning period had previously been purchased. These were distributed, as necessary.

#### **7. BOOK OF CONDOLENCE**

A Book of Condolence was opened in the Reception area of the Town Council Offices, beside a framed photograph of the late Queen, and a vase of white Calia Lilies. This has been signed by staff, some Councillors and some members of the public.

On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September I took the Book of Condolence to Crelake House Residential Home, and Abbotsfield Nursing Home, in order that staff and residents would have the opportunity to sign a Book of Condolence, which they might not otherwise have had the chance to do.

I was very well received in both Homes, where many residents were extremely pleased to have the opportunity to record their thanks to the late Queen for her years of service to the residents of this country and the Commonwealth.

The Town Council's Book of Condolence will be archived with that of West Devon Borough Council, and those of other towns and parishes within the

Borough. We will advise Buckingham Palace of how many signatures are contained within our Book, as a national total figure of signatures is being collated.

## **8. PROCLAMATION**

On Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September the Town's Proclamation was read by the 2<sup>nd</sup> citizen of the town (the Town Clerk), in the unavoidable absence of the 1<sup>st</sup> citizen of the town (the Mayor).

It was estimated that iro 400 people were in attendance for the Proclamation, with the Proclamation Party being as follows;

- Carl Hearn – Town Clerk
- Councillor James Ellis – Deputy Mayor of Tavistock;
- Councillor Caroline Mott – Mayor of West Devon;
- Rear Admiral Ric Cheadle – Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Devon;
- County Councillor Debo Sellis – representing Devon County Council;
- Reverend Rosie Illingworth – representing St Eustachius' Church

Also in attendance were two Mace Bearers (Simon Dell and Paul Blowey), with the National Anthem being played by Pipe Major Gordon Macaoidh of the City of Plymouth Pipe Band, who had also played the specially written piece of music at the Lighting of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacon on Whitchurch Down.

## **9. CHURCH SERVICE**

I liaised with the organisers of the Commemorative Church Service with regard to arrangements for the event during the planning of OLB, and collated attendance figures from amongst Councillors and their families when the date of the Service became known.

## **10. FLOWERS LAID BY THE WAR MEMORIAL**

The chosen place for the laying of flowers in memory of the Queen was on the grassed area around the War Memorial. In accordance with the OLB Plan, these were removed for composting by Works Dept. staff on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September at 9am, the day following the Queen's Funeral.

## **11. SUMMARY**

I am personally very pleased with the arrangements which were put in place, and enacted, in a Plan that had started to be planned nationally in the 1960s and thank all those colleagues who helped to achieve such seamless and respectful arrangements. The Council's Plan will continue to be reviewed and updated, as we believe a new Operation London Bridge will now be put in place for the next such event.

**Jan Smallacombe**  
**Assistant to the Town Clerk**

# **Tavistock Town Council**