

Protocols for marking the death of the Duke of Edinburgh

The Local Response

1. The civic authorities are anxious lest London be overwhelmed by a massive influx of visitors to commemorate the death. It is felt that this would be mitigated by adequate provision being made in the regions for local commemorative services.
2. Every parish church in the Diocese is encouraged to hold a **commemorative service**.
3. In addition, every District Council area will have a **designated civic service**, attended by one of the Lord Lieutenant's Deputies. A member of the Bishop's Senior Staff will liaise with the incumbent and Rural Dean, and preach at the service.
4. Buckingham Palace considers that a local commemorative service after the State Funeral would be misplaced.
5. **Exeter Cathedral** will host two services: one for the county and one for the city. The Lord Lieutenant will attend the county service and a deputy attend the city service. Bishop Robert will preach at both services.
6. Clergy and churchwardens need to plan for **Books of Condolence** as far as possible to be available in each parish church. Thought needs to be given as to where in the benefice or mission community people are most likely to want to gather. Arrangements need to be in place to ensure that churches remain open and are accessible for those who wish to pray and/or record their condolences.
 - a. Churches should be open with a public notice displayed prominently inviting people to sign the Book of Condolence.
 - b. The National Association of Civic Officers recommends that a Book of Condolence should be loose-leaf, using quality paper in A4 ring binders. This will enable both their subsequent collation and binding, and the easy removal of any inappropriate comments. If desired, the official commemorative prayer can be added to the volume. A downloadable version is available on the Diocese website.
 - c. The Condolence Book should be displayed on a table centrally in the church with a chair and pen for people to use (preferably not a biro which fades).
 - d. On such occasions, people often like to light a candle. It is important to give thought as to how this might safely be facilitated in your own setting.
 - e. Parishes may wish to erect a separate table or display of photographs or memorabilia, especially if a member of the royal family has visited in the past.
7. Local schools should be invited to sign any book of condolence and clergy should make arrangements to support school staff in leading collective worship.
8. Any questions regarding arrangements for parishes, deaneries or archdeaconry should be directed to the appropriate Archdeacon.
9. Any question regarding arrangements for the Diocese should be directed to the Diocesan Director of Communication or the Archdeacon of Exeter.

10. **Flags:** not all Devon churches fly flags and for those that do, official guidance provides that:
- a. All flags should be flown at half-mast from official confirmation of the death until 0800 hours on the day after the funeral.
 - b. The general convention in flying flags on or over church buildings is that the only flag flown is the “flag of St George with the diocesan arms in the top quarter nearest the mast”. Many churches possess only a flag of St George without the quartered arms and that must be considered adequate.
11. **Bells:** A tenor bell is tolled on the official announcement of death, either at noon or in the evening (before the evening service, if there is one); a time before the state funeral bells are rung.

The National Response

12. The liturgy of the State Funeral and its publication rests solely with Westminster Abbey. The publication of other official material will be undertaken by Church House, Westminster, following the go-ahead from Lambeth Palace. All liturgical material is fully formatted and ready to publish.
13. The official texts of the funeral liturgy will be posted only on the Cambridge University Press (CUP) website because of copyright. The official Church of England website will carry prominent links to the appropriate CUP page which will carry a modified 'home page' for the eventuality.
14. In addition to the official prayers and collects, there will also be a suite of simple prayers published on the CofE website suitable for children and use in schools.
15. A national Order of Commemoration will provide the framework for local and diocesan services. This service can be adapted as required, but is designed to work equally well in a parish church or cathedral. Church House will simultaneously provide notes of guidance on such services as well as further resources for private and small groups.

Need some help?

If you have any queries, please contact your archdeacon's office:

Plymouth: 01752 858382

Totnes: 01626 832064

Barnstaple: 01271 375475

Exeter: 01392 425577

If you have a query about communications or a wider diocesan matter, please contact the main Diocese number on:

01392 294 4940

Helpful websites

Diocese of Exeter Website: <https://exeter.anglican.org/>

Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/>

Cambridge University Press website: <https://www.cambridge.org/>

Church House Publishing: <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/>