

## **Sourton Parish Council Flag Flying Policy and Protocol**

1. Sourton Parish Council recognises that flags are emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities and strengthen community cohesion. They are a way for communities to express feelings of joy, pride, and loyalty.

2. Like all symbols, flags are open to wide-ranging interpretation and, therefore, also have the potential to cause controversy and create tension between community groups whose opinions may differ. The flying of any flag must be viewed in the context in which it is flown or displayed. Factors affecting the context include the manner, location and frequency with which flags are flown. The Council has a responsibility to carefully consider the potential impact upon its communities of flying flags from its properties and how that action may be interpreted.

3. Only flags that fully conform with the “Plain English Guide to Flying Flags” issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government shall be flown

All flags must be:

- be maintained in a condition that does not impair the overall visual appearance of the site
- be kept in a safe condition
- have the permission of the owner of the site on which they are displayed (this includes the Highway Authority if the sign is to be placed on highway land)
- not obscure, or hinder the interpretation of official road, rail, waterway or aircraft signs, or otherwise make hazardous the use of these types of transport
- be removed carefully where so required by the planning authority

Subject to compliance with the standard conditions, there are 3 categories of flag:

(a) flags which can be flown without consent of the local planning authority

(b) flags which do not need consent provided they comply with further restrictions (referred to as “deemed consent” in the Regulations)

(c) flags which require consent (“express consent”)

4 Should an individual or organisation wish a flag(s) associated with them to be flown / displayed on the Parish Council flagpole, a written application outlining full details of their flag(s) involved, the reason(s) behind their request and the period they wish their flag(s) to be flown / displayed for should be submitted to the Clerk to the Parish Council.

5. Any such request will be duly considered by the parish council at their next meeting, the parish council’s decision shall be final with no right of appeal by the applicant.

6. Any costs associated with the flying of flags for individuals and/or organisations shall be fully met by such individuals or organisations.

7. The flag shall only be flown at “Half Mast” to reflect significant national or local events, the decision as to whether the flag should be flown at half-mast shall be taken by the chairman (in his absence the vice-chairman) and two other councillors.

Adopted 2022

Reviewed January 2025

8. Following a decision being made to fly the flag at half-mast, the reasoning behind the decision shall be reported at the next parish council meeting.

9. These guidelines will be reviewed annually by the parish council