



## Guidance Note: Operation London Bridge

There is an official protocol in place in the event of the death of Her Majesty the Queen, officially known as 'Operation London Bridge'. It covers the activities for each day from when the Royal death is announced (Day 0) through to Day+10 when the state funeral will take place.

This guidance sets out the how bell ringing plays its part throughout the process and has been formulated in consultation with The Royal Household and Lambeth Palace. Town and city councils will already have an OLB plan in place and this will consist of what to do on the day on the announcement and the following days, in accordance with Royal protocol.

As with most national/international bell ringing requests, local arrangements with church, council and public plans should be consulted and ringing should take place whenever is most appropriate for a local arrangement.

A lot will depend on the timing of announcements and where we are in the Church liturgical calendar.

The following sets out some guidelines that the bell ringing community might find helpful. **It is recommended that bell ringers liaise with church authorities ahead of time to avoid any confusion at what will be a very sad and difficult time.**

### **On the day of announcement of the death of Monarch:**

Bells should be rung fully or half-muffled. It is considered appropriate to ring fully muffled where possible, with the tenor backstroke open, if you have sufficient muffles. The Royal Household have advised the following times that ringing should take place based on the timing of the official announcement:

*On the announcement of Death, Bells may be rung or tolled at the discretion of local Parochial Church Councils. They may be rung or tolled for one hour as shown below:*

- *If the announcement occurs before 1100hrs: noon on the day of death.*
- *If the announcement occurs between 1100hrs and 1600hrs: 1800 hours on the day of death*
- *If the announcement occurs after 1600hrs: noon on the following day*

*Such details will be covered in the first Press Release issued by the Royal Communications Office.*

This updated guidance has been forwarded by Lambeth Palace to go in all Church of England guidance packs for Parishes. Please check your parish has a copy and everyone is clear on the expectation.

(Separate arrangements are in place for St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey).

Provided that ringing has been approved by the church authorities and does not conflict with other guidance, longer lengths of ringing may be appropriate.

**Following days:**

Bells should remain muffled until the day that the Palace proclaims the new Monarch. At that point bells should be rung open in celebration of the accession at a practicable time (again, with the agreement of the church) following the announcement.

Bells should then revert to being rung muffled until the day of the state funeral (10 days after the announcement of the death).

On the day of the funeral bells should be tolled for the hour immediately prior to the time of the Funeral Service. This may afford those an opportunity to ring a quarter peal, but general ringing or tolling would be acceptable.

There may be further clarification being offered by the Royal Household or Lambeth Palace at the appropriate time, if this is the case the CCCBR will communicate this via our website and social media channels and with Association Officers as soon as is practicable.

**Vicki Chapman**

Public Relations Officer  
Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

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**Notes: Muffles and ringing muffled bells:**

Muffles are leather pads fitted to a bell's clapper to reduce the volume. They attenuate the bell's strike note whilst retaining the hum. By only muffling the clapper on one side you get an 'echo' effect as blows are alternately loud and soft.

Bells are usually muffled on the backstroke as the handstroke gap emphasises the echo effect. Two muffles can be fitted, one on each side of the clapper, to fully muffle the bell. Bells are only rung fully-muffled (with the backstroke of the tenor left open) for the death of the Sovereign, the incumbent Vicar (Parish Priest), or the Bishop of the dioceses.

For safety reasons, muffles should always be fitted and removed with the bells down. To muffle the backstroke, put the muffle on the side of the clapper that is furthest away from the rope. To muffle the handstroke, put the muffle on the side of the clapper that is nearest to the rope.