



## Guidance Note: Ringing for the death of a Monarch

There is an official protocol in place in the event of the death of a British Monarch. 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 a plan in place, and this will consist of what to do on the day of 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.**

If during this period other events are booked (e.g. weddings) where the bells would normally be rung open, the Archbishops' Council advise that it is up to the individual PCC to decide in consultation with those who are asking for the bells to be rung open and the ringers.

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

Bells should be rung half or fully muffled depending on how many muffles you have. If you have enough muffles, it would be appropriate to ring fully muffled with the tenor backstroke open. 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 tolled at the discretion of local Parochial Church Councils. They may be tolled for one hour as shown below:*

- *If the announcement occurs before 1000hrs: noon on that day.*
- *If the announcement occurs between 1000hrs and 1200hrs: 1400 hours on that day.*
- *If the announcement occurs between 1200hrs and 1600hrs: 1930 hours on that day.*
- *If the announcement occurs after 1600hrs: noon on the following day.*

*It is desired if churches have the facility to toll fully muffled, otherwise bells may toll as able.*

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

This updated guidance has been forwarded by the Church of England. Upon the demise of the Sovereign the Church of England will publish guidance packs for Parishes.

(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:**

The Proclamation will be made in London two days after the announcement of death, followed by regional local proclamations throughout the following day. Open ringing should take place at the time of the local proclamation. 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 local announcement.

The raising or lowering of flags should not determine when bells are rung open. Bells should be rung open at the local proclamation, then returned to muffled. This may be at different times of the day, or even a different day from the London proclamation, depending on what time the local proclamation is made, which would normally be the day after the London proclamation.

Bells should then revert to being rung half or fully muffled until the day after the state funeral - 11 days after the announcement of the death, unless the announcement is made on a Wednesday in which case this will be 10 days, as the funeral will not take place on a Sunday.

On the day of the funeral bells should ideally be tolled or rung 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**

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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 (half muffled) 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.

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.

**Ringling for other events during the period of official mourning:**

There may have already been events in the church diary for which bells had been requested, e.g. weddings. If this is the case, the clergy should liaise with the couple to determine whether open ringing is appropriate or not, given the local mood, and personal preferences.

Ringling for any event during this time should be at the discretion of the clergy.