

FLAG FLYING POLICY

Executive summary

1. This paper invites the SPCB to consider and agree the flag flying policy.

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Issues and Options

2. The current flag flying policy has been in existence since 2004 and was last reviewed in 2013 by the previous SPCB. A copy of the policy is attached as **Annex A**. In light of the SPCB's decision to fly the Rainbow flag on the 2nd of July, officials took the opportunity to carry out a short review to consider whether any changes to the policy are required.
3. It is suggested that the policy remains fit for purpose. However, it may be possible to improve the agility under which decisions are made in terms of the exceptional circumstances referred to in the third and last paragraphs of the policy. It is therefore recommended that the Presiding Officer is afforded an element of discretion, in consultation with SPCB members, in order to make quick decisions where and when necessary.

Resource Implications

4. There are no resource implications.

Governance Issues

5. There are no governance issues.

Next Steps

6. We will implement the decisions taken by the SPCB.

Publication Scheme

7. This Paper can be published.

Decisions

8. The SPCB is invited to consider and agree the Flag Flying Policy (**Annex A**).

HR and FM Group
June 2016

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Extent of application

These guidelines apply to the Scottish Parliament.

Flags to be flown

The Saltire, Union flag and European flag shall be flown daily and will meet the requirements of the listed dates below.

- European Day – 9th May
- Official Celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday – usually the 2nd Saturday in June
- Official Opening of the Scottish Parliament
- Remembrance Day – usually the second Sunday of the Month of November
- St Andrew's Day – 30th November
- In addition to the daily flags the Commonwealth flag, the Armed Forces flag and the United Nations flag shall be flown on the listed dates below
- Commonwealth Day – Usually 2nd Monday of the month of March
- The Armed Forces flag shall be flown on Armed Forces Day - usually the last Saturday of the month of June
- United Nations Day – 24th October

Flying of other flags

No other flags will be flown unless in exceptional circumstances where a case is made to and approved by the SPCB.

Superior Position

The Scottish Parliament has flag poles all of the same height and the superior position is the central pole. The next superior position is the flag pole to the left of centre flag pole viewed from Horse Wynd towards the front of the building followed by the flag pole to the right of the central flag pole.

Position of flags

The Saltire must be flown in the superior position, with the Union flag in the second superior position and the European flag in the third. Any additional flags to be flown, approved by the SPCB shall be flown in the fourth and fifth superior positions dependent on importance.

How the Union Flag should be flown

The broader diagonal white stripe should be at the top left hand side of the flag nearest the flagpole.

Her Majesty The Queen present in the Scottish Parliament

The Royal Arms of Scotland (the "Lion Rampant") is The Queen's official banner in Scotland and will be hoisted when Her Majesty The Queen enters the Scottish Parliament building and will be lowered when The Queen departs. It is not to be hoisted when The Queen is only passing in procession. The Royal Arms of Scotland shall be flown in the superior position with the Saltire in the second superior position, the Union flag in the third and the European flag in the fourth.

Visits by heads of State

On visits by heads of state, the appropriate flag of the visiting dignitary shall be flown in the superior position with the Saltire in the second superior position, the Union flag in the third and the European flag in the fourth.

Flying of flags at Half Mast

“Half Mast” actually means that the flag is flown two-thirds up the flagpole.

The occasions on which flags are to be flown at Half Mast are:

1. From the announcement of the death up to the funeral of the Sovereign, except on specified times on Proclamation Day (the day the new Sovereign is proclaimed), when flags are flown at Full Mast.
2. The funerals of members of the Royal Family, subject to discussion with the Palace.
3. The day of the announcement of death, funeral and day of any motion of condolence for all serving Members of the Scottish Parliament.
4. The day of the announcement of death, funeral and day of any motion of condolence for former Presiding Officers and former Scottish First Ministers.
5. The day of the announcement of death and funeral for serving and former Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom.

The death and funeral of serving and former heads of State

In the event of the death and funeral of serving and former heads of State, flags may be flown at Half Mast.

“Day of the announcement of death” means Parliament’s flags fly at Half Mast until sunset or if the death is announced after 1.00pm on the day, flags will also fly at Half Mast on the following day.

Changes and additions may be made to these arrangements by the Corporate Body to reflect exceptional circumstances.