

Brixham Town Council

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Title:	Operation London Bridge		
To:	Community Services Committee	Date:	08.01.18
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Purpose of Report

To ensure Councillors are aware of Operation London Bridge.

What is Operation London Bridge?

Operation London Bridge is the codename for the plan for what will happen in the days after the death of Queen Elizabeth II. The plan was originally devised in the 1960s and is updated several times each year. It involves planning from government departments, the Church of England, Metropolitan Police Service, the British Armed Forces, media and Royal Parks of London. Some key decisions relating to the plan were made by the Queen herself, although some can only be made by her successor after her death.

The phrase "London Bridge is down" will announce the death of the Queen to the Prime Minister and key personnel, setting the plan into motion.

The Official Plan

The Queen's private secretary will be the first official to handle the news. The private secretary's first act will be to contact the Prime Minister, and civil servants will convey the phrase "London Bridge is down" using secure telephone lines. The Foreign Office's Global Response Centre, based at a secret location in London, will communicate the news to the governments of the 51 other countries that are part of the Commonwealth of Nations, of which the Queen is the Head. (Of the 51 other Commonwealth nations, 15 are additionally Commonwealth realms, of which the Queen is also head of state).

The media would be informed via an announcement to the Press Association and the BBC through the Radio Alert Transmission System (RATS) and to commercial radio through a network of blue "obit lights" which will alert presenters to play "inoffensive music" and prepare for a news flash.

A footman would pin a dark-edged notice to the gates of Buckingham Palace. At the same time, the palace website would display the same notice. Parliament would be recalled. If possible it would meet within hours and the Prime Minister would address the House of Commons.

Immediately following the announcement, the Royal Mint would begin producing new coins and banknotes with the new Monarch's image on them, for issue upon his or her accession.

The day after the Queen's death, the Accession Council would meet at St James's Palace to proclaim the new Monarch. Parliament would meet that evening when MPs would swear allegiance to the new Monarch.

Different arrangements for moving the Queen's coffin are planned depending on where she dies. For example, if the Queen dies at Windsor Castle or Sandringham House, it would be moved by car to Buckingham Palace within a couple of days. If the Queen dies overseas, it would be brought by No.

32 (The Royal) Squadron to RAF Northolt and then by car to Buckingham Palace. If the Queen dies at Holyrood Palace or Balmoral Castle in Scotland, the coffin would first lie in repose at Holyrood Palace followed by a service of reception at St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh. Following this, the coffin would then be transported to Waverley Station and then taken by the Royal Train to London. In all cases the coffin would be taken to the throne room at Buckingham Palace. Four days after the Queen's death, it would be moved to Westminster Hall and lie in state for four days.

The State Funeral would be held at Westminster Abbey nine days after the Queen's death, after which her body would be buried in a prepared tomb at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle.

What Brixham Town Council needs to do

Torbay Council have a lead Officer responsible for Operation London Bridge. Brixham Town Council had hoped to have started discussions with Torbay Council by now. However, the officer at Torbay Council has now left and we are awaiting confirmation of who has taken over the role.

It is important that Brixham Town Council has an understanding of what is entailed including factors such as:

- Mourning Protocol
- Flag Flying
- Book of Condolence
- Events during the period of Mourning
- Proclamation Day
- Dress Code
- Marking a Silence

As mentioned above, due to staff changes, it is unsure at this stage what Torbay Council's plans are. Having done research there are protocols which the Town Council should consider. A draft protocol is attached for discussion topics only. The protocol will continue to be developed during the course of discussions with Torbay Council on Operation London Bridge to ensure that the protocols for both Councils work in harmony.

Recommendations

That the Town Council agree to participate in Operation London Bridge

That the Town Council work in partnership with Torbay Council

That the Town Council continues to develop the draft protocol for discussion at the next meeting