

URGENT BUSINESS: COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

COMMONWEALTH OF NATION'S FLAG OF PEACE 13TH MARCH - COMMONWEALTH DAY 2023 27 October 2022

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

For the committee to decide whether hold a Commonwealth of Nation's Flag of Peace flag raising on 13 March (Commonwealth Day) 2023 to mark the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Commonwealth Charter by our late Queen Elizabeth II.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To consider whether or not Lancaster City Council hold a Commonwealth of Nations Flag of Peace flag raising on 13 March 2023, as described in the report.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of its annual programme of flag raisings, the City Council raises the Commonwealth Flag at Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls each year on the second Monday in the month of March (Commonwealth Day). There is a very brief and simple service when the flag is raised and usually the Mayor will be in attendance at Lancaster Town Hall, the Deputy at Morecambe Town Hall and both will be accompanied by Senior Officers.
- 1.2 In 2023, Commonwealth Day will fall on 13 March and will mark the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Commonwealth Charter by our late Queen Elizabeth II.
- 1.3 Along with other UK cities, Lancaster City Council has been invited, by Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR, Pageantmaster, The Commonwealth of Nations' Flag of Peace, to take part in raising the Flag of Peace and carrying out an accompanying service with a bugler and piper, etc. A guide to the event is appended, as is the Charter of the Commonwealth for Members' information.

2.0 Reason for Urgency

- 2.1 This matter cannot wait until the March 2023 meeting of the Committee as the Pageantmaster is asking for an early response to help him plan and supply the flags, buglers, pipers, etc, to the cities taking part.

3.0 Proposal Details

- 3.1 To take part, the City Council would be required to organise a brief ceremony during

the early morning of 13th March - Commonwealth Day 2023, as outlined below in the letter from the Pageantmaster (and in more detail in the appended guide).

- **10.30am:** Council guests assemble.
- **10.35am:** Mayoral / Lord Provost party including Town Crier, Bugler/Cornet player or Trumpeter, Piper, Bishop or Mayor's Chaplain and other guests of the council including their HM Lord-Lieutenant - (where there is more than one City in a County, a DL), form up on the steps of your city or town hall, or another location of your choice.
- **10.40am:** Town Crier or other community representative steps forward, rings his or her bell and reads out the Commonwealth Proclamation, found on **page 4** of the Guide.
- **10.45am:** Town Crier steps back and the Bugler/Cornet Player or Trumpeter steps forward and undertakes the Fanfare (**Majesty**), found on **page 6**.
- **10.50am:** Bugler/Cornet player or Trumpeter steps back. Lord Mayor/ Lord Provost or Mayor holding the folded Commonwealth flag, accompanied by the Bishop or Mayor's Chaplain, step forward. Bishop or Mayor's Chaplain blesses the flag using the words found on **page 5** of the Guide. Lord Mayor/ Lord Provost or Mayor thanks the Bishop or the Mayor's Chaplain on behalf of the city and says a few words confirming the importance of the Commonwealth Charter and of the Commonwealth itself.
- **10.55 am:** A 'lone' Piper steps forward to play a tune fitting the occasion (**Highland Cathedral**) found on **page 7**. On completion of the Piper, the flag would be given to the individual responsible for hoisting the flags in the city in readiness of its raising as we would request that all flags in the 76 cities are raised together at **11am** that morning, uniting the cities of the UK in this celebration of the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Charter by Her Majesty, The Queen. (We would therefore hope that your designated guests would be accompanied by Sword and Mace bearers, other civic regalia that would add to the pageantry of the occasion, along with the High Sherriff and High Steward, where applicable).
- **8.pm:** From **page 8**, and with the generous support and involvement of the Central Council of Bell Ringers, you will see that we are encouraging bell ringers throughout the 76 cities to ring their bells, by undertaking a minimum of ten whole pulls to mark each year since the Charter was signed.

4.0 Options

4.1 Commonwealth Day is traditionally marked at both Town Halls by raising the Commonwealth Flag. If the Council decided to fly the new Peace Flag, that would be provided at no extra cost to the Council by the Pageantmaster's office. They would also source a bugler and piper for the Council and have informed Democratic Services that there would be no cost to the Council for this.

4.2 The options are

- a) to mark Commonwealth Day in the usual manner with the existing flag; or
- b) for Democratic Services to make the arrangements set out in paragraph 2.1 above to hold a Commonwealth of Nations Flag of Peace flag raising as prescribed by the Pageantmaster.

Option b) would entail a much bigger event than the one usually planned, however could be carried out within existing resources if the Committee chooses that option.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Whilst flag flying is usually a matter for the Mayor, it is recognised by officers that Elected Members may have differing views on the Commonwealth. This report has, therefore, been brought to members to make the decision.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):

None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified. Whether or not to take part in this event is a decision for the City Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any costs resulting from a decision to take part in this event would be met through existing resources and budgets in Democratic Services. The Pageantmaster has said that the flag, piper and bugler will all be provided without cost to the City Council.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces

None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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