
To: Council

On: 27 February 2020

Report by: Director of Finance & Resources

Heading: European Union Flag

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report asks the Council to consider which flag(s) will be flown from the third flagpole following the exit from the UK from the European Union on 31 January 2020.
- 1.2 There are currently three flag poles at Renfrewshire House, Renfrew Town Hall and Houston Square Johnstone. The Council has agreed previously that the Union Flag, the Saltire and the Europe Flag be flown every day of the year, other than as detailed at paragraph 3.3 below in relation to the Europe Flag.
- 1.3 Options for consideration in relation to the third flagpole are detailed in paragraph 3.4 below

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council consider the options for the third flagpole as detailed in paragraph 3.4.
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3 Background

- 3.1 The Council has over several years taken decisions in respect of which flags will be flown from Council premises, the dates and occasions on which these flags will be flown and the occasions on which flags will be flown at half-mast.
- 3.2 Other decisions have been taken on an ad hoc basis having regard to guidance provided by the Flag Institute and on receipt of requests from a number of parties including the Scottish and Westminster Governments, CoSLA and the Merchant Navy Association. Many of these decisions are historic and were taken prior to the re-development of the Council HQ at Renfrewshire House and the refurbishment of Renfrew Town Hall.
- 3.3 The occasions on which flags, other than the Europe Flag, are to be are:
- Armed Forces Day – From the Friday preceding Renfrewshire's Armed Forces Day each year until after the National Armed Forces Day takes place
 - Commonwealth Flag – on the second Monday in March of each year
 - Red Ensign – on 3 September of each year, unless 3 September falls on a weekend when the flag would be raised on the preceding Friday
 - Rainbow Flag – it was agreed that the flag would be flown annually, and to consult with the local LGBT community on how best to mark this occasion.
 - International Brigades Flag – it was agreed that this flag would be flown on 16 February each year. Leaders of the political groups subsequently agreed that should 16 February fall on a weekend that the flag be flown on the following Monday.
- 3.4 Arising from the referendum result, the Council requires to take a decision in relation to the European Union Flag now that the UK has exited the European Union.
- The default position that the current Council approval continues in force and the EU flag remains as the flag flown on all days other than those on which an alternative flag has been approved;
 - The EU Flag is also the flag of the Council of Europe. The United Kingdom remains a member of that organisation and the Council could decide to fly the flag of the Council of Europe
 - Council could decide simply that following Brexit the EU flag is no longer flown (with the option to fly it only on Europe Day, 9 May). This would mean that the third flagpole would be empty on most days.
 - Council could approve another "default" flag to be flown most days. However, there is no obvious contender for that.
 - There is no Renfrewshire flag and although the former Burghs had Coats of Arms, it is understood that the Lord Lyon was against flags with these Coats of Arms being flown because the Burghs no longer exist
 - A flag could be designed and flown when ready.

- The Council could decide to permanently fly the flag of a recognised organisation or cause whose aims align with Council policy eg the Rainbow Flag
- The third flagpole could be removed although that means a decision will be required on what will happen on the various commemoration days already approved by Council.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – there will be a cost to the Council if a flag were to be designed. There would also be costs involved if the third flagpoles were to be removed.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – none
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none.
6. **Information Technology** – none
7. **Equality & Human Rights**
The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **CoSLA Policy Position** – not applicable
13. **Climate Risk** - none

List of Background Papers – none

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