

Shared Amendment for Discussion to the agenda item entitled "Council's consent to fly the LGBT Flag"

Paul Ainsley

Sally-Anne Wadsworth;Chris Nix;Christopher Clark;John Harris;Jonathan Nichols;Sally-Anne Wadsworth;Martin Brookes

enquiries

Dear all,

I want to be clear from the outset that recognising LGBTQ+ residents and supporting inclusion is important, and I fully support the council marking LGBTQ+ History Month. The question before us is not about recognition, but about ensuring we use our civic flagpoles in a way that is proportionate, consistent, and fair to all groups.

Ahead of our meeting on 14 January 2026, I am sharing the wording of an amendment I am planning to move during the debate on the agenda item titled "Council's consent to fly the LGBT Flag." I am doing this simply to support a smoother and more informed discussion on the night. I have attached both documents, including the proposed draft amendment, "Proposed Amendment – LGBTQ Flag Flying Protocol," so colleagues have the opportunity to look at them in advance.

I am bringing this amendment in my capacity as the council's Armed Forces Champion, and part of that role involves helping us maintain a balanced and consistent approach to how we recognise different groups. I also want to acknowledge the work of the two councillors who brought forward the original proposal. Their intention to support LGBTQ+ residents and to ensure the council marks LGBTQ+ History Month is genuinely appreciated, and their contribution has helped shape a constructive discussion.

The original proposal includes a draft press release that highlights the involvement of those two members. In the spirit of keeping our communications inclusive and reflective of the whole council, I feel it would be helpful for any public statement to focus on the collective decision rather than individual members. The amendment I am putting forward supports that approach and keeps the emphasis on the council acting together.

The intention behind this amended proposal is to find a balanced approach. It avoids creating an imbalance between different commemorations, and it helps us avoid setting a precedent that may be difficult to apply consistently in future. At the same time, it still enables us to show respect, solidarity, and recognition in a clear and visible way.

Flying the flag on the first and last day of February offers that balance. It provides a meaningful and visible statement of support while keeping our approach in line with how we mark other significant occasions. For example, events such as Armed Forces Day and Remembrance, both of which carry deep national importance, are marked for a single day. It would be challenging to justify a full month long display for one group when others, including veterans, receive a much shorter period.

This amendment is not being moved at this stage; it will be brought formally to the meeting in the usual way. Circulating it now simply gives us all the chance to consider the wording and, if helpful, share any thoughts or suggestions beforehand. I am very open to discussion and keen that we approach this item collaboratively.

If anyone has comments, questions, or suggestions, I'm very happy to talk them through. I'm keen that we approach this item in a constructive and collaborative way.

Kind regards,

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Oakham Town Council – Flag Protocol for LGBT+ History Month

Purpose

This protocol establishes Oakham Town Council's approach to flying the rainbow flag during LGBT+ History Month, observed nationally each February. It ensures visibility, inclusivity, and respect for statutory and civic traditions.

Principles

- **Recognition:** LGBT+ History Month is a nationally recognised observance highlighting the history, contributions, and rights of LGBT+ communities.
- **Balance:** The Council acknowledges the importance of visibility while ensuring flag-flying practices remain proportionate and respectful of wider civic protocols.
- **Transparency:** Decisions are made openly, in line with lawful governance and community expectations.

Protocol

- The rainbow flag will be flown at Cutts Close on:
 - 1 February – to mark the launch of LGBT+ History Month.
 - 28 February (or 29 February in a leap year) – to mark the closing of LGBT+ History Month.
- The flag will not be flown continuously throughout the month.
- Additional displays may be considered for specific Council-hosted events during February, subject to prior resolution.

Communication

- Public notices will explain the significance of the flag and the Council's chosen days of display.
- Messaging will emphasise Oakham's commitment to inclusivity, heritage, and lawful governance.

Press Release

Oakham Town Council – LGBT+ History Month Flag Display

Oakham Town Council is proud to mark **LGBT+ History Month** this February. To show our support for equality, inclusion, and the celebration of LGBT+ heritage, the rainbow flag will be flown at Cutts Close on:

- **1 February** – the launch of LGBT+ History Month
- **28 February** – the closing day of LGBT+ History Month

By flying the flag on these key dates, the Council honours the month's significance while respecting our wider civic traditions.