

FAO: Local Councils within the Shropshire county area.

I hope this letter finds you well, I am writing to you to request that the matter of flying a pride flag during the month of June be considered by the local councils within Shropshire.

My name is Jenn Lister, I live in Oswestry, and I am working with pride groups across the county to approach communities within Shropshire and ask if they are willing to show support for their LGBTQ+ residents this pride month (June 2024) by flying a pride flag.

The 2021 census shows that in Shropshire, 2.3% of the population identify as not being heterosexual. This is despite a lack of established LGBTQ+ community within the county, and no major pride events like we see in Manchester, Birmingham, Brighton, or Liverpool. There are many within the LGBTQ+ community in Shropshire who feel isolated and do not feel welcome within their towns and villages. There is a fear of hate crimes and hateful attitudes, and many are afraid to be openly and truly themselves. Many people who have lived in Shropshire most of their lives have terrible stories to tell about the way they have been treated as "less than" by members of their communities, and feel that they are tolerated only as long as they don't make people aware of their identity.

I would love to offer the members of the SALC each a pride flag which they can fly outside the town hall, or from any flag pole within their communities that they feel appropriate, for a period of time as a show of solidarity and support to the LGBTQ+ people and families which live in their communities. I would be willing to buy the flag, bring it to you myself, make sure it fits whichever specifications you require, and collect it when you are done with it so you don't need to be concerned about storage.

Gay people deserve recognition and respect. There is a fear about discussing LGBTQ+ people within rural communities, but the reality is that gay people are your teachers, your family members, your sons and daughters, your constituents, they are loved and worthy of respect and recognition. If you are fearful of what the people of the town will say, please remember that they already foster those beliefs without the flag flying. The only difference is that now the LGBTQ+ people who hear those things know that their town council, their representatives, respect them and are willing to stand alongside them against hatred.

I believe that flying this flag for a short period of time within Pride Month would support and foster the cultural life of the town, and support the mental wellbeing of its residents. It would link in with the nationally recognised Pride Month, we would be happy to share that you are flying the flag, and it would support the rich culture and creativity that LGBTQ+ residents offer to their communities.

Shropshire Council has approved the motion for pride flags to be flown for a period of time during the month of June from Shropshire Council buildings in the market towns outside of Shrewsbury. Last year, Oswestry Pride flew the pride flag from its flagpole and received messages of thanks from its residents saying how pleased they were to see representation by their local government. We also have pride movements in Bridgnorth, Shrewsbury, and Ludlow approaching their local town councils asking them to do the same.

I am aware that there are policies which inform which flags can be flown, when, and for how long. I have attached Shropshire Council's flag flying policy from their website which lists the dates on which the Union Flag must be flown:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/shropshire-council/policies/flag-flying-policy/>

Within the month of June this includes the 15<sup>th</sup> June for the birthday of His Majesty The King, and the 21<sup>st</sup> for the birthday of The Prince of Wales. With this in mind, we have identified the week of 10th-14th June as a possible window of time that would be optimal for organisations to show their support.

The considerations for suggesting this timeframe include:

- Avoids the official birthday of His Majesty The King (15<sup>th</sup> June)
- Avoids the birthday of The Prince of Wales (21<sup>st</sup> June)
- Avoids Volunteers Week (1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> June)
- Avoids Refugee Week (17<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>)
- Avoids D Day and the following weekend celebrations (6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> June)
- As close as possible to Oswestry Pride (15<sup>th</sup> June)
- As close as possible to Bridgnorth Pride (15<sup>th</sup> June)
- Takes place during Pride Month (June 2024)

Per the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and in 2021), the Rainbow flag does not require consent from the local planning authority to be flown.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider this motion, and I am available for any questions or concerns you might have.

Kind regards,



Jenn Lister - Oswestry Pride ([oswestrypride@gmail.com](mailto:oswestrypride@gmail.com))

Co-signed by:



Phil Davies (Shrewsbury Pride - [shrewsburypride@gmail.com](mailto:shrewsburypride@gmail.com))



Dids Miller (The Shropshire Transgender Support Charity - [didslucymiller@gmail.com](mailto:didslucymiller@gmail.com))



Hal Musgrove (Ludlow LGBT Collective - [ludlowgaymers@protonmail.com](mailto:ludlowgaymers@protonmail.com))



Glyn Ridgeway (Telford LGBTQIA+ - [telfordlgbtqiaplus@gmail.com](mailto:telfordlgbtqiaplus@gmail.com))



Huw Rees (Bridgnorth Pride - [bridgnorthpride@gmail.com](mailto:bridgnorthpride@gmail.com))



Richard Parks (Shropshire Youth Association - [info@sya.org.uk](mailto:info@sya.org.uk))