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**ROYAL VISITS: A GUIDE FOR ORGANISERS**

The Role of the Lieutenancy Office	Page 2
The Role of the VIP Protection Unit, Kent Police	Page 3
<b><u>BEFORE THE DAY</u></b>	
Civic Dignitaries (Mayors etc)	Page 4-5
Draft Programme	Pages 6-7
Final Programme	Page 8
The Press and In-house Photographs	Page 9-10
Rehearsals	Page 11
<b><u>ON THE DAY</u></b>	
Presentations and Greeting Line-Ups	Page 12-13
Final Points	Page 14

## **The Role of the Lieutenancy Office**

The Lieutenancy Office is responsible for the planning, preparation and smooth running of the "*official programme*" for a Royal Visit. The official programme is the one that is agreed with, and approved by, the Royal Office concerned. The programme is prepared in liaison with the organisers at each venue, Kent Police and the Royal Household.

In Kent Royal visit planning for the Lieutenancy Office is carried out by Jo Holmes, the Deputy Clerk to the Lieutenancy. The Lord-Lieutenant is The Viscount De L'Isle MBE. The quota of Deputy Lieutenants in Kent, including the Vice Lord-Lieutenant, is 71.

Jo works closely with organisers at each venue to draw up their programme giving them ideas and advice about all aspects of the programme such as civic involvement, press and protocol issues. If the visit includes more than one venue, she will pull each individual programme together to make one programme for the whole day. Jo is the point of contact, working on behalf of the Royal Office and the Lord-Lieutenant, on all aspects of the visit for the organisers. If you have any questions about your programme they should be directed to Jo.

The first stage is for Jo to help prepare a "*draft programme*" that has been agreed with the organisers and the Kent Police VIP Protection Unit. The draft programme will be sent off to the Royal Office for approval about four weeks before the visit. Jo will also contact civic dignitaries and agree transport arrangements with the VIP Unit. Once the draft programme has been approved by the Royal Office one of their representatives will come to the venue to go through the programme in more detail. A "*final programme*" will then be prepared and sent to the Royal Office and to others involved. The final stage, of course, being the day of the visit itself. On the day Jo will act as a liaison point between the Royal Office representative, the organisers, the civic dignitaries and the VIP Unit. This is all covered in more detail in the following sections.

## **The Role of The Kent Police VIP Protection Unit**

The VIP Protection Unit is responsible for the security of the Royal visitor for the duration of the programme and has a dedicated unit of officers who deal with this work.

A representative from the VIP unit will visit the venue with Jo during the planning stages of the programme to advise the organisers about the security issues. Jo will notify organisers when the VIP unit representative is to accompany her. It is a good idea for the organisers to include whoever is responsible for security and/or operations at the venue in this meeting. The VIP unit will also liaise with local police about the visit and are the point of contact for the Royal Visitor's Personal Protection Officer.

For the organisers, they are the point of contact on all security issues to do with the visit. If you have any questions about security they should be directed to the VIP unit.

On the day of the visit the VIP unit are responsible for the smooth running of the policing operation connected with the Visit, working closely with other sections of Kent Police. They are the liaison point on security issues between the Personal Protection Officer, the organisers at each venue and the local police. Any queries you might have about security on the day should also be directed to them. Officers from the VIP unit will be at each venue in advance of the Royal Visitor and officers will also arrive with the Royal Visitor's party.

Between the Lieutenancy Office and the Kent VIP Protection Unit there is a wealth of experience of planning and working on Royal visits so please do make as much use of them as you need to.

## **BEFORE THE DAY**

### **Civic Dignitaries**

The Lord-Lieutenant is The Queen's representative in the County. He is always therefore invited to be in attendance at a visit by a Member of the Royal Family and is always the first person to greet a Royal Visitor. If he is unable to do this he will nominate the Vice Lord-Lieutenant or one of the Deputy Lieutenants to act in his place.

Currently the Protocol to be followed on Royal Visits is more relaxed giving more opportunities for flexibility in the nature of a Royal Visit and whether or not the full list of County and local civic dignitaries are invited to attend. In many cases the Royal Office and the organisers prefer that a visit remains a local event and just the local civic dignitaries are invited. For other more formal occasions or when there is a full day's programme of visits, the full list of civic dignitaries are invited, usually to the first venue. Jo will discuss this aspect of the visit with the organisers and will confirm to them which civic dignitaries are to be included. (Some Royal Visits are classed as 'private' and therefore do not require the attendance of any civic dignitaries.)

For each venue, Jo will notify the civic dignitaries that they are invited and the organisers do not need to contact them.

The list of civic dignitaries in the County is as follows:-

#### **County civic dignitaries**

- The High Sheriff of Kent
- The Chairman of Kent County Council
- The Clerk to the Lieutenancy
- The Chief Constable of Kent or his representative

#### **Local civic dignitaries**

- The Mayor of Medway - or the Lord Mayor of Canterbury or Mayor of the local Borough - or the Chairman of the local District Council
- The Chief Executive of Medway - or equivalent post in local Borough or District Council
- Local MP
- Local MEP (if applicable)

All those on the above list are on the official order of precedence laid down by the Home Office for Royal visits. They will form the first greeting line and will be presented by the Lord Lieutenant (or his representative).

**Please note that the list above does not show the civics in the correct order of precedence.**

The order of precedence on the day will be worked out by Jo for each venue and included in the programme. It is important this is adhered to when waiting for the official presentation.

Political leaders - such as the Leader of the local authority - are not civic dignitaries and are not therefore invited by the Lieutenancy Office but may be invited by the hosts if they wish. Town Mayors are not included in the list above either but may also be invited by the hosts if the venue is within their area.

Jo will notify the civic dignitaries as soon as possible about the event and give them a rough idea of timings. If there are formal invitations from the host it is usually easier for these to be sent to Jo to send on to the civics. Jo will let organisers know who from the list of civic dignitaries is able to attend. If organisers have any queries from these civic dignitaries about the programme or their role in it, they should be passed on to Jo.

Nearer to the date of the visit Jo will send those civic dignitaries who are attending a copy of the final programme and any other material they need to have.

**If the member of the Royal Family is visiting alone (ie without their spouse) then spouses of civic dignitaries are not invited to attend.** The exceptions to this general rule are the more social occasions, like a visit to the County Show or a garden party. It is very much up to organisers whether they decide to invite the spouses of their guests but they should remember that it makes a great deal of difference to numbers if they are included!

## **Draft Programme**

Once Jo knows the date of the visit, she will make contact with organisers and arrange a first visit or “recce” to the venue to give advice, discuss ideas and to work with the organisers to prepare each individual programme. It is usual for an Officer from the VIP unit to visit at this point as well.

Travel details for the Royal visitor will be worked out by Jo and the VIP unit - including helicopter landing sites, cars between venues and routes and travel times between venues. Organisers do not need to worry about any of these things - they need only worry about what happens once their visitor arrives at their venue.

Press involvement on the day including possible photo opportunities will also be discussed at this stage [see Press section for more detail].

Once this initial recce has taken place Jo will prepare a draft programme to be sent to the Royal Office for approval.

The following, if included in your programme, must be cleared through Jo when the draft programme is prepared and before you notify a wider circle of people involved from your side as they are all things that have to be approved by the Royal Office concerned:

- Inscriptions on plaques
- Any presentations to be made (eg posies)
- Signing of Visitors Books
- Arrangements for lunch, especially menus
- Any speeches to be made by the Royal visitor
- Any gifts to be made in honour of the visit
- Official photographs to be signed (these must be obtained in advance from the Royal Household concerned)

Jo will aim for the draft to be fairly detailed and it will include things like suggested timings, the running order of places to be visited, “opportunity to retire” (toilet break!) and a rough idea of numbers of people to be met at each stage. The format for receptions or similar gatherings and lunches will be discussed. The draft will also include things you wish the Royal Visitor to do (like some of the things mentioned above) so that you can get approval for these. However, final names and numbers do not need to be included at this stage.

The draft programme has to be with the Royal Office at least 4 weeks before the day of the visit.  
The Royal Office will then either approve this draft or let Jo know of any changes they wish to make.

**Until the Royal Office has given this approval the programme content, including timings, is not definite!**

If you are unsure about timings to be included on invitations, please ask Jo, as timings for your guests will differ from those for the Royal Visitor because you need to make sure that those to be presented and any other guests are in place well before the Royal Visitor arrives. Usually guests should arrive half an hour before the Royal Visitor.

When deciding for your draft programme who in your organisation should do what, it is worth knowing that the Royal Households prefer that, while the Royal Visitor is being shown round a venue, the person in charge of each particular area should be presented and then escort them. Someone who has a first class knowledge of an area, the people in it, what they do and their names should be the one to escort the Royal visitor round that area, handing back to a main escort to move on to the next area.

You should also think carefully about who your main escort for the whole tour is to be. Again, this needs to be someone who has a good knowledge of everything the Royal Visitor is to see. Royal visits nowadays are not the formal occasions they were in past years and should involve as many people in an organisation as possible.

It is also worth knowing that organisers should not feel that they have to make any very expensive or time-consuming changes or alterations to their surroundings just for their Royal visitor. There are some strange myths surrounding Royal visits, like special toilets having to be put in and red carpet put down everywhere! This is not the case. The last thing any member of the Royal Family would wish is for organisers to go to any great expense because they are coming to visit. Royal visitors really do go to all sorts of places in all sorts of conditions.

## **Final Programme**

Nearer the date of the visit, the VIP unit and Jo will make another recce accompanied by a member of the Office of the Royal visitor - this could be either a Private Secretary, Equerry or Equerry-in-Waiting or the Personal Protection Officer. Whoever attends from the Royal Office, they have the responsibility of the final approval of the programme in all its detail. They will wish to walk the course of the visit and may make minor suggestions or amendments.

Once your programme has had this final approval, the finer details will be included, final names and numbers added and the final programme will then be produced. This will be sent to the Royal Office no later than 2 weeks before the day.

**Once a programme has been sent to a Royal Office in its final version significant changes cannot be made. Any person not named in the Programme should not be presented unless authorisation has been given by the Lord-Lieutenant or person accompanying the Royal visitor.**

The final programme will show a detailed description of the visit, broken down into segments no shorter than 5 minutes and will include, amongst other things:-

- Names of all the main people to be presented
- Names of those escorting the member of the Royal Family
- Details of those making any presentations (posies etc) to the member of the Royal Family
- Details of 'retirement' opportunities

Attached to the final programme will be:-

- Brief biographical details on all the main people to be presented
- Briefing notes on the organisation receiving the Visit
- If there is a lunch - table plan and menu
- If there is a pre-lunch or similar reception - list of guests, or groups of guests, showing their occupation or connection with the organisation being visited

**Jo needs to have these background papers well in advance of the 2 week deadline to send with the final programme!**

## **Press and In-house Photographs**

Press facilities at any Royal engagement are the responsibility of the Buckingham Palace Press Office for The Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh and immediate members of their family, and of the Clarence House Press Office for The Prince of Wales and his family.

Press facilities for Royal engagements by The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, The Duke and Duchess of Kent and Princess Alexandra, are primarily the responsibility of the Private Secretary in those Royal Households, consulting with Buckingham Palace Press Office as required.

Photography, filming and reporting by the media are normally permitted at all official Royal engagements in the UK.

In arranging press facilities, the Palace asks that the following four sets of requirements be considered: those of the member of the Royal Family concerned, the hosts, the media and the general public.

The objectives are:

- To ensure there is no inconvenience to the member of the Royal Family by cameramen and reporters (e.g. obstructing their route during a visit, or attempting to cover private parts of an engagement such as a visit to a children's ward);
- to meet the wishes of the host organisation so far as press coverage is concerned;
- to give the media the best possible opportunities for legitimate reporting of the event;
- and to safeguard the interests of the general public, many of whom will have waited for hours, so that their view is impeded as little as possible by press activity.

On formal occasions such as church services or official meals, the press facilities will also be balanced with the need to maintain the dignity of the event.

Press Announcements about Royal engagements are made by the Palace usually about four to six weeks before an event and the press should not be notified before the Announcement has been made. If you have any enquiries from the press before the Announcement by the Palace you should merely say that nothing has been confirmed and that you will contact the enquirer when you have more definite news.

The organisers should not tell the press about the visit until they are given the go ahead to do so by Jo or the Royal Office concerned. No member of the Press or Media will be presented unless it appears in the official programme.

If the Palace Press Office are not handling press arrangements directly then the organisers will be responsible for inviting the press and looking after them on the day. This should be done on the advice of the Lieutenancy Office and the Royal Office's Press Officer. In these circumstances, once the organisers have been given the go ahead to announce the Visit, they may notify and invite the press themselves but should try to keep the numbers to a minimum.

**The organisers should identify one person to be responsible for press arrangements before and on the day of the Visit. This needs to be someone who is not involved in any presentations on the day and who can be free to look after the press throughout the duration of the Visit. This person should make themselves known to the Personal Protection Officer for the member of the Royal Family, on arrival. Thereafter, the two will work closely together ensuring the press are not being obstructive.**

Organisers may issue their own press release giving details of their organisation and general information about what the visit is for. This press release should be sent to Jo so that either she or the Royal Office concerned can approve it before it is sent out. This press release should not give details of the timings of the visit - just give the date of the visit and whether it is morning or afternoon. Details of timings can be given nearer the day to those members of the press interested in attending.

Whether press arrangements are being handled by the Palace or direct by the organisers, an in-house photographer is allowed. This photographer is often permitted to take photographs in areas where the press are not allowed and can follow the Royal Party throughout the duration of the visit.

## **REHEARSALS**

No matter how small or large a Royal Visit it is always advisable to arrange a dress rehearsal before the day of the visit. This will ensure every detail of the visit meets all elements of the approved final programme and will raise any issues that need attention, well in advance of the day. The dress rehearsal also acts as a confidence building measure for those who are taking part and helps make the day much more enjoyable for all concerned.

This dress rehearsal should include the key people involved, ie. main hosts, and other people with a role to play in the visit – being a host is a very important role as the Royal Visitor relies heavily on that person to ensure the programme is being followed and timings are kept to schedule.

More importantly, is the role of the host when a visit involves a ‘Walkabout’ by a Member of the Royal Family. This is an incredibly important aspect and, if not given careful attention, can lead to many problems.

Whilst a walkabout is taking place, the lead host must stay close to the member of the Royal Family – they must not be left unattended at any point.

With some walkabouts involving Her Majesty The Queen, it is usual for barriers to be in place, thus leaving a clear route for the Royal Party to walk. However, on many occasions the preference is that barriers are not used and it is thus important that an organisation (in consultation with the Local Authority and Police) have measures in place to have stewards on hand to manage the public so that the Royal visitor’s path is not impeded.

Media coverage of walkabouts needs careful handling also. It is imperative that the Royal visitor’s path is not obscured from the public by a mass of photographers and security officials. Again, the emboldened paragraph above in ‘Press and In-House Photographs is an important aspect that **MUST** be adhered to, thus ensuring a smooth and enjoyable visit for all concerned.

To ensure visibility for the public and other guests, the press should be kept at a distance of about 10-15 feet so far as possible, and never less than 10 feet. Sufficient manpower must be deployed. However, this should be controlled to ensure that it does not resemble a posse!

## ON THE DAY

### Presentations and Greeting Line-ups

Jo will usually be at the venue before the member of the Royal Family is due to make contact with the civic dignitaries and ensure their greeting line-up is correct, check on the press and sort out any last minute hitches (and nerves!)

The following is a guide for those being presented in a formal greeting line-up (usually only at the beginning of a visit):-

- the Royal Visitor will offer their hand for a handshake
- men when being presented should make a slight bow with the head, rather like a nod, and not from the waist
- ladies when being presented should make a slight curtsey (ie not go right down to the ground!)
- the correct form of address when speaking to a member of the Royal Family once you have been presented is, in the first instance, Your Royal Highness, and, subsequently, Sir or Ma'am (to rhyme with Jam)
- if being presented to The Queen the correct form of address is, in the first instance, Your Majesty, and, subsequently, Ma'am (again to rhyme with Jam)

There is no obligation on anyone to bow or curtsey. It is recommended in the case of Her Majesty The Queen and for other senior Members, eg Prince Philip. It is custom or convention and not a rule so people of all ages should feel free to go along with it or not. What is important is that the Royal Visitor and everyone involved in the engagement uses the time to the best advantage and that the visit itself fulfils its purpose and is enjoyed by all.

**Members of the Civic party do not follow the Royal Visitor and should adhere strictly to the instructions they receive from Jo, on the Lord-Lieutenant's behalf.**

For those being presented elsewhere on a visit usually in a much more informal way - it is not necessary to bow or curtsey and it is easiest to stick to Sir, or 'Ma'am' when talking to the Royal Visitor. The Royal Visitor may or may not offer a handshake,

The host who escorts the Royal Visitor should remember that it is the host who presents others to the Royal Visitor and not the other way round! The form of words might be:

for a formal line-up - "Ma'am may I present Mr John Smith, our Finance Director."

for informal presentations (ie when presenting staff in an office or factory) - "These are members of my production team, Sir, who have worked so hard on the project you have been seeing today."

The escort should try to keep an eye on the time and keep things flowing. He or she should precede the Royal Visitor at all times during the visit - even if this seems rather impolite. The onus is on the person escorting and not on the Royal Visitor to keep things moving and on time.

If the escort has to present groups of people at say, a reception, the escort should not be frightened to move the Royal Visitor on to the next group. If they stand talking to one group for too long there is less time available for meeting all the others. The Royal Visitor is quite used to being steered in this way!

Try not to be too formal and keep things as relaxed and interesting as possible. Remember that your Visitor will have been briefed on your organisation so you must be prepared for all sorts of questions,

## Final Points

Following the visit, it is usual for the principal organiser to write to the Private Secretary expressing appreciation of the visit.

You should note that the organisation extending the invitation is expected to bear any costs of the arrangements.

Guests often ask what they should wear for the occasion which is a tricky one in this day and age when people wear all kinds of things for all kinds of occasions! Suffice to say that the people in the formal line-up will be wearing suits and ties and the ladies will be wearing perhaps the sort of thing they wear for a wedding! Hats may be worn but there is no need especially if the setting is fairly informal - an old people's home or a facility for young people for example - when it would seem appropriate not to wear a hat. On the whole people nowadays seem to do without. Gloves, likewise, are not essential for a lady. Some people may prefer to dress less formally. Again the Lieutenancy Office will guide you if asked.

It is not necessary to send personal invitations to the Lord-Lieutenant, the Clerk to the Lieutenancy and the Chief Constable as they will be there on duty.

Finally, it should be said that on some occasions the Lord-Lieutenant hands over responsibility for a Royal Visit to the Vice Lord-Lieutenant or to a Deputy Lieutenant and he or she then acts on behalf of the Lord-Lieutenant on all matters relating to the visit.