



Protocol for handling of deceased members

This document is largely based on a blog post (bluf.com/b/396) published in 2017, updated with additional information for site admins.

Rationale

It is an inevitable fact that, over time, members of the club may pass away, whether naturally, through accidents, or illness. So, we have systems in place to manage that. This guide outlines the process, and what steps need to be taken administratively.

The first part, outlining the process, is useful for everyone. The second part, while not private, will be of use only to those who have appropriate admin permissions on the site.

Overview

The current process, which has been tweaked over the years, can be summarised thus:

- When initial notification is received, confirmation is sought if appropriate
- Following confirmation, the member's profile is marked as 'Deceased'
- This causes a banner to be displayed on the profile and in the apps, stating that we have been informed of the death, and the date on which we were notified
- It also prevents any further messages being sent to the member account, and suspends all BLUF emails to that account's address
- A news item is posted to the site, including any suitable details of which we have been informed (eg names of partner, date of service, cause of death)
- For significant persons in the community, we will try to arrange for someone to submit an obituary, to be posted in the site magazine section
- For other people, we are happy to post obituaries submitted by those close to them
- Approximately six months after the initial notification, the profile will be removed from the site
- Approximately a year after profile deletion, the number allocated to the profile will be available for re-use
- Where someone's partner is still a member of the site, we will take consideration of their views in shortening or lengthening any relevant timescales. Some may wish a profile to be deleted immediately, while others may wish it to remain for longer, and we will do our best to accommodate that.

If you wish to notify BLUF of the passing of one of our members, we would prefer that you do it by email, to webmaster@bluf.com.

How-to for site admins

This section explains the steps necessary, and the required permissions. You can see your permissions list towards the bottom of the screen when you sign in to v4 Admin. If you do not have the listed permission, or the *superuser* permission, you will not be able to carry out the specific task, and should ask someone else to do it.

Confirmation

There has not yet been an instance of a false notification, but that doesn't rule out the possibility. So, we should not act on mere rumour, and attempt where possible to verify information. This may be by checking Facebook, news sources, or trying to reach out to other people known to the member, if possible. Often, however, we must simply use gut instinct, based on the source of the original notification.

Profile setting

Required permission: profile-edit

In v4 Admin, click the Members menu, and select Manage. On the following screen, enter the member number, and click retrieve. (If you do not have a member number, fill in the search box instead, and try to find the member that way, but be cautious; and verify you have the correct member id; you can search by usernames on other sites just by typing them into the box).

When the profile edit page appears, first check that the Key info section (top of right hand column) does not already indicate that their profile has been marked. If you see the message **This member was marked as deceased on** followed by a date, then it has already been done.

Otherwise, scroll down the right hand column to the **Admin actions** section, and click the drop-down menu to choose **Mark as deceased** then click the Execute button below. (**Unmark deceased** will reverse this).

The page will reload, with the message *Member has been marked as deceased* at the top.

Posting an announcement

Required permission: content-news

Announcements are posted in the site news section, and should not be restricted to any single BLUF Local group. In admin, click the Articles menu and select News. Make sure that the 'BLUF Local' drop down on the page is set to 'none' - if you cannot change it, you do not have sufficient permissions.

The headline of the article should be the member's full name, eg 'John Smith' without their BLUF number.

For the categories, tick the boxes for *members* and *obituary*.

The text should usually follow a common format, something like this:

We are sorry to announce that we have been informed of the death of John, @xx@, who passed away on DATE. Our condolences to his friends and family.

The xx should be replaced by the member number, to create a link to the profile.

Add additional information or links where relevant, but avoid linking to any sensational news accounts of accidents, or unreliable sources. Links may be included using Markdown syntax, eg

John was sadly one of the victims of [the crash of flight 101](<https://some.reliable.source/>)

Click the empty box below **Display article until** and select a date two weeks into the future. This should ensure that the news item will be seen by a significant number of members, and feature in the Monday email for the next two weeks.

In the **Display thumbnail for member** box, enter the member number on its own, with no @ or # symbols. This will ensure the preview photo is displayed on the site next to the news article.

Finally, click Add to save the article and add it to the site. You can retrieve it for editing later in the usual way.

Creating an obituary

Required permission: content-magazine

An obituary should be published for significant players in the leather scene, and we should reach out to find people who can submit one for us. For other members, we can invite their partners or colleagues to submit one, but there is no need to be as pro-active about seeking content.

To create an obituary, select Articles from the Admin menu, then Magazine.

For the title, use the full name of the member, and if we know the dates of birth and death, add those too, eg *John Smith, 1975-2020*

For the article categories, tick the boxes for *members* and *obituary*

Write the article, or paste it into the main text box. You may use Markdown formatting to include links and styled text.

For the Author name, enter your name, rather than just your BLUF number.

For the Publication date, select today's date. Ignore the Defer publication and Event date options.

Tick the box *Show on the contents page* and tick the *Use Markdown formatting* box if you used Markdown in the article.

Ensure the *BLUF Local* is set to None and leave the other items blank. Click Add to publish the obituary.

If photos are required, retrieve the article for editing, and add them in the usual way.

Profile photos can be added when the profile is deleted; see the next section.

Profile removal

Required permission: member-admin

This is usually done around six months after we have been notified, but may be done earlier or later, at the request of partners/family.

In v4 Admin, select the Members menu, and click Manage. Enter the BLUF number and click Retrieve to load the profile edit screen.

Scroll to the very bottom of the right hand column, where you will find the **Profile deletion** heading.

From the reasons to delete, there are two options, *Deceased (do not archive)* and *Deceased (archive as Obituary)*.

The first option permanently and irrevocably deletes all content. The second preserves the profile text, as a new magazine article, with the profile images attached to it as a gallery. The article will have a name of the format *John Smith, aka Leatherman*

Where an obituary has already been published, it may be appropriate to choose the second option, rather than the first, particularly for those who have made a large contribution to the leather scene. We may also choose to do this if a surviving partner wishes a profile to be memorialised, however in most cases, profiles and images should simply be deleted.

After selecting the appropriate option, click the Execute button below, and the profile will be removed from the site. The BLUF number will be flagged in the database and not available to be reused for a period of one year from the date of profile deletion

Archiving a profile as an obituary

Required permission: content-magazine

When this is done, an article will automatically be generated in the Magazine section of the site. To edit that article or link it to an existing obituary, you will need the *content-magazine* permission, but it will be created regardless.

Automatically created articles are not shown in the contents page by default. Instead, they should usually be linked to the actual obituary, so that readers can see what has been posted about someone, and then click the *More* button at the bottom of the page, to take them to the original profile and photos.

When *Deceased (archive as Obituary)* is selected as the reason for profile deletion, you will see a message indicating the Content id (cid) of the automatically created article. You should make a note of this.

Then, select Magazine from the Articles menu, type in the cid that was displayed, and click Retrieve.

It is important that you review the profile text.

Before deciding whether you want to link the profile text to an existing published obituary, read it and decide if it is suitable, or if it may require an advisory note to readers. For instance, while some profiles may have PG rated content, others may be fairly explicit about the sexual desires of the member, which could be something of a jarring experience if readers have just read an obituary.

You may, if necessary, tidy the profile text up, remove any links that don't work, for instance, or fix formatting profiles, but you should not generally alter someone's words. If the profile did not use Markdown formatting, you may turn that option for the article off.

If no original obituary was published for the member, you may add a short introductory paragraph, along the lines of

John Smith was a BLUF member for over 10 years, and sadly passed away in January 2020. We have archived his profile, in his original words, as a tribute to him.

and tick the option to show the article on the Contents page.

Click Update to save any of your changes.

If an original obituary was published, you should retrieve it to edit, in the usual way. At the bottom of the text, add a paragraph - with content warning if necessary - like this

To see John's original profile text and photos (contains some explicit text), click the More button.

Below the article text, in the box marked **Reference (cid) of next article in a series** enter the cid of the automatically generated article, and then click Update.