

## **Meeting of the Armed Forces Working Group**

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

### **Present:**

Councillors: B Boulter, M Chamberlain, L Eaton (Chair), R Eaton, P Swift.

Officers: M Hall

Visitors: Lt Col Pope, David Atterbury (Royal British Legion)

### **1. Apologies for Absence:**

Councillors: B Dave, S Haq, S Morris

### **2. Notes of the last meeting:**

6<sup>th</sup> November 2013 – Approved

### **3. Armed Forces Covenant:**

The Chair welcomed Lt Col Pope and David Atterbury from the British Legion.

Cllr Eaton thanked them as they had both just taken part in the official signing of the Armed Forces Covenant with herself as the Chair of the Working Group and the Mayor.

The Group together with Lt Col Pope and D Atterbury discussed the next practical steps that the Council should take in order to consolidate and develop the Covenant.

In summary these are:

a. Try to capture the raw numbers of how many serving and ex service personnel live in the Borough. It was agreed to do this by contacting:

1. SAFA
2. The Royal British Legion (Leicestershire Branch)
3. Regiments stationed in the Borough
4. Schools – Request how many pupils are in receipt of the Armed Forces Supplement
5. Uniformed youth organisation based on the borough such as the cadets

At this stage it was agreed not to request any detailed information as organisations maybe suspicious and there could also be issues with confidentiality and Data Protection etc. It was agreed that further information could be requested at a later date once these overall figures were known.

The Chair of the Group circulated a letter that she had drafted to be sent to the schools in the borough as per the above. It was approved by the Working Group and MH agreed to have it put onto Council letter headed paper and distributed.

b. As part of the Council's upgrading of its website a dedicated very visible page would be established for the Covenant with appropriate links to other useful organisations. MH said the Council would learn from existing best practice on this.

#### **4. WW1 Centenary Commemorations**

a. Councillor Boulter - arrangements for commemorating the start of WW1.

On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August, on the eve of the declaration of war, there will be a borough wide event at Peace Memorial Park in Wigston.

This will commence at noon and last for about half an hour and will involve a short service in the presence of people invited from across the borough. The local South Wigston Regiment will also be in attendance. The service will be lead by the vicar of All Saints in Wigston. Refreshments will be provided by the Friends of Peace Memorial Park afterwards in the Pavilion.

The WG agreed that BB and MH, in consultation with the Chair, should agree the guest list and send out invitations to the event.

b. Appendix B - Letter from St Peter's Church, Oadby

The WG discussed the request by the church that the Council organises an event in Oadby that the church could actively take part in. The WG agreed that the Council's main focus for this year, in addition to Armed Services Day and Remembrance Day, would be the borough wide event on 3<sup>rd</sup> August in Peace Memorial Park. The WG agreed that MH should write back on that basis on behalf of the WG and suggest that the church works with Oadby Stakeholders and other Oadby groups to organise an event themselves.

It was also suggested that if the church could be floodlit at night that there is a national movement to have red filters fitted to the lights to represent the poppy. It was also suggested that if the church or any event they organise needs funds that they should apply to the Oadby Forum.

c. Appendix C – Letter from Wigston Civic Society

The WG discussed the request that the Civic Society had made for a parade or re enactment to take place in Wigston or South Wigston. The WG agreed that the Council's main focus for this year, in addition to Armed Services Day and Remembrance Day, would be the borough wide event on 3<sup>rd</sup> August in Peace Memorial Park. The WG agreed that MH should write back on that basis on behalf of the WG. Regarding the enquiry about the national scheme to lay a commemorative stone in the home town of anybody receiving a Victoria Cross in WW1, Col Pope said he would make enquires and let MH know what the current position nationally.

#### d. Photographic Commemoration of WW1

MC raised the idea of trying to obtain photographs from residents of the borough of WW1. It was agreed by the WG that this was an excellent idea. This request would be publicised in the next edition of Letterbox. Some work will need to be done in the interim to find the best way of obtaining these images securely, scanning and publishing them on the Council's website and then returning them safely to their owners. MC said she felt very passionately about this and would be happy to be actively involved in the project. BB said he had access to a book written by a local Wigston resident that has captured many images of WW1 from Wigston and would let MH see it.

#### 5. Fly the Flag for Commonwealth Day

The national event took place on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014. MH was reporting to members that he had received correspondence prior to the event that requested that the Council did not proceed due to the poor human rights records of some of the Commonwealth countries. MH had written back on the basis that these were issues for the Commonwealth Association and those individual counties and that the correspondent should raise his concerns with them direct. The Council was participating in a national event in good faith. MH asked the WG if they were happy with that approach as some members had raised concerns at the time. The WG said that they were happy with the approach that MH had taken and that should continue to be the Council's position.

**MWLH**  
**April 2014**