

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL OUTSIDE BODY REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 25 SEPT 2018
title: ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT REPORT 2018
submitted by: COUNCILLOR JIM WHITE

1 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this annual report is to inform and update Committee of any changes to Section 4 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Armed Forces Community Covenant as at 25 SEPTEMBER 2018, and to update the Committee on any other changes in relation to the Armed Forces Community Covenant

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – to treat everyone equally and ensure that access to services is available to all. To engage with all our communities to ensure we deliver services to meet customer needs and expectations.
- Corporate Priorities – to seek to continually improve, ensuring that council services are fit for purpose and customer focused.
- Other Considerations – to meet our ongoing Commitment to the Armed Forces Community in the Ribble Valley.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 On the 24th July 2013 The Borough Council with partners from the Military, Private and Charitable Sectors signed an Armed Forces Community Covenant.

3 COMMUNITY COVENANT SECTION 4

3.1 Section 4 of the Community Covenant requests that the Armed Forces Champion – Cllr White co-ordinates and keeps the Council informed of ongoing issues and Initiatives relating to the Covenant.

3.2 Section 4 of the Community Covenant remains as a workable document, and all members, partners and officers are requested to have input into it to make it meaningful, and fully representative for the Armed Forces Community in the Ribble Valley. Additions since the last report in September 2017 are:

- A. Supported RBL campaign for changes to the future census to include a section on membership of the Armed Forces. (The reasoning behind this Campaign is to find out where former members of the Services are, so assistance and help can be better targeted.)

- B. Supported Lancashire County Council in their bid for a grant from the Armed Forces Covenant for 2 x workers to help Local Councils in delivery of the Covenant. (The idea is these workers can help local Armed Forces Champions, and to bring together a coordinated approach amongst other task.)
- C. Supported a Longridge Head teacher for a grant of £20,000 which was successful from the Armed Forces Covenant for a show at Preston Guild Hall. (see below on the 100 Years Commemorations of WW1 Para G)
- D. Assisted Hyndburn and Ribble Valley CVS Veterans open day 05/12/17 at Pendle Hall – 15 Voluntary organisations offered help and free advice.
- E. Noted that the NHS now have signs in surgery's for veterans to add a change to medical documents indicating they are ex Armed Forces. (In some cases if a resident is ex Armed Forces, and due to his/her service requires medical help they may well receive a FastTrack service- note the rules for this service are contained in HM Government Armed Forces Covenant report for 2017).
- F. Provided assistance and help to Moorlands Private School Armed Forces representative in relation to the School signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant. (It should be noted that 45% of the school's 100 boarders are service children).
- G. This November marks the 100 year of the end of WW1. Towns and Villages across the Ribble Valley will be taking part in the National Beacon lighting. In addition many Parishes are also holding additional events as well as their normal Memorial Services and Parades. At the time of compiling this report the following events are planned:

Slaidburn and Easington are taking part in the 'Battles Over' event, a Beacon in the village, and an event afterwards at the Village Hall with a display of photographs and information from the Slaidburn Archive Group.

Waddington are placing Statues around the Village as part of the RBL Here not Here Event.

Bolton with Bowland are having an event which includes flames around the Memorial, and then an event at the Village Hall.

West Bradford are unveiling a new War Memorial to honour WW1 and WW2 servicemen and women.

Simonstone have already erected an RAF Roundel, planted by local schoolchildren to mark the 100th Anniversary of the RAF, it bloomed in April this year.

Tosside will be lighting a bonfire and returning to their Village Hall.

Mellor, along with some other Parishes will have a Beacon Light.

Ribchester, Hothersall and Dutton Parishes will be holding a joint event at Ribchester Village Hall which will include poetry, music and pen pictures of men who lost their lives.

Whalley, Barrow, Wiswell, and Billington have set up a group called “Whalley Remembers” that have been fundraising and will give out banners, stickers and cups to school children. They have also organised a new Heritage Walk with Blue Plaques, and will be holding a Lantern Event. In addition the names of those lost will be in Parish Magazines leading up to the event.

Longridge will be renaming the Kestor Lane Park as a Memorial Park and unveiling a new memorial.

A Longridge Head teacher has booked the Guildhall in Preston on the 11th Nov 2018 for an event called “Armistice”. The event includes some 15 schools, 700-900 school children, teachers and helpers from the Longridge Cluster of schools for 2 x 2 1/2 hr shows. This promises to be an amazing event supported with an Armed Forces Grant. The Head teacher has already accumulated some 20,000 stitched//knitted poppies, and will be placing Ghost Soldiers around Longridge prior to the event.

Clitheroe/RVBC will be holding an event including Beacon Lighting – details yet to be announced.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – the suggestions made in this report may impact on an element of officer time.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – none identified.
- Political – none identified.
- Reputation – the Council has a reputation for supporting the Armed Forces.
- Equality & Diversity – the Council should be consistent in its considerations of all groups.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Note the Contents of this report.

NAME: Cllr J White
AUTHOR

For further information please ask for Olwen Heap, extension 4408