

KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- ME22/018

Committee:-	Markets and Events Committee
Date:-	27 th July 2022
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Remembrance Day 2022 and beyond
Wards Affected:-	All but especially William Knibb

1. Purpose of Report

To seek views on the arrangements for Remembrance Day for this year and future years.

2. Recommendations

Members' views on the trade off between having an 11am or a 2.30pm act of remembrance in November each year from 2023 are sought.

Members views on the core elements of the remembrance day are also sought

- Parade and parade route/arrangements
- Outdoor service or indoor service at SS Peter and Paul
- For a morning event, whether any indoor service at 11.30am at SS Peter and Paul should be regarded as a civic service

3. Information

3.1. Historically, Remembrance Day has been organised by the local branch of the Royal British Legion, with support from the local authority and – usually – the rector of SS Peter and Paul Church or other church leaders. The advice the RBL nationally give their branch networks is that the annual service and act of remembrance should be “owned” by the local authority and, in our case, this is the Town Council not NNC.

3.2. In January this year, there was a three way discussion between the RBL secretary, the rector and the clerk about arrangements for 2022 and what lessons could be learnt from the 2021 event, which had taken a different form from those previously, and had drawn a larger

crowd. All three parties agreed to consider the practicalities of moving the service to the morning rather than keep it in the afternoon of the Sunday. The F&G Committee agreed that a move to the morning would be appropriate as there was no longer any need to accommodate the interests of other towns in setting a timetable, and 11am was the national point of remembrance. However, the RBL, having consulted its own members, felt that it had insufficient resources to simultaneously support Kettering, Rothwell, Desborough and Burton and honour its new responsibilities in Northampton (the parade marshal is now the county parade marshal, so the first call on his time is Northampton) so it asked that, in 2022, the event remain in the afternoon. Without RBL resources, it would be impossible to arrange a parade involving the band, and various cadet groups, who also help with stewarding and layout of the parade area, provide flag bearers, or attract sufficient veterans, many of whom attend events elsewhere in the county in the morning. It would also prevent the attendance of the Lord Lieutenant.

3.3. Subsequent discussions have taken place about what can be done on a more permanent basis after 2022 to remedy this situation, both in terms of the timings but also other aspects of the event, to maintain its attraction for local people and its relevance and reach. The timing of the event will have an impact on the format and vice versa.

3.4. Format

3.4.1. The main elements of the event as conducted in 2019 and 2021 are :-

- Parade and march to the war memorial, starting at the Market Place, involving veterans, band, cadet and other service affiliated organisations, managed by British Legion and an overall Parade Marshall. Parade inspection by Mayor, Lord Lieutenant and others beforehand. Veterans and other parade members form a drumhead square at the junction of Sheep St and Northampton Rd (junction closed)
- Act of Homage at the War Memorial and laying of wreaths.
- Service of Remembrance conducted by a member of the clergy, - there is flexibility in who does this and in which capacity. This has more recently been conducted at the war memorial, before then, it was conducted in church as part of a wider church service.

3.4.2. The British Legion have arranged the Act of Homage and wreath laying and organised the parade, supported by cadet and service organisations, and provided various flag bearers. Churches Together have managed the service element and the local authority has managed the traffic order, site preparation, facilities, security, publicity, and Mayoral reception. Having the service outdoors enables it to be more ecumenical, and include other faiths and denominations. It can be led by which church or faith group wishes to conduct it, and has to date been led by the Chaplain to the Royal British Legion, with contributions by the Mayor's Chaplain, the Chair of Churches Together and someone representing the inter-faith forum. If held at 11am, the normal Sunday morning service could be delayed and shorn of those elements which are part of the act of homage. There is clearly more capacity outdoors than indoors for a service to reach large numbers of local people.

- 3.4.3. A delayed morning service of 11.30am could be badged as a “Civic Service” if members wished; that is one which is attended by the Mayor and councillors and which has a civic theme to it.

3.5. Timings

- 3.5.1. It is difficult to gauge the impact of moving to an 11am event on the format described above. The background arrangements and the outdoor religious service either side of the Act of Homage could be provided without any problems. The delivery of the parade and the ability of a proportion of veterans to attend would however be compromised. The Town Council, - at some extra cost – could provide stewarding and the laying out of chairs for example, which is currently done for free by cadet organisations, but the net impact would probably be to no longer provide the parade element of the event.
- 3.5.2. All parties remain in favour of a move to the morning **if** it can be delivered. It is intended that a conversation take place with the cadet organisations, including those providing a band, to see whether they could still support a parade, even if the British Legion couldn't and, through the RBL, to see if we can establish how many veterans are committed elsewhere on the Sunday morning.
- 3.5.3. **Is a parade Important / required?** To quote the RBL; “ That is an important question. It is one of the only days of the year that our Ex Service Veterans have a chance to formally parade and pay respects to their fallen comrades, This is why the Veterans are the lead group after the Band and the Union Flag”
- 3.5.4. The other event – the Armistice Day commemoration – at 11am on the 11th November, will go ahead as normal and is not affected by these considerations.

4. Consultation and Engagement

Consultation has been conducted to date with the RBL and the Rector, with correspondence with the Lord Lieutenants' office. Further engagement with cadet organisations, veterans and other parties

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

There is £2500 in the budget for this year, for the traffic order and other facilities cost. Provision in future years may have to be higher to pick up some of the costs currently provided for free, if a change in timings means the resource is no longer available.

6. Policy Implications

The Council is committed, through the armed forces covenant, and generally, to supporting the interests and wellbeing of ex servicemen

Background Papers

Correspondence with RBL, LL, Rector
