

Report of a meeting of the Events Liaison Group held on Wednesday 6 October 2021 at 10.00 a.m. in the Roden Suite, Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem to discuss the arrangements for The Remembrance Day Parade and Church Service on Sunday 14 November 2021.

Present:-Cllrs Dodd, Everett, Hill, Parry
Mrs Christine Saxton (RBL)
Rev. R Haarhoff (Wem PCC)

Mrs P O'Hagan (Town Clerk)
Mrs Susan Thornhill (PA to the Mayor & Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Broomhall, Hoffmann & Meakin. PC Heathcote (Wem Police).

2. Arrangements for Remembrance Day Parade and Church Service

Parade Notes and Church Service

This year there will be the normal parade and church service. Enquiries in the event of rising covid rates will be made with other local town councils with regard to their arrangements.

In previous years the number of people gathering around the War Memorial i.e Wreath Layers, Flag bearers, Councillors, Dignitaries etc has increased to an extent that the service and wreath laying are obscuring the view of those members of the public attending. Therefore, it was agreed that the focus should be on the wreath laying ceremony and the two minute silence so only those involved with the wreath laying will be permitted around the War memorial.

Following on from last year's wreath laying service when due to the Covid pandemic, only a handful of wreath layers attended, it was agreed to replicate this again this year and to re-position Flag Bearers, Councillors etc.

It was requested that members of the Events Liaison Group act as marshals at the gates and steps of the church to direct wreath layers and flag bearers to their positions. Cllr Hill said he would assist. It was suggested taping off the church steps.

It was agreed to meet with Rev Rob Haarhoff, Church Warden Chris Mellings & Christine Saxton RBL prior to the service to talk through the arrangements.

Confirmation is awaited from Craig Jenkins that he would act as Parade Marshal at this year's event. If for any reason he is unable to carry out this role, the RBL will organise a replacement.

It was confirmed that Ruth Wilson will be playing the Last Post and Reveille and that members of the Wem Jubilee Band will again play Abide with me whilst flag bearers etc assembled on the Church Green.

Cllr Dodd stated that normally all other Churches in Wem close on Remembrance Sunday and that if the service at the Parish church is cancelled, other churches will need notice to open.

Wem Parish Church – Singing is still permitted but behind masks and due to the current levels of covid in Wem, the church are still being very cautious with masks being worn in church, space between pews and hand sanitising. It was suggested singing only the last hymn giving members of the congregation the opportunity to leave if they wish. Guidance is required from the church with regards to the capacity allowed in the church.

At the end of the church service it was suggested that members of the congregation are to be asked to leave via the back door only to avoid a gathering around the War Memorial and the Church steps. However, to avoid a backlog at the back door, it was suggested to still use the side door but to direct/channel members of the congregation towards the gates/church green. Only the Mayor, The President of the RBL and the Town Clerk are to stand on the steps to take the salute. Nobody is to congregate behind them.

It was reported that the RBL flags had been received and handed to Cllr Hoffmann who has secured the poles required to fix to the Christmas tree holders on the High Street. We await delivery of the lamppost poppies. Mrs Saxton said that the poppy collection starts on the 30th of October and both the flags and the lamppost poppies must not go up before this date. It was therefore suggested that both the flags and lamppost poppies go up on the 30th of October and are taken down by the 21st of November. The lamppost poppies need to go at a height that they cannot be tampered with and a map is required to show where the poppies have been placed.

Risk Assessment and Marshalling of Event

Risk Assessment – to be updated with covid in mind and to be guided by government guidelines and covid rates and to make a decision in the first week of November as to whether to go ahead with the parade and church service.

John Ralphs will act as Chief Marshal, he has requested 2 marshals for each road closure, 8 marshals in total. The Carnival Committee have assisted in the past and it was suggested contacting Colin Jones who arranges the road closures for the Christmas Lights parade for volunteers. Any volunteers should meet at 10.20 a.m on the morning of the event for a briefing by the Chief Marshal.

It was confirmed that a road closure application had been made and awaits approval. Notices need to be displayed two weeks before the event.

Mrs Thornhill said that she would check to ensure the service around the War Memorial would not be disturbed by a football match.

3. Any Other Matters

The PA system has been booked, there will be no live streaming this year.

Mrs Saxton confirmed that the United Services club will be open for light refreshments after the service however a buffet will not be provided this year, instead individually wrapped biscuits and cakes will be on offer.

Mrs Saxton reported that £7,291.41 was raised for the poppy appeal in Wem last year in one week. She also reported that due to the Shawbury branch of the RBL closing that they are now joined with Wem.

The following are required - First Aiders, one on the church green and one on the pavement in front of the church. Contact Katie Carter leader of the Girl Guides, Brownies & Rangers.

28.10.21

Agenda item 8 Events Liaison Group 6.10.21 Notes

Assistance for those who require some help accessing the Memorial and into the Church.
Town Councillors to be considered for this role.

Chairs required for the elderly or infirm (Town Council to supply if church unable, email
Church Warden Chris Mellings).