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Surrey Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2020-21

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Foreword

As Chairman of the Surrey Civilian-Military Partnership Board (SCMPB), I have great pleasure in welcoming you to today’s first ever on-line Surrey Armed Forces Covenant Conference.

Following our last hugely successful conference with Lt-Gen Richard Nugee at ATC Pirbright, we will this year be looking at ‘The Power of Partnership’ – hearing especially about the joint working with the military during our response to COVID-19. We will hear how the county has adapted to support the armed forces community be it as military spouses, service children or with veterans’ hubs. We will of course continue to promote the use of our Forces Connect App. We also have the MoD Covenant Team update us as to where the new Armed Forces Covenant Legislation is in the Parliamentary process. A packed three hours for us all!

I am pleased to present to you our draft annual report which covers activity from a wide range of partners across Surrey over the period of 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. Please do email any further examples of achievements for inclusion to armedforces@surreycc.gov.uk by 31 March 2021.

Despite COVID-19, this has been another successful year for the SCMPB as we have continued to support Surrey’s armed forces community. This has been made possible by great partnership working with 11 Infantry Brigade and HQ SE, with our HM Lord-Lieutenant, the Borough and District Councils, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, Service Charities, businesses and with all our partners from Health, Education and Employment.

Every year we develop new initiatives and this year is no exception. We have further developed and sustained new and existing veteran hubs and drop-ins. Following the creation of the first Veterans Hub at Guildford Fire Station, we are delighted that Woking and Fordbridge fire stations will follow suit, once restrictions allow. This approach has attracted national interest and is being replicated in fire stations within Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Kent with more counties to follow. Because of the pandemic, the planned pilot to register recruits at ATC Pirbright as service voters with the local authority of their choice has been delayed until April 2021. However, this initiative also continues to attract the interest of both the Electoral Commission and the Cabinet Office.

The Forces Connect South East (FCSE) legacy proves to be of lasting value. FCSE, a two-year project led by Surrey County Council with the aim of making it easier for members of the armed forces community to access consistent advice and sources of support continues. The Forces Connect app is going from strength to strength with over 9,300 downloads, and the project has provided training nationally to more than 7,500 staff and over 250 elected councillor Armed Forces Champions. We were proud to be runner-up in this year's Soldiering On Working Together Awards.

When you have read this report, I hope you will feel, as I do, justly proud of all that we have achieved. We are working together and empowering each other to better deliver the Armed Forces Covenant for all members of the armed forces community in Surrey and beyond. We are absolutely determined that they will never be disadvantaged as a result of their service to our Nation.

In conclusion, I would like to advise you that I will be standing down as Chairman of our Board in May 2021, when I will also step down as a County Councillor. I have been delighted to serve as Chairman of the Board for 4 years and I would like to thank all members for their support and dedication. It has been a real privilege to have worked with so many committed people in partnership with the military across Surrey and beyond. Surrey has achieved much and I feel proud to have played my small part in our success story.



Peter Martin

Chairman of Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board

Introduction

The Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board and partners have continued to work hard to support our armed forces community, despite the extra challenges brought about by the Covid19 pandemic. This report sets out a summary of some of these achievements in implementing the Armed Forces Covenant within Surrey. The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the Nation ensuring that those who serve or have served in the British Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly. All Surrey local authorities have signed the Armed Forces Covenant and appointed an elected councillor Armed Forces Champion and Covenant Lead Officer to be key points of contact and to take forward the Covenant locally to help ensure that the armed forces community does not face disadvantage compared to any other citizen when accessing public services.

Engagement

Joint Working through the Covid-19 Response

On 19 March 2020, Surrey Local Resilience Forum declared a major incident in relation to Covid-19 and established a response structure to help manage the impact of the pandemic within the County. From the outset, 11 Infantry Brigade embedded military planners within the key teams dealing with response, who helped establish a number of new processes to address the pandemic. These included



creating a food distribution hub to support vulnerable residents who were shielding and unable to access food supplies, setting up temporary mortuaries to manage the increase in number of deaths, establishing a PPE distribution hub, helping set up the mobile testing units and establishing the mass vaccination centres.

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAmb) also received support from a small cohort of military personnel who worked alongside ambulance staff during the winter to respond to patients as the service faced increased pressure.

The Trust welcomed the support which followed a request to the Ministry of Defence, approved under the Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) principles.

An initial group of 36 personnel from the Royal Logistic Corps received training and assisted the service by pairing up with a SECAmb clinician for a shift to drive an ambulance. The cohort was based out of the Trust's Gatwick and Polegate operational areas.

Proposed Armed Forces Covenant Legislation

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly, and will not be disadvantaged in accessing public services by their military service. It also allows for special provision for those who have sacrificed the most, such as the bereaved and injured. The Government proposes to introduce legislation to increase awareness and improve delivery of the Covenant in key areas that are fundamental to a good life, whilst retaining the ability of service providers to honour the Covenant in the best way to suit local needs. The focus of the proposed legislation is around having due regard for the armed forces community in the areas of public housing, education and healthcare. At the request of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), 11 Brigade held a series of focus groups made up of Armed Forces Champions and Covenant Lead Officers, which included Surrey County Council, to consider the draft proposals and make recommendations to the MoD on the key issues in these areas, as well as examples of best practice. In March 2021, Peter Bruinvels was called as an Expert Witness to brief MPs on the Select Committee of The Armed Forces Bill on the many examples of the best practice that Surrey County Council already undertook in partnership with the Armed Forces through its Surrey CC Civilian Military Partnership Board without the need for any legislation in the fields of Education, Health and Housing. He also spoke very positively on the role of Armed Forces Champions and commended their appointment and the work undertaken by them which definitely makes a difference.

Surrey as an Exemplar

Surrey's Civilian Military Partnership Board is considered a national exemplar by the MoD as it is proactive, engaging and delivering improvements to the armed forces community. During the year, it has provided advice and support to other authorities including Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and East Sussex.

Local Covenant Panels

In addition to the countywide Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board, Woking, Spelthorne, Guildford and Surrey Heath borough councils have all established local covenant panels in partnership with local units to implement the Armed Forces Covenant at a local level and to plan remembrance events.

Local Partnership Working with the Army

11 Brigade continues to support partnership working locally with the local authorities through direct work and by working with the local Task Force Commanders at Army Training Centre (Pirbright) and 1st Battalion the Irish Guards.

Successful relocation of 2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment to Pirbright

During autumn 2020, 2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment moved to Pirbright from Weeton Barracks in Lancashire, where they had been fortunate to enjoy a period of relative stability for the past 10 years. For many, Weeton Barracks had been home for a significant period of time and indeed some of the personnel had never been permanently based elsewhere. Their new home - Elizabeth Barracks in Pirbright had been vacant for some time and as such it has been stripped of many of its former welfare facilities. The Battalion has since applied for the NAAFI Fund and await the final response. The fund will be used to directly support the soldiers' and families in Pirbright by vastly improving the HUB and Contact House.

The Move with the families went very well despite many having to self-isolate the day of the move; this meant parts of the plan had to be re-written delaying some families by two weeks. The schools were very accommodating with the constant changes in dates and have supported the families well. To date, the children have settled in very well, this been aided by specialist local agencies working alongside the families with children that need that little extra support. At the time the Battalion moved, Guildford Borough Council was a Tier 3 area which prevented many from exploring the new location. Hopes for post-lockdown are positive, many are looking forward to seeing what their new home location has to offer.

Covenant Funding Bids from Army Training Centre (Pirbright)

The Armed Forces Covenant Grant Fund awarded ATC(P) a grant of £74,140 for a project entitled "Creating positive outcomes through play". With the ongoing impact of Covid 19 the renewed delivery target start date is September 2021. The project will be delivered in partnership with Guildford Borough Council and seeks to address play needs of service children with their social, physical and emotional needs being supported. It will be delivered over a 3 year period and has a four tiered approach including weekly outdoor Playrangers sessions at Beech Grove play area Pirbright, a holiday playscheme, youth workshops and family fun days. The activities will be free of charge as financial constraints are often a barrier for service families.



A number of smaller grants have been submitted to the Armed Forces Covenant NAAFI Fund for projects to improve the quality of life for serving personnel and their families living at ATC(P) the results will be published in March 2020 and we are hopeful that they will be approved.

Surrey's Annual Covenant Conference 2021

Surrey's annual Armed Forces Covenant conference was held online this year due to the pandemic. The event was again a huge success with over 150 delegates attending.

They heard from a range of speakers about the how public authorities and the voluntary and community sectors worked together with the military in the response to Covid.

This session was led by Steve Owen-Hughes, Chairman of Surrey's Local Resilience Forum and Surrey's Chief Fire Officer. The second part of the conference considered the new Armed Forces Covenant legislation, local military priorities and improving connections with the armed forces community. This included an inspirational presentation from an army spouse employed by Gold Employer Recognition Scheme award holder KBR.



Forces Connect Mobile App



The Forces Connect mobile app was established using funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund. During the year that funding came to an end and Surrey County Council entered into a new partnership with The Shots Foundation, the charitable arm of Aldershot Football Club, who kindly agreed to sponsor the app for the next two years.

During the year, the number of users continued to grow with over 9,300 downloads and 19 regions on board. The app has continued to develop during the year and now includes Nepali translation to support our Gurkhas to access help and support. Once restrictions allow, a formal relaunch of the app will take place at RMA Sandhurst.



Electoral Registration Pilot for Service Personnel

During discussions with some members of the armed forces community, it became apparent that some serving personnel did not feel connected enough to the local community to participate in elections. One survey showed that only 46% of respondents declared that they were on the Electoral Roll with even less saying they would exercise their right to vote. It was agreed between Guildford Borough Council and the Commanding Officer at the Army Training Centre (Pirbright) to support a twelve-month pilot to assist recruits to register as a service voter with the local authority of their choice. This pilot, which was delayed because of the pandemic, is due to begin in April 2021. This has attracted considerable interest from both the Cabinet Office and the Electoral Commission as well as other training bases around the country. Once registered, the service vote is valid for 5 years and will enable them to vote by post from anywhere in the world.

Surrey Military Appeals Committee

Surrey Military Appeals Committee continued to meet remotely during the past 12 months. Chaired by Mr Michael More-Molyneux – HM Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey, it has Col John Baynham OBE – Deputy Commander 11 Infantry Brigade SE, Shahid Azeem DL - the High

Sheriff of Surrey, Dame Penelope Keith DL and Cllr Peter Martin – Chairman of SCMPB amongst its lead members. During the past 12 months, it has received top level reports and briefings from 11 Infantry Brigade and HQ SE as well as from the Chairman of Surrey Civilian-Military Partnership Board and from both ABF The Soldiers' Charity Surrey and from Surrey Royal British Legion. As well as supporting the wider work of the Military and service charities in the County, it has campaigned to increase the speed at which Capita recruit into the Military. It also plays a leading role in ceremonial events including Armed Forces Day Flag-Raising and maintains a Military Events Diary and as well as allocating Service Deputy-Lieutenants to support particular ceremonial events.

All-Party Armed Forces Covenant Parliamentary Group

Surrey's Civilian-Military Liaison Advisor has been appointed in a personal capacity to the All-Party Armed Forces Covenant Parliamentary Group as its Armed Forces Champion and Covenant Lead Adviser and is able to share many examples of best practice from Surrey. This has included promotion of the Forces Connect app and associated training materials. In March, Peter Bruinvels was an Expert Witness to the Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill highlighting the effective role of Surrey's Civilian Military Partnership Board, its best practice and the very effective role played by Armed Forces Champions.

Employment

Surrey County Council as a supportive employer

As a major employer, Surrey County Council proactively supports its workforce. For prospective employees its welcoming culture is clearly set out to members of the armed forces community, which is demonstrated through updated [webpages](#) and promotion of the Gold Employers Recognition Scheme logo on all job adverts. For new starters, the updated induction process highlights Surrey's commitment, support available and positive HR policy, which not only covers Reservists (both training and mobilisation), but also includes ex-service personnel, spouses of serving and reservist personnel, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers and reservists from other nations.

Praising Surrey's Reserve Forces

Reserves Day 2020 saw Surrey County Council release a [video](#) via social media praising the work of Surrey's Reserve Forces. The video featured Surrey's Chief Executive, Chairman, Leader, Portfolio Holder, Armed Forces Champion, Chief Fire Officer as well as three of Surrey's reservists. They thanked those within the Reserve Forces for the commitment to both Surrey County Council and the Nation and highlighted the huge range of transferrable skills that they bring to their civilian career.

Surrey County Council Deploys Three Reservists

Three of Surrey's reservists have been mobilised over the last 18 months. One colleague was deployed in Iraq to support training to Kurdish and Iraqi Forces, whilst two further colleagues were deployed to support the response to Covid19. One of these was embedded within the Surrey Local Resilience Forum to support the response planning whilst the other was one of 120 Reserve



Soldiers mobilised from 4PWRR as part of the Covid Support Force tasked to set up and run Mobile Testing Units.

Woking Borough Council – a Gold Authority

In summer of 2020, Woking Borough Council was proudly awarded the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme gold award, the first Surrey district or borough council to achieve this prestigious award. Woking's gold status reflects its huge commitment and support for the armed forces following the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant in 2012 and follows on from their silver award in 2016. Their commitment is demonstrated through a range of actions and initiatives both internally focussed within the council, as well as externally, some of which is highlighted below. Surrey County Council acted as mentor to them.



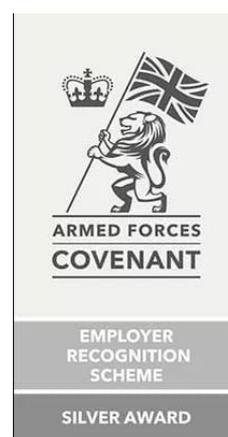
Woking has recently reviewed its Reservist Policy and Housing Allocation Policy and encourages job applications from the armed forces community as well as promoting opportunities for staff to become reservists. They ensure staff are trained on the needs of the armed forces community by providing training to frontline staff as well as through the induction process.

Externally Woking actively promotes awareness, recognition and remembrance throughout the borough and following awarding Freedom of the Borough to ATC (Pirbright) in 2017, a freedom parade is held in the town centre every two years. Following its restoration in 2015, the Peace Garden at the Muslim Burial Ground in Horsell, which was once the final resting place of 19 Muslim soldiers from the Great War and a further eight casualties of the Second World War, is now a significant heritage site for Woking. The site recognises the contribution of soldiers from all parts of the world who gave the ultimate sacrifice and provides a focal point for annual acts of commemoration.

Woking also actively supports local veterans across the borough and has been instrumental in enabling the relocation of the Veterans Hub to Woking Fire Station and promoting referrals to RBL and SSAFA Surrey.

Spelthorne Borough Council – A Silver Authority

During the year Spelthorne Borough Council further increased its support to the armed forces community and has committed to offering an additional 10 days paid leave for Reservists to enable them to undertake training commitments. In addition, recognising the hugely beneficial transferable skills that ex-service personnel have, their HR team has established links with the Career Transition Partnership advertising council positions on their jobs portal for those leaving Her Majesty's Armed Forces.



In recognition of their endeavours the Ministry of Defence saw fit to award Spelthorne Borough Council the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme silver award. They have now set their sights on achieving the gold standard and will endeavour to work with partners in the Public and Private Sector through 2021 to become an advocate and champion of good practice. Surrey County Council acted as mentor to them.

SE Gold Awards Association (Formerly Gold Alumni Association)

As a Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award holder, Surrey County Council is co-chairman of the South East Group, which gives advice, mentoring and support to other organisations, especially local authorities - developing their relationship with Defence

across Surrey and beyond. This year, Surrey acted as mentor to Woking Borough Council and as “critical friend” to both Oxfordshire County Council and West Sussex County Council advising and supporting them in their three successful applications for gold status. Surrey County Council is a very active committee member of the National Gold Awards Association and regularly participates in the annual Defence Relationship Management Conference in Westminster.

South East Regional Employers Engagement Group (REEG)

Surrey is a key member of the South East Regional Employers Engagement Group during the year delivered a joint presentation with Hampshire County Council on how it advocates on behalf of the Armed Forces through its day to day work.

Army Training at Pirbright

Lt Col Shamus Kelly has taken over from Lt Col Rob Sandford as Commanding Officer HQ Regt ATC(P) and will remain as the Task Force Commander for Woking and Guildford borough councils and a member of the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board.

Training at the Army Training Centre (Pirbright) was paused in March 2020 during the first national lockdown but resumed in mid-May initially at 50% capacity working up to a full intake. Training is being conducted in a Covid 19 secure environment with recruits required to stay on camp for the duration of their course. The length of the training course has been reduced by two weeks to 12 weeks but will revert to 14 weeks from April 2021. Training is challenging at times but instructors have adapted well and ATC(P) is on track to meet target numbers of trained recruits.



Currently no families are attending Pass Off Parades due to Covid 19 restrictions however, a live streaming of the event is available for families to view and updates and photographs of the recruits progress throughout the course have been published on social media which has been welcomed.

Looking to the future, plans are being implemented to enable ATC(P) to expand and become the British Army Soldiers Academy. In order to achieve the full potential ATC(P) will work with local authorities and stakeholders and explore areas such as utilising joint facilities.

Education and Young People

Supporting Service Children

The Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) is commissioned to deliver School Improvement on behalf of Surrey County Council. Within this remit, SAfE has mechanisms to monitor the outcomes of service children as well as signposting schools to opportunities which may support the specific needs of this small but distinct group of learners in Surrey.

Work is ongoing to focus support for service children on language and literacy to help increase attainment levels. A model to achieve this was launched with schools in September 2020 when schools were asked to complete an audit to highlight trends and showcase successful interventions. A follow up will be held with schools after a 12-month period to look at added value. In addition, a self-evaluation tool was issued to schools looking at

different groups of learners, including service children and progress is being monitored to see if additional tailored support is required for individual schools.

A new webpage has been launched on the [SAfE website](#) which sets out key information for schools with service children. This includes information on the use of the Service Pupil Premium which is made available to schools to help them to offer pastoral and emotional support and to help mitigate the negative impact on service children of family or parental mobility and is currently £310 per eligible pupil.



SAfE and Service Pupil Premium

The Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) is commissioned to deliver School Improvement on behalf of Surrey County Council. Within this remit, SAfE has mechanisms to monitor the outcomes of Service Pupil Premium Children and we signpost our schools to any opportunities, which might support the specific needs of this small but distinct group of learners in Surrey.

To view Surrey's Service Children Data Summary 2019 please [click here](#).

Current activities of SAfE that help schools to support Service Pupil Premium Children:

- Recovery Covid-19 Fund – Literacy and Language Catch-Up. A direct mailing will be sent to all schools who access Service Pupil Premium to highlight this fund, and remind them that it can be used to support literacy catch-up SPP children if required.

Home to School Transport

Following a number of queries from service families regarding home to school transport, Surrey Admissions and Transport prepared a briefing paper outlining the statutory entitlement for school transport, the appeals process and implications for service families. This was presented at meeting of the Unit Welfare Officers, both regular and reserve, covering Surrey which gave an opportunity to ask questions of the lead officer, after which Unit Welfare Officers took the guidance back to their units to share with families as appropriate.

Health, wellbeing and welfare

Armed Forces Health Champions Group

On 1 April 2020 Surrey Heartlands became one Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) from a merger of four separate CCGs. As a result, plans are in place for re-signing the Armed Forces Covenant as a new statutory body with the Deputy Commander of 11 Infantry Brigade once Covid19 restrictions allow.

The Armed Forces Health Champions Group continued to meet during the year under the chairmanship of the Deputy Director of Surrey Heartlands. The group brings together colleagues from across the health system with Adult Social Care, the voluntary sector and the military with Surrey County Council officers to further support for Surrey's Armed Forces community. Issues considered included the Employer Recognition Scheme awards, Step into Health, GP Veteran Awareness Training and support for armed forces carers.

Veterans' Hub Project

The Forces Connect South East Veterans' Hubs project, led by Surrey County Council was successfully completed during the summer bar some delays in opening provision due to the impact of Covid-19. The project achieved more than was anticipated and has significantly improved services for veterans across the Surrey, Hampshire, Kent and East and West Sussex by connecting with 35 veterans' hubs across the south east, including seven in Surrey.

In order to assess where the focus of the project should be, a needs and gap analysis by county was carried out, looking at the location of veterans as well as their needs and requirements. Over 2,500 veterans took part in this research which showed what veterans wanted from a hub, and the key infrastructure needed. It showed that quite a number do not label themselves as veterans, rather ex-service, and confirmed that members of the LGBTQ and BAME community feel accepted as members of the wider veterans' community and do not seek specific provision. This reflects the way LGBTQ and BAME are represented across the armed forces. However, in areas where retired Gurkhas and their families make up a significant proportion of the local community, the project has enabled the creation of two new hubs that are Gurkha facing yet welcoming to all veterans.

The research led to the production of a best practice guide '[Grow your Hub](#)' guide and manual (commended by ASDIC) which provides practical advice to anyone seeking to set up a hub.

This work led to the roll-out of best practice identified and the promotion of locally tailored services. Twenty-one new and existing hubs across the SE region have been supported and sustained through the project both financially and through mentoring. This includes 17 new Hubs that are now operational (or will be once Covid-19 restrictions allow) across the region.

The University of Surrey was commissioned to provide external evaluation of the project and found that 'the project has exercised a strong influence in integrating ex-armed forces personnel into regular civilian life.... and played a significant role in establishing a network of like-minded ex-armed forces personnel who have not only benefitted from the regular camaraderie and friendly interaction but on several occasions received life-saving support, a new job and help. The best practice guide provides information which has enabled individuals to set up support services and networks based on their individual community needs.'

Veterans' Hubs within Fire Stations

The model of holding a veterans' hub within Guildford Fire Station has been of interest across both the county and nationally. Since its inaugural meeting in June 2019, the successful model will be rolled out within two further stations in Surrey (Woking and Fordbridge) as well as ones in Kent and Berkshire once Covid restrictions allow. The Surrey Chief Fire Officer is the national Armed Forces Lead for the Fire Service and will take this approach to the Chief Fire Officers meeting to share it across the country.

As the hubs were not able to meet in person during the pandemic, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service worked with partners in the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board to provide an online provision via zoom. Two sessions were held in December 2020 and March 2021 and included inspirational speakers, including Surrey's Chief Fire Officer as well as representatives of support agencies including SSAFA, Royal British Legion, Citizens Advice and the Transition and Intervention Liaison



Service ('TILS') who explained services available and how these could be accessed whilst Covid19 restrictions were still in place.

In advance of the opening of the new hub in Fordbridge and in partnership with the North Surrey Armed Forces Partnership, a management committee has been established along with a Facebook Group and Twitter account, [@fordbridgehub](#), to disseminate information and to provide a platform for anyone in North Surrey who has served to come together and connect online. During the first lockdown in spring 2020, the crew at Fordbridge fire station also established a community garden that its hoped will become a focal point for the Hub to use as soon as it is safe to do so.

Veterans' Support during Covid19

Local authorities, organisations, charities and hubs have been proactive in helping to ensure veterans are supported during the pandemic. Armed Forces charities and other relevant sources of support available to veterans have been included in contact centre resources. In addition, a specific communication was sent out via Surrey Community Foundation and Surrey Community Action to voluntary and community groups across the county highlighting how to signpost to support available along with an offer of training for staff within the community and voluntary sector.

Veterans' Should not be Forgotten

In March 2020 the Chancellor of the Exchequer awarded additional funding for veterans' mental health, some of which was made available to provide immediate support for vulnerable veterans with reduced social contact as a result of Covid19. Surrey was fortunate to receive a total of over £13,000 of this funding as a result of successful bids by Age UK Surrey for additional support for veterans over the phone, and by the Veterans Support Association for hobby packs to give veterans a project to focus on during lockdown.

Recognition and Remembrance

Due to the Covid19 pandemic many of the plans in place for armed forces events needed to be changed to take account of the restrictions in place at the time. The UK was on full lockdown on both VE Day and Remembrance Sunday, and during Armed Forces week and VJ Day many restrictions were in place which resulted in the majority of events held during the year being moved online. This section sets out some of the events that took place.

VE Day 75



VE DAY
75TH ANNIVERSARY

As original plans for celebrating and commemorating VE Day had to be put on hold, Surrey Military focussed on collating local and national Virtual VE Day 75 events and sharing them online. At a county level the Chairman of Surrey County Council Tony Samuels led the county in tribute and remembrance, addressing Surrey residents with a speech shared online on Friday 8 May. In addition an insight into the personal and moving stories behind the victory of VE Day were shared by three Surrey residents. Guildford Cathedral's service for VE Day on Sunday 10 May was livestreamed to residents via their youtube account. To help young children join in the celebrations, a VE Day 75 colouring poster was designed and shared for families to stick in their windows.



All across the county, local authorities and local communities came together to give thanks, find hope and celebrate. Below are just a few brief highlights.

Elmbridge Museum hosted an online exhibition focusing on Elmbridge's experience during WWII. This included three videos to bring objects in the museum to life and explain their significance. In Epsom and Ewell VE Day goody bags (supported by Sainsburys and Waitrose) were delivered to veterans. Guildford Cathedral was stunningly bathed in red, white and blue lights over the VE Day 75 weekend. Mole Valley marked the occasion with videos reminding us why it's important to celebrate VE Day and what it was like to celebrate in Dorking 75 years ago. Reigate and Banstead called on residents to make and decorate their homes with bunting and share images. In the run up to the anniversary Runnymede shared some wonderful photographs of local life in the second world war.



As well as producing a half hour virtual service for VE Day 75, Spelthorne Borough Council promoted the "V" for Victory community tribute and encouraged the public to post pictures of themselves on social media with the hashtags: [#spelthorneremembers](#) and [#surreyremembers](#). The initiative was adopted by local authorities, organisations and businesses across the South East and was a great success.



Residents were also encouraged to send in their own photos from VE Day and Spelthorne Museum incorporated them along with photos from their own archive to curate a virtual exhibition. The exhibition was visited 684 times over the course of the bank holiday weekend; a record for the museum and will provide an enduring archive for the local community. Spelthorne Young Voices recorded two songs especially for the commemorations with children recording their parts in isolation before they were combined together. Given the technical challenge this presented it was no mean feat and was the first time that the choir had performed in this way. The commemorations were streamed over 3000 times over the course of the bank holiday weekend and the social media campaign that led up to it reached a potential audience of some 90,000 people. The commemorations generated articles in the local press, on radio and provided an opportunity to promote the Armed Forces Covenant. Most importantly, they provided a means for residents to pay their respects and helped to bring the community together at a time of adversity.



Surrey Heath put together make-your-own bunting and a poster and shared virtual commemorations, which included local history. Tandridge encouraged residents to celebrate by decorating their homes and listening to VE Day party music via Facebook. A number of pipers also played across the area. The Mayor of Waverley encouraged residents to mark the occasion and remember those who sacrificed so much, making use of digital technology share time with friends and family. Woking shared some wonderful historical images and the area collectively raised a glass to those who gave so much.

Armed Forces Week

Despite being in partial lockdown as a result of Covid-19, and social distancing rules still applying, many local authorities across the county held a flag raising ceremony, with some opting to do it virtually. The county flag raising took place at Guildford Cathedral, with Mr Michael More-Molyneux, Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey raising the Armed Forces Day flag with the Very Reverend Dianna Gwilliams, Dean of Guildford and the Rt Revd Andrew Watson, Bishop of Guildford.



Further ceremonies were held by Surrey County Council, Guildford Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Runnymede Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council, Woking Borough Council and Farnham Town Council.

Armed Forces week celebrations continued with a daily themed social media campaign which encouraged residents to share photos of the loved ones who are serving or who have served. Reserves Day was celebrated by the release of a video by Surrey County Council recognising the valuable skills that our reservists bring to civilian employment. This was particularly relevant during the fight against Covid-19, where a number of the Surrey reservists either were deployed or used their skills in re-deployed roles within the multi-agency approach to deal with the pandemic.

The week culminated on Armed Forces Day with a speech issued on social media by the Lord-Lieutenant thanking the Armed Forces for all they do, both at home and abroad, which included a collage of the photos that were shared during the week on social media. That evening Guildford Cathedral was illuminated with the Armed Forces Flag covering the whole of it.

VJ Day 75

Saturday 15 August 2020 marked the 75th Anniversary of VJ Day (Victory over Japan) commemorating the end of the Second World War. The huge magnitude of the war in the Far East is often overlooked and the price of victory was enormous. To mark the day Colonel Patrick Crowley DL shared his [insights on VJ Day](#) via a video on social media which highlighted the role of 2nd Battalion East Surrey Regiment. The Surrey History Centre brought together stories, images and artefacts relating to VJ Day on their webpage [WWII - Britain's Forgotten Army](#). These included images of some of the celebrations that took place in Surrey in 1945 and also stories and documents relating to those held in the notoriously brutal POW camps.



Many of the bigger plans for marking VJ Day had to be postponed, however some were still able to take place. Guildford Cathedral held a social distanced VJ75 Day service at which Colonel Patrick Crowley gave an address, which was streamed online. Other examples of

local celebration included Epsom and Ewell where 24 goodie bags and afternoon tea style treats donated by Sainsbury's and Waitrose were delivered to veterans, and in Spelthorne where yellow daisies were planted and a video was released featuring a local Army Cadet and a local resident who is the former president of the North Surrey Branch of the Burma Star Association and a WW2 Veteran.

Many residents came together in spirit at 11am, joining people across the nation for two-minute silence to remember the sacrifices of those who gave so much on our behalf.

Remembrance Sunday

Due to the second national lockdown, it was not possible to hold communal services of Remembrance inside places of worship, but many services were streamed online including the one at Guildford Cathedral. Outdoors services at war memorials and local cenotaphs were permitted where strict social distancing rules were observed and a number of these were held across the county including one run by Farnham Town Council at Gostrey Meadow. Representatives from ATC(P) also attended smaller Remembrance Services in Woking, Guildford, Bisley, Knaphill and Pirbright.



All Surrey residents were encouraged to take part in the two-minute silence on their doorstep, or inside their homes, as a mark of remembrance at 11am on Sunday 8 November (Remembrance Sunday) and Wednesday 11 November (Armistice Day).

In order to show our thanks to our war heroes, some of Surrey's key workers – our modern day heroes – showed their thanks through a [video](#) streamed online which saw key workers recite out a poem thanking those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.



Surrey Employer Recognition Scheme Awards

Organisation	Year	Award	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Ashford and St Peter's NHS Foundation Trust	2019	Silver			
Automatic Data Processing Ltd (ADP)	2020	Gold			
BAM Nuttall	2020	Silver			
Capgemini UK PLC	2020	Silver			
CGI IT UK Ltd	2019	Gold			
Combat Stress	R2020	Silver			
Compass Group	2018	Gold			
Crest Nicholson Plc	2019	Silver			
CSH Surrey	2019	Silver			
CVQO Ltd	R2020	Silver			
Drumgrange Ltd	2017	Silver			
Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust	2018	Silver			
ISS Facility Services	R2020	Gold			
Jankel Armouring Ltd	2016	Silver			
JTI UK	2019	Silver			
KBR Ltd	2019	Gold			
Made to Measure Mentoring Ltd	2020	Silver			
NSC	2017	Silver			
Paratus Limited	2017	Silver			
Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust	2018	Gold			
Southern Gas Networks Plc (SGN)	2018	Gold			
Siemens PLC	2017	Silver			
Surrey County Council	2016	Gold			
Wates Construction Ltd	R2020	Silver			
Woking Borough Council	2020	Gold			
AFC Total: 87			56	16	9

Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board Members

Peter Martin (Chairman) Surrey County Council

Brigadier Paul Evans OBE DL Chairman of Recognise and Remember Task Group

Mr Michael More-Molyneux HM Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey

Colonel John Baynham OBE Deputy Commander, 11 Infantry Brigade and HQ SE

Colonel Patrick Crowley DL South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association

Lt-Col Shamus Kelly Commanding Officer, Army Training Centre (Pirbright)

Major Richard Watkins 1st Battalion Irish Guards

Debbie Goldsmith Army Training Centre (Pirbright)

Mr David Munro Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey

Steve Owen-Hughes Chief Fire Officer, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service

Jim France Royal British Legion

Sqn Ldr Bryan Jones SSAFA Surrey
Anthony Shipley Surrey Heartlands
Cllr Tom Gracey Surrey Leaders Representative
James Whiteman Surrey Chief Executives' Representative
Reverend Roland Olliff Diocese of Guildford
Louise Punter Surrey Chambers of Commerce
John Kingsbury Veteran's Representative
Canon Peter Bruinvels CC Surrey County Council Civilian-Military Liaison Adviser

Supported by officers from Surrey County Council
For further information please contact: armedforces@surreycc.gov.uk

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