

**Armed Forces and Veterans Champion Update**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report will provide an update on:-

- (a) The work of the WW1 Commemoration Steering Group, highlighting the upcoming events taking place across the Council area in commemoration of the first World War.
- (b) The work of the Armed Forces Community Covenant and the Argyll and Bute Armed Forces and Communities Partnership; and
- (c) The work of the Armed Forces and Veterans Champion for Argyll and Bute, Councillor Maurice Corry.

Recommendations:-

The Council is asked to:-

- (1) Note the contents of the report and the updates provided; and
- (2) Agree to support the upcoming events in relation to the First World War commemorations, including the national event due to take place on Islay in 2018.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 This report provides an update on the work of the Armed Forces Champion and includes reference to the WW1 Commemorations taking place between 2014 and 2018, the work of the Armed Forces Community Covenant and the Argyll and Bute Armed Forces and Communities Partnership.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Council is asked to:-

(1) Note the contents of the report and the updates provided; and

(2) Agree in principle to support the upcoming events in relation to the First World War commemorations, including the national event due to take place on Islay in 2018.

**4.0 DETAIL**

**4.1 First World War Commemorations**

4.1.1 The Council agreed to set up a Steering Group to oversee the commemorations of the First World War during the period from 2014 to 2018. The Steering Group is currently chaired by Patrick Stewart, the Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute, and membership includes Councillor Corry and Elected Members from each local area, officers of the Council and volunteers across the Council area.

4.1.2 The first event organised as part of the commemorations was held in Oban on 20 September 2014 and involved military veterans, serving members of the armed forces, the cadets and representatives from community organisations. A parade of remembrance marched through the town and a service of commemoration took place at the Corran Halls. The event organisation was assisted greatly by Oban Community Council, and funding to cover costs was secured from the Oban Common Good Fund, the McQueen Trust and the Bids Group. Help in kind was also provided and the Council provided a range of support to assist with the event.

#### 4.1.3 Other events planned are as follows:-

##### **Battle of Loos commemoration – 26 September 2015**

This event will take place in Campbeltown, and will consist of an exhibition in the Victoria Halls and will also involve a parade through the town by local uniformed groups. Local schools are also involved in the event. Organisation of the event has been taken forward by a Sub Group of the WW1 commemoration Steering Group which is chaired by Patrick Stewart and also has input from local people and Ward 1 Councillor Rory Colville.

##### **Battle of Jutland commemoration – Helensburgh 30 May 2016**

This event will be held in Helensburgh on 30 May 2016. The WW1 Steering Group have agreed that a Sub Group to be chaired by the Chairman of the Royal British Legion (Helensburgh) be formed to deal with arrangements in the local area. This event will be a joint event organised with input from the Royal Navy.

##### **Horse event – Inveraray 2 July 2016**

This event will commemorate the Home Front and the effort made by local estates and families during the war and will take place in Inveraray. Detail for the event has still to be finalised, but arrangements are being co-ordinated by Patrick Stewart with input from Liz McNab.

##### **Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders event – Dunoon 2017**

Arrangements for this event are at a very early stage. The event will be held during the summer of 2017 and will take place in Dunoon. The WW1 Steering Group will take this forward.

##### **National Commemoration, SS Tuscania and HMS Otranto – Islay 2018**

This event will take place on Islay in 2018, and is being organised by the Scottish WW1 Commemoration Panel. The event will be significant as it will be one of the last to take place in Scotland during the commemorations. It will be organised at Scottish Government level, and will have input from the Royal Navy and the US Navy. The Chair of the WW1 Steering Group is liaising with Norman Drummond, Chair of the National Panel regarding the event. The Council has also been contacted directly and propose to respond in a positive way to the initiative.

It is anticipated that there will be a high level of interest in the event from both the UK and also from the US, presenting an ideal opportunity for the Council to showcase the area and all that it has to offer. There will likely be high levels of visitors to the area for the event, and it would be beneficial for planning to start at an early stage.

##### **Victoria Cross recipients – 2017/18**

There are 3 Victoria Cross recipients from WW1 from the Argyll and Bute Council area. It is proposed that a commemorative paving stone is installed in each of the 3 recipient's local areas (Cardross, Innellan and Portnahaven). The Area Committees will discuss local arrangements and work is ongoing to identify relatives of the recipients.

#### 4.1.4 Work undertaken by the library service

The library service have been involved in a number of projects:-

##### **World War I – Library activities**

The library Service has committed to curating one touring exhibition per year over the Great War commemoration period. Themes are as follows:

2014 - ***Healing Hands on the Home Front*** : the work of local auxiliary hospitals. 2014 marked the centenary of the opening of Hermitage House, Helensburgh and Mount Stuart, Bute. This exhibition is concluding its tour this year.

2015 - ***Bedford, Battalions and Brave Battles*** : a history of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, including their training at Bedford prior to going to war in 1915

2016 - **Local stories and connections** [title to be devised] – a collection of WWI material obtained so far from local individuals and communities

2017 - ***Keep the Home Fires Burning*** [working title] – the Home Front and daily life during wartime

2018 - **The War at Sea** [title to be devised] – exhibition will include information about the sinking of the Otranto and Tuscania in 1918

These exhibitions all tour our main libraries, spending about a month in each one.

In 2015 and 2016 the library service will be holding **WWI Roadshows** in 6 libraries, giving an opportunity for people to bring artefacts, photos and documents to be scanned or photographed and experts from the Scotland's War team (see below) will be on hand to give information about objects that are brought in.

[Helensburgh – 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> Aug 2015 ; Rothesay – 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Sept 2015 ;  
Campbeltown – 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> Sept 2015 ; Lochgilphead – 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015 ;  
Dunoon and Oban tbc in 2016]

Over the centenary period the library service will be contributing to the national website, ***Scotland's War***. Each participating local authority has its own page on the website and information can be added under various themes. By 2018 it is hoped to have a comprehensive overview of the contribution Scotland made to the war effort as well as commemorating the sacrifice made by local people.

The library service is also collating information about all the **war memorials** and **rolls of honour** in Argyll and Bute. By the end of 2018 we hope to have a complete record of all servicemen and servicewomen listed on these memorials along with any background information that can be obtained (e.g. place of death/burial, family history, photograph, obituary). Some of this recording has been undertaken by local history and community groups who

have produced some excellent booklets about local memorials and we are indebted to the volunteers who have taken on this task. We now have to fill in the gaps where no research has been done and bring everything together to make the information more accessible.

## **4.2 Armed Forces Community Covenant**

4.2.1 The last year (14/15) has been a successful one for Argyll & Bute with sixteen applications for funding being screened by the local AFC board co-chaired by Councillor Corry and Commander Ian Riches OBE RN (Base Executive Officer). Of the sixteen applications, twelve were considered to meet the criteria of the Covenant and were strongly supported and nine were granted funding by the Scottish Regional panel sitting in Stirling. A breakdown of the grants awarded since 2012 is provided as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.2.2 This has resulted in £381,733 being disbursed throughout Argyll & Bute. It is true to say that the standard of the compilation of the bids has risen considerably, partly due to the skills of the individual but in the main the excellent coaching and mentoring provided by Morevain Martin at AVA. It is pleasing to see the variety of the bids and more often than not it is the simple, low cost ones that give the most pleasure when they succeed in gaining funding as there is invariably so much gain for so little outlay. The administrative support provided to the chairs by the council is invaluable and both chairs would like to record their gratitude for this and the use of the Victoria Halls for the meetings.

4.2.3 The Armed Forces Community Covenant awards scheme will continue from 2015, but the details of this have not yet been published.

## **4.3 Argyll & Bute Armed Forces and Communities Partnership**

4.3.1 In parallel with the Covenant Grant Scheme, the Argyll & Bute Armed Forces and Communities Partnership met for the first time in March this year, Councillor Corry is also a key member of this group. This organisation brings together the experts in housing, education, jobs, health, social care and education to ensure that the service person or veteran and their families are not disadvantaged in anyway.

4.3.2 The inaugural meeting was a success with many different agencies exchanging ideas and information. From an educational perspective it was encouraging that the Royal Caledonian Education Trust attended and are now actively engaging with local schools to help support service children. The meeting started with a presentation of the role of Erskine Hospital through its history, the present day and the future. The next meeting will be held in Helensburgh in early September, but for the future it is suggested that as these meetings are about the whole of Argyll & Bute that future meetings should be held in other regional centres with local reps from all of the agencies supporting.

#### **4.4 Support for Schools Funding Support**

4.4.1 Argyll and Bute Council continues to benefit from MOD Support Fund for State Schools with Service Children. Money has been allocated in 2014/15 as a result of successful bids from the Education Service.

#### **4.5 Argyll and Bute Welcome and Information Packs**

4.5.1 The first edition of these packs has been very well received by civilian and armed forces personnel in Argyll and Bute including those who have families in London, Portsmouth and Devonport.

4.5.2 Building on this success, the second edition is being drafted by Argyll and Bute Council and the Royal Navy for publication in the near future. This project is co-funded in a similar way to that of the first edition.

#### **4.6 Armed Forces and Veterans Champion**

4.6.1 The Armed Forces and Veterans Champion has undertaken a number of activities, these include:-

- Has been instrumental in achieving the formation of the Argyll and Bute Armed Forces Community Covenant Grants Board;
- Involved with the setup of the Argyll and Bute Armed Forces and Communities Partnership;
- Is a key member of the World War One Commemoration Steering Group;
- Has worked to facilitate the linking and integration of the civilian and military communities across Argyll and Bute;
- Provided support for service personnel and families in the community;
- Provided support for our veterans and their families;
- Championing the rights of individual veteran and armed forces families, which has seen the introduction of better communication and signposting to relevant Council and NHS Services;
- Liaised with primary and secondary schools in relation to the support of the children of military personnel and veterans.

4.6.2 Councillor Corry as part of his remit is also involved in liaising with many different organisations, such as the Royal British Legion, Veterans Scotland, Veterans Housing, SSAFA, Erskine, Scottish Submarine Trust and Argyll and Bute Council Social Work.

4.6.3 Other Groups attended by the Armed Forces and Veterans Champion:-

- Cross Party Group on Veterans along with other Council Champions to feed information and raise veteran issues with the Scottish Government;
- Liaison meetings with the MOD in Whitehall around the Community Covenant and has helped to maintain the proactive profile of Argyll and Bute Council;

- Continued attendance at the Tri lateral meetings at HMNB Clyde (Faslane) with senior Council staff from Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire and the Royal Navy to continue the preparation and planning around the maritime change programme and other areas of potential joint work and associated liaison issues.

4.6.4 Argyll and Bute Council is recognised as the foremost Local Authority in the United Kingdom in regards to the implementation of the Armed Forces Community Covenant since 2012.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

5.1 This report updates on the work of the Armed Forces and Veterans Champion, and highlights the range of activities that he has been involved with, bringing benefit to many areas across Argyll and Bute and continuing to provide a high profile to the approach taken by the Council in relation to the administration of the Armed Forces and Community Covenant. It also details the ongoing programme of commemoration of WW1 and the efforts made to bring events to all parts of the Council area

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Policy - none

6.2 Financial - support from the Provost's Fund for one Civic event each year may be required. Support may also be required from the Council in relation to the event in 2018 on Islay once more details are known.

6.3 Legal - none

6.4 HR – none

6.5 Equalities - none

6.6 Risk - none

6.7 Customer Service - none

**Executive Director of Customer Services – Douglas Hendry**  
**Armed Forces and Veterans Champion – Councillor Maurice Corry**  
 17 June 2015

**For further information contact:** Shona Barton, Area Committee Manager (01436) 657605

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – List of Community Covenant Grants awarded

## Appendix 1 – Grants awarded by the Armed Forces Community Covenant

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Gareloch Riding for the Disabled Association</b>	<b>Mrs Kate Bennett Chairperson</b>	July 2013	£10,000
<b>Scottish Submarine Centre Trust</b>	<b>Brian Keating Chairperson</b>	July 2013	£200,000
<b>Rhu Gala Equipment Bank</b>		December 2013	£5,000
<b>Campbeltown Heritage Centre</b>	<b>Alan Milstead Chairperson</b>	May 2014	£20,200
<b>Helensburgh Play Park Association</b>	<b>Emer Flett Secretary</b>	May 2014	£26,000
<b>Helensburgh and Lomond Young Carers Initiative</b>	<b>April Walker Young Carers Development Co-ordinator</b>	September 2014	£10,000
<b>Cove and Kilcreggan Youth Cafe</b>	<b>Susan Will, Chairperson</b>	January 2015	£30,000
<b>Cardross Primary School Association</b>	<b>Bob Seaward Chairperson</b>	January 2015	£3,610
<b>Helensburgh and Lomond Carers SCIO</b>	<b>Eileen McCrory Manager Helensburgh &amp; Lomond Carers</b>	January 2015	£6,500
<b>Craigrownie Park</b>	<b>Veronica Ferguson - Chairperson</b>	January 2015	£48,043
<b>Campeltown Sea Cadets</b>	<b>Donnie Cameron – Commanding Officer</b>	January 2015	£22,380
<b>Total</b>			<b>£381,733</b>