

Commemoration of World War One

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 National commemoration of World War One has been ongoing since 2014 and will continue to 2018. Within Argyll and Bute, the World War One Commemoration Steering Group has coordinated local commemoration events and taken a role in promoting knowledge and understanding of the First World War. The Group has promoted local and community engagement with its work through the inclusion of representatives of community groups and local elected members on the Group, and by the establishment of local Sub-Groups which have each been tasked with delivering one of a series of annual commemoration events with particular local and historical significance.
- 1.2 The Council has entered into a UK Government-led scheme to lay a commemorative paving stone for each recipient of the Victoria Cross medal for valour awarded for action during the First World War. Within the Argyll and Bute area there are four paving stones to be laid to mark the centenary of awards made in 1917 and 1918.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Argyll and Bute World War One Commemoration Steering Group was formed to develop a commemoration programme to mark the centenary of the First World War for the Argyll and Bute area. The Group is made up of elected members nominated by Area Committees, representatives of community councils, representatives of community groups and organisers of individual commemoration events. The Group is overseeing a programme of commemoration events marking each year of the First World War, sited across the authority area and having particular regard to elements of the armed forces or community impacted by World War One in the Argyll and Bute Area. The Group has also monitored progress towards laying a commemorative paving stone to mark the awards of the Victoria Cross to four individuals either from or with particular links to Argyll and Bute.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Area Committee is asked to note the work of the World War One Commemoration Steering Group.
- 3.2 The Area Committee is asked to note the Council's involvement in the project to lay a commemorative paving stone for each recipient of a Victoria Cross for action during World War One.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The Council, receiving a report from the Armed Forces Champion, at its meeting on 29th August 2013 noted a proposal for the establishment of a World War One Commemoration Steering Group to be led by the Royal British Legion, and the proposed development of a 4-year commemoration project, which would mark the centenary of the First World War. It was envisaged that the Group would encourage investigation and commemoration of the impact of the First World War on communities, and that the Group would support work along with the Scottish National War Memorial to compile and publish the names of those listed on local community war memorials.
- 4.2 Membership of the Group was initially proposed as representatives of the Council, being the Provost and a representative of each of the Council's administrative areas, representatives of each of the five branches of the Royal British Legion in

Argyll and Bute, representatives of each branch of the military as well as cadet forces, and representatives of 7 SCOTS, formerly the 51st Highlanders, and 5 SCOTS, formerly the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, both of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. Council agreed in August 2013 to delegate local area nominations to the relevant Area Committees.

- 4.3 Elected member membership of the Steering Group comprises Cllrs Corry, McCuish, MacMillan and McQueen, nominated from each of the Council's four Area Committees. Councillor Robertson is also engaged with the Group in her role with the Scottish National War Memorial.
- 4.4 The Lord Lieutenant of Argyll and Bute, Patrick Stewart, acts as Chairman of the Steering Group, and is supported by Cllr Corry acting as Vice Chairman.
- 4.5 The membership of the Steering Group has been populated throughout the life of the Group by representatives of local groups, community councils, and individuals and organisations who have brought particular skills, experience and knowledge to the Group which has complemented its ability carry out its function. This has included persons local to areas where particular commemorations have taken place locally, for example a particular focus on Oban-area membership during the planning of the commemoration event which took place in Oban in September 2014, and has most recently included the addition of Ms Ann Galliard, of Dunoon, who is leading the preparations for the commemoration event intended to take place in Dunoon in 2017, and Ms Jenni Minto, of Islay, who is leading on preparations for the commemoration event planned for November 2018 to take place on Islay.
- 4.6 Council administrative support has been provided by the Libraries team within Community and Culture, and by Governance and Law. Officers from the Libraries team have undertaken significant work in researching the involvements of people from the Argyll and Bute area in the First World War, and in assisting individuals to learn more and to understand more of their family or community involvement in the War, particularly through the organisation of a series of Roadshow events held in Argyll and Bute libraries at which Dr. Yvonne McEwan of Edinburgh University, and Project Director of Scotland's War 1914-1919, gave talks for attendees on Scotland's role in the War and facilitated 'drop-in' sessions for individuals to receive information on family stories, artefacts and photos. Governance and Law have facilitated meetings of the Steering Group, monitored the membership of the Group to ensure engagement, facilitated civic elements of commemoration events, and have developed and maintained contact with family members or other individuals who have knowledge of recipients of Victoria Crosses.
- 4.7 The Council has signed up to a UK Government programme to lay a commemorative paving stone to mark the centenary of the award of each Victoria Cross issued for action during the First World War. Argyll and Bute Council will lay four commemorative paving stones, in commemoration of Sir John Reginald Noble Graham, Cardross, awarded the Victoria Cross on 22nd April 1917, David Lowe MacIntyre, Portnahaven, awarded the VC for action 24th-27th August 1918, George Henry Tatham Paton, Innellan, awarded the VC 1st December 1917, and

Colonel George de Cardonnel Elmsall Findlay, Cardross, awarded the VC 4th November 1918.

- 4.8 Each commemorative paving stone is 600mm x 600mm, will bear the name on the individual, their rank and regiment at time of award, and the date of the action for which the VC was awarded, and each is to be laid in a place which would have resonance for the individual recipient, for example outside a house in which they lived or a school they attended, with regard to the importance of the stones being part of the community and so being site in a place where they can be seen by members of the public. The programme will result in commemorative paving stones being laid across the country, and an interactive online map will allow interested persons to identify the location of each stone and uncover information about the recipient.
- 4.9 It is intended that a Council laying a stone marks the event in a reflective and respectful manner, which is inclusive in order to represent the shared history and bring this to a wider audience. The Steering Group have sought to communicate with descendants and family members of recipients, as well as the wider community, to identify suitable locations for the laying of paving stones which will enable access and serve as an appropriate memorial to the recipient. Having received significant information regarding Colonel George de Cardonnel Elmsall Findlay the Group has been able to identify a suitable location to site a commemorative paving stone near a family home of the recipient, and it is hoped that through communication with family and communities associated with the other recipients, similarly suitable locations can be identified for the other stones.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This report sets out the arrangements for the Argyll and Bute World War One Commemoration Steering Group and advises members of the work which the Group has undertaken in promoting awareness and understanding of the First World War, including the organizing of local commemorative events. The report sets out the intended further work of the Group in the coming years and advises of the role played by the Group in the UK Government's programme to lay a commemorative paving stone for each recipient of a Victoria Cross for action during the First World War.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy - none
- 6.2 Financial – none
- 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

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APPENDICES – N/A