

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 17 MAY 2016
title: 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: OLWEN HEAP

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform committee of plans to work with Lancashire County Council on an event to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – The Council's sustainable Community Strategy includes education as one of our core areas for working with partners. Through partnership with LCC we will use this project to enhance the education of Ribble Valley children.
- Corporate Priorities – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley. Although this project does not contribute directly to the local economy it is intended to help people reflect on what made the community into what it is today and to reinforce commitment to the protection of values and freedoms.
- Other Considerations – In its role of community leadership the Council can help provide a focus for Ribble Valley residents to remember and respect those who gave their lives for their country.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 As a continuation of the memorial activities that have taken place since 2014 for the start of World War 1 it is the intention to mark the 100th anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Somme.

2.2 Lancashire County Council have requested that Ribble Valley Borough Council work together with them and an artist on a project to be held in the Castle grounds on Friday 1 July 2016.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The project is entitled Lost Generations, and the artist is Andy Farr.

3.2 A plinth is to be erected in the memorial garden alongside the unknown soldier where members of the public can take a turn in standing on the plinth for a period of 2 minutes in the same pose as the soldier. The Ribble Valley Mayor has been invited to be the first participant at 7.00am. It is envisaged the event will run until twilight dependent in the interest shown in taking part. A film/time lapse piece will be made of the vigil.

3.3 There will be an exhibition in the Stewards Gallery from the end of October until the end of January 2017. Pieces of art completed as a result of the vigil will be included in this exhibition.

3.4 Lancashire County Council will be working with local high schools and youth groups to help them gain an understanding and appreciation of memorialisation. Local British Legion representatives will also be included.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – Lancashire County Council are paying for the artist and plinth construction. Ribble Valley staff will give support in kind and the Communications Officer will help with the publicity of the event.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – Risk assessments will be carried out and participants will be asked to sign a disclaimer.
- Political – None. Commemoration of the sacrifice made by soldiers of Lancashire at the Battle of the Somme is not seen as being politically sensitive.
- Reputation – Residents of Ribble Valley have repeatedly demonstrated popular support for commemorative events. It is expected that the same support will be shown for this event.
- Equality & Diversity – access to the event will be open to all.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Through the Community Services committee the Council is working together with Lancashire County Council on the Lost Generations project, in order to give individuals the chance to pay their respects to those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and to help a new generation of school children to understand and appreciate why we will not forget.

OLWEN HEAP
ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

For further information please ask for Olwen Heap, extension 4408

REF: OMH/community services/170516