

CLOA Case Studies – First World War

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper shares examples about how councils are involving communities and working with partners to plan for local commemorations to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014.

Recommendation

Members are invited to note the report.

Actions

To be taken forward by officers as directed by members.

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Hyndburn Borough Council

Hyndburn Borough Council's First World War centenary plans are centred on the Accrington Pals Battalion.

Planned activities include an exhibition at Haworth Art Gallery, planting poppies across the Borough, a commemoration service at St John's Church in February 2014 and a Centenary Concert and Pals March in September 2014. Other plans involve an Accrington Pals commemorative beer and updating the Borough's boundary signs to say, 'Welcome to Hyndburn – home of the Accrington Pals.'

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, the Council is planning a maroon flare in Accrington and books of honour, presentations and wreaths at the Accrington Pals memorial in France.

Further community activities are also planned in Hyndburn to coincide with the programme of national commemorations, the first of which will be the Duke of Lancaster's Freedom Parade in July 2014 which the council is working to organise.

Staffordshire County Council

As part of the county's preparation for the commemoration of the Great War, Staffordshire Archives and Heritage want to explore whether the home front has the potential to engage new audiences in the centenary commemorations and in researching their own community's experience of the war. The council has reviewed its collections and undertaken primary research within the collections of Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Archive Service, Keele University, libraries and museums in Staffordshire, and the National Archive. Research was also carried out into newspaper records in New Zealand.

A 'Staffordshire Great War' website has been created to offer information and support to partners and individuals in Staffordshire or who wish to visit the county as part of the commemorations (www.staffordshiregreatwar.com)

A range of resources were developed to help engage communities in the commemorations, including an updated book about the extensive training camps that existed on Cannock Chase between 1915 and 1919. The book explores the construction and use of these camps and also looks at the men and women who lived and trained on Cannock Chase and the effect the camps had on the wider locality. The council is also producing a 'Researching Your Staffordshire War Memorial' guide which will be free to all members of the public.

Staffordshire Archives and Heritage has also supported Keele University's bid to become a co-ordinating Centre for Community Engagement in the Centenary of the First World War. The theme of the centre was developed with SA&H, being 'Everyday Life on the First World War Home Front'. If successful it will stimulate a range of dialogues between scholars, community groups and the heritage bodies to co-produce new research and creative responses to the First World War home front.

Broxbourne Borough Council

Broxbourne council currently has 18 projects planned for 2014-2018. Below are a selection of just some of the projects which aim to engage local communities and residents:

Poetry Competition themed "War and Peace"

All members of the community of all ages will be invited to take part in a poetry competition which will run from January to April 2014.

Performances of Private Peaceful and War Horse at Broxbourne Civic Hall (BCH)

As part of the agreement with the National Theatre, BCH is screening performances of Private Peaceful and War Horse in February 2014.

Mayoral Debate for young people

The annual Mayoral debate for the borough's secondary school pupils will be held in April 2014. The schools will be asked to debate 'Can war ever be justified?'

Secondary Schools Photographic Competition

This will be linked to the First World commemorations by using the theme "War and Peace" and will be run in conjunction with Paradise Wildlife Park and B3Living.

Let's GO Play: Step Back in Time

This event for children and families will comprise of traditional games and crafts from 1914, accompanied by music and food from that era, run in conjunction with Scouts, Army Cadets, Women's Institute, and Children's Centres. The programme will include: arts and crafts (poppy making, medal making, rings with emblems, poppies on plates, painting, balloon modelling); food (getting children to make jam sandwiches and tasting desserts which were popular in WW1); musical performance (old style music hall songs featuring local cub scouts & guide groups; army cadets (to run an assault course); face painter (for camouflage war wounds); tanks and trenches (model tanks and trenches); vintage clothing (making hats, aprons etc.); inflatable assault course.

Nottinghamshire County Council

The following are a selection of the wide range of projects planned for the centenary in Nottinghamshire:

Trent to Trenches – Nottinghamshire in the Great War

This is a volunteer led partnership project supported by the County Council and Nottingham City Council. An exhibition will be held at Nottingham Castle with touring versions for County venues highlighting from research the impact World War One has had on Nottinghamshire. The project is developing with County Council support

Britain in the Great War, 1914-1918

Events will include period music shows, dancing, cooking and military drill demonstrations, troop manoeuvres, period vehicles, artillery firings and for children a Junior Boot Camp and battle interactives.

World War One – Exhibition

A participatory community project based on one memorial chosen for each district and linked with the Big Draw. Family memories will be linked with photographs and artefacts. Artworks created would then be displayed at Rufford Gallery and local libraries.

War Poetry at The Southwell Poetry Festival

Sessions in libraries around the county on war poetry and writing workshops. There would also be sessions on the online Poetry Archive and work with schools.

Turning Back the Pages on Nottinghamshire in World War One

A special pictorial publication utilising photographs, memorabilia and manuscripts from Nottinghamshire Libraries and Archives.

Somerset County Council

Somerset Council's Heritage Service has launched a project called 'Somerset Remembers' to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

The centrepiece of the project will be an exhibition at The Museum of Somerset opening in August 2014, with a touring exhibition visiting other venues across Somerset. A programme of special events at The Museum of Somerset will accompany the exhibition and is expected to include: evening talks; living history day involving military and social history re-enactment groups, and First World War and family history experts; gallery talks featuring objects highlighting particular aspects of Somerset's wartime experience; and sessions for people to bring items they own for scanning and uploading to the community archive.

Activities encouraging community involvement are also being planned in partnership with The Western Front Association. These are expected to include: talks to community groups and organisations; diary and poetry reading sessions using Somerset archives and images; a football match at the First World War memorial playing field; a concert with music that was popular in Somerset during the war years; and a research symposium at the Somerset Heritage Centre.

Somerset Heritage Service also has some research projects that it is recruiting local volunteers for. These projects focus on digitising and publishing Somerset's First World War parish returns; creating an index to a selection of Somerset's wartime newspapers; and researching First World War sources to be included in the exhibition.

Worcester City Council

Worcester City Council is working with a number of partners, to implement the Worcestershire World War 100 project. The main focus of the project is to tell the story of local people through a multi-venue gallery experience which will incorporate people's ephemera and memorabilia. The exhibitions will run throughout the four-year commemoration period but will be rotated and updated during that time.

The exhibitions will examine different aspects of the First World War in Worcester and will use technology, audio-visuals, leaflets and traditional displays. Activities to engage children and youth are expected to include drama, poetry and creative writing.

The project also aims to encourage active involvement from local people by offering opportunities for them to bring their own Great War heritage items and for them to co-curate the exhibition. Additionally, opportunities for participation and engagement exist through web pages, heritage trails and community activities.