

CLOA Case Studies: First World War Commemorations

Purpose of report

For information/ noting.

Summary

At the last CTS Board meeting, Members requested a paper outlining the work councils were undertaking to mark the First World War Commemorations.

This report provides some case studies of activities being undertaken by councils. More examples can be found on the LGA website resource on the First World War: <http://www.local.gov.uk/first-world-war-centenary>

Recommendation

Members are invited to note the report.

Action

Officers to action as appropriate.

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CLOA Case Studies – First World War Commemorations

Case study one: Staffordshire County Council

1. The County Council has had a key role to play in leading the County's World War One commemorations and supporting other organisations to deliver their own projects and activities.
2. The County itself is rich in Great War-related assets including:
 - The National Memorial Arboretum – a national and international centre for commemoration.
 - Allied and German war cemeteries on Cannock Chase.
 - The remains of two large Great War Camps on Cannock Chase which trained over 500,000 men for the trenches from across the United Kingdom and abroad. They are some of the most complete Great War archaeological sites in the country.
 - The Staffordshire Regiment Museum which details the history of Staffordshire's regiments and the crucial role they played throughout the conflict, including a series of 'practice trenches'.
3. To address the Great War commemorations, the Council developed a strategy outlining the work streams and project legacy for 'Staffordshire: Staffordshire Great War Centennial: A Strategy for Commemoration 2014 – 2019'.
4. A cross-service steering group was established to deliver the outcomes and ensure it supports the aims of the County Council. The key themes to drive the work forward were identified as the Military Legacy: Cannock Chase and the Great War Camps, literature and artistic interpretation, memory and the Home Front and the Staffordshire Great War Trail.
5. Much work has already been done to support the aims of the strategy
 - Three conference/network events have been held involving stakeholders from both the community and formal organisations.
 - There has been continuous support for local groups, including steering group attendance at events/exhibitions in venues, such as at Berkswich, Eccleshall and Butterton.
 - A website has been created with information about the main sites to visit, what's on events, news, a research blog strand and resources for community groups.
 - A Facebook, Twitter and Flickr feed has been established.

6. There has been grant success (£37,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund) for research work to be carried out on a rare collection of tribunal records held by Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent archive service. (The project – 'Staffordshire Appeals: Opening access to Staffordshire's Great War Local Military and Appeal Tribunals' – involves tribunals against conscription, including stories of a conscientious objector and baker deemed essential to food provision. Around 15,000 records will be made freely accessible online.)
7. Further grant funding has been achieved (£20,000 from the Arts Council) for a new touring exhibition called 'Resonance: Reflections on the Great War' through artworks inspired by Staffordshire collections. (Ceramicist and printmaker Stephen Dixon will be producing new ceramic work inspired by objects, photographs and documents relating to the First World War from archive and museum collections in Staffordshire. Stephen's work explores our responses to the Great War a hundred years on. Funded through Arts Council England's Grants for the Arts scheme this exhibition will tour Staffordshire's museums, evolving at each new venue.)
8. To find out more about Staffordshire's Great War projects, visit the website: www.staffordshiregreatwar.com

Case study two: Kirklees Council

9. Kirklees Council realised that residents would want to commemorate the First World War centenary, and looked at ways in which they could support projects and activities.
10. Subsequently, a 'Lest We Forget' Network group was formed. Local history groups, civic societies, community groups, The Royal British Legion, churches, universities/Colleges, elected members and interested individuals were invited to contribute.
11. More than 130 people attended the initial two meetings which were held at Huddersfield and Dewsbury Town Halls. These meetings inspired groups to think of ways they could commemorate the Great War in their own communities, allow them to share ideas and research, avoid duplication, form partnerships and learn how the local council could support their plans.
12. At each network meeting, representatives from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) have given presentations about the funding available for First World War projects. HLF have endorsed the network meetings as being extremely useful in encouraging groups to apply for funding.
13. Presentations have also been given on war memorials, archives and family history research. A variety of projects have also been completed, while many more are being planned to take place throughout the anniversary years. These include:
 - exhibitions displayed in museums, libraries, community halls and churches
 - books

- WWI town centre trails
 - music performances
 - poppy seed planting
 - talks and lectures.
14. Kirklees Council plans to continue with the network meetings throughout 2014-18, which will not only encourage new projects but will also allow those who have completed a project to share their experiences.
15. Kirklees Council has set up a specific webpage which provides information about local activities, exhibitions and projects, links to resources and other related webpages. The webpage also allows groups to upload their own events in order to promote them to a larger audience – and will soon have the capacity for them to upload projects that may need volunteers, partners or local research information and so on. The network also provides the press and public with a centralised point from which to gain information.
16. Further information on Kirklees' 'Lest we forget' website <http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/leisure/LestWeForget/index.aspx>

Case Study three: Basingstoke and Deane Council

17. The names on War memorials across the borough have been captured in a memorial booklet. The result of working with town and parish councils in the borough. Basingstoke and Deane's First World War heroes are also being commemorated by the public exhibition of a Roll of Honour drawn up in 1916. A copy of the original is on show at the Willis Museum.
18. More than 1,200 local service men that fought in the Great War are named on the document, which has been digitally enhanced and preserved by Hampshire Records Office in special packaging for future generations to view.
19. The Basingstoke Roll of Honour carries the inscription 'Lest we Forget' Men of the Borough of Basingstoke who served in H M Forces in the European War 1914 to 1919.
20. According to a local historian, Basingstoke, presented the Mayor and Basingstoke Town Council with a Roll of Honour in June 1916, This was a large scroll naming local men who were serving in or who had been serving in the Forces up to that time.

2 December 2014

21. A special Mayor's reception is being held for descendants of those named on war memorials across the borough with a special commemorative service being held at St Michael's Church to mark the centenary of the start of the First World War. The council will also be holding special Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies this year to recognise the significance of the First World War centenary.
22. As part of a national initiative, the council will be laying down commemorative paving stones provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government to commemorate their local Victoria Cross recipients.
23. For more information go to <http://tinyurl.com/pdcgf8y>

Case Study four: Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

24. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council is holding a number of activities and events from music hall sing-a-longs and show-and-tell events, to remembrance events and local history talks.
25. Work is also underway refurbishing the borough's seven war memorials and 207 war graves, to ensure they are in pristine condition for the centenary. Local schools, uniform groups, organisations and residents have stepped forward to take on the task of keeping dedicated graves looking neat and tidy over the coming years, once the refurbishment is complete in the summer.
26. For more information go to <http://tinyurl.com/m4ponae>