

Mayors' Message

I am sure that as the Autumn days grow shorter and the nights continue to draw in thoughts will be turning to how Whittlesey and the surrounding villages will commemorate Remembrance Day this year.

There have been no official Central Government instructions or guidance issued on procedures for Remembrance Day Ceremonies except for arrangements in London at the Cenotaph which will be greatly scaled down this year. At this stage it has been left very much to local authorities to decide on what should take place in their own local areas.

In the Fenland area opinion is divided on how the day should be marked. For instance, in March only five people will parade, and spectators are being asked not to parade but to stand outside their homes at 11.00 on Sunday 8 November.

Nationally, in response to the present Covid 19 crisis, there are areas where spectators are being advised to stay at home and a token wreath is to be laid by a local dignitary.

Whittlesey Town Council discussed this matter at the last Full Council Meeting, and I have met with the Town Clerk and Parade Marshall subsequently to discuss options.

It would be unthinkable to abandon a ceremony of respect for those who have given their lives in conflict whilst in the service of their country but at the same time we have to be mindful of Government guidelines issued during the current Covid 19 pandemic.

Accordingly, it has been decided that a scaled down Ceremony of Remembrance will be held at Whittlesey War Memorial at 2.30 pm on Sunday 8 November 2020 with a limited number of wreaths being laid. These will comprise of a wreath laid by the Deputy Lieutenant, His Honour Neil McKittrick, on behalf of the Queen followed by wreaths laid on behalf of Whittlesey Town Council, Fenland District Council, the Armed Forces and Veterans and the British Legion.

There will be no street parade preceding and no service at St Mary's Church afterwards. There will also be no reception at the Ivy Leaf Club, Whittlesey.

Should any organisation wish to lay a wreath after the official ceremony has concluded they are most welcome to lay their wreaths informally.

There will be Acts of Remembrance attended by representatives of Whittlesey Town Council at Coates and Pondersbridge at 11.00 am and at Turves and Eastrea at 12 noon on the Sunday.

In the interests of the public in general I would ask that as many as possible stay at home and pay their respects by watching the Cenotaph Ceremony on television.

Locally it is to be hoped that Fenland Youth Radio will be able to broadcast the short service at the Whittlesey War Memorial and a visual recording of proceedings undertaken by Robert Windle for distribution on social media later.

I fully realise that these arrangements will not please everyone and some will be extremely disappointed. The decisions are not taken lightly but with the best interests of everyone in mind during these unprecedented times.

A short Act of Remembrance will be held as usual at Whittlesey War Memorial on Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 11.00 am.

These are the arrangements as they stand at present and may change according to how the present Covid 19 related situation progresses.

Cllr David K M Mason
Mayor & Leader
Whittlesey Town Council