

**ANNUAL STATEMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES COUNCILLOR CHAMPION  
2024/25**

**Councillor Graham Jones  
Armed Forces Councillor Champion**

**The Role:**

Underlying all actions is the objective to raise the profile and needs of the Armed Forces community (serving personnel, both regular and reserve, their families, veterans and Cadets), within the Council and the Borough. It will be essential that the Champion is kept informed of all relevant developments through the Surrey Leaders' representatives on the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board and its associated Task Groups, and through the SCC Community Partnerships Team. Close liaison with the Armed Forces Covenant Officer, with particular reference to the Council's actions undertaken through the Armed Forces Covenant and the Community Covenant. Close liaison with the Executive Office on all ceremonial Armed Forces matters in which the Mayor should be involved. (e.g., ranging from Armed Forces Day flag raising, attendance at local Armed Forces events, to Freedom Marches). The Champion is encouraged to keep the local Member/s of Parliament apprised of the activity within the Borough in relation to the Armed Forces community. To liaise as appropriate with local members of the Armed Forces, in particular the appropriate Task Force Commander (appointed by 11 Infantry Brigade) to assist in understanding where help may be most needed and to enable in return a better understanding within the Armed Forces of the limitations and different responsibilities of Local Government and its decision-making processes. To be the primary focal point for liaison with businesses/local organisations within the Borough to promote the Armed Forces Corporate Covenant and encourage engagement with the Armed Forces, in particular Reservists and Cadets. To support local Cadet units by acting as the key link with the local authority, and to look to provide local ceremonial, remembrance and volunteering opportunities. To sponsor an Annual statement to the Community & Wellbeing Committee detailing the Champion's actions over the past year in respect of the Covenants.

## 2024 FOCUS

### Remembrance Day:

#### Mission:

To continue to support the Royal British Legion (RBL) in the planning and preparation of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Remembrance Parade and act as Parade Marshall.

#### Outcome:

The Parade is now well established and runs efficiently. The parade has grown in terms of community organisations taking part and the crowds attending to watch the parade has grown significantly.

### Veterans Hub

#### Mission:

To continue to support both Rotary and RBL in the running of the Hub.

#### Outcome:

Epsom and Ewell Veterans Hub is now the most successful Hub in Surrey with over 30 Veterans form the tri-service community attending regularly. Charity organisations are now invited to attend the Hub and offer help and advice to Veterans. The Hub also has an Archery Club and a Modelmaking Club. Various away days are organised to take Veterans on days out. In 2024 there have been trips to the Army Museum in London, D-Day Museum in Portsmouth, D-Day beacon lighting, Epsom Downs, a coach tour of London's Christmas Lights and a Christmas lunch in Banstead.

### Military Band Concert

#### Mission:

Produce an annual Military Band Concert at Epsom Playhouse to create awareness of our armed forces and raise funds to support RBL in Epsom and Ewell and the Mayors Charities.

#### Outcome:

The first concert took place on 19 January 2024 and the event was a sellout raising just under £10,000 which was divided between the two charities. The next concert, performed by the Scots Guards Band, will take place on 23 January 2025.

## Armed Forces Covenant Award Scheme

### Mission:

To work towards moving up from the existing Bronze award held by EEBC to the Silver Award.

### Outcome:

A paper was presented to RA Councillors and to the Chief Executive outlining the work that needs to be undertaken to qualify for the Silver Award. RA Group were supportive of the possibility that the work could be undertaken in 2025.

## Form an Armed Forces Advisory Group

### Mission:

To set up an advisory group consisting of Veterans charitable support groups from around the Borough.

### Outcome:

The first meeting took place in November 2024 where it was agreed that the advisory group should meet three times a year. The aim of the group is to discuss best practice, create a complete Borough wide events diary and advise on any political changes that could affect Veterans such as the latest Government policy on Veterans housing.

## 2025 Objectives

To continue to support the Armed Forces and Veterans community in Epsom and Ewell by supporting:

Remembrance Day

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Veterans Hub

The Military Band Concert

Explore requirements to achieve Silver status for the Armed Forces Covenant Awards Scheme.