

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR ARMED FORCES 2019/20

Armed Forces Day Parade

Havering once again took to the streets on Saturday 29 June 2019 as part of the annual national campaign that gives everyone the opportunity to show their support for the men and women of the armed forces past and present.

Among those marching were currently serving troops, veterans and cadets, as well as service families.



Romford Market was at the centre of the day's celebrations as it hosted free family entertainment with a mini fun fair, military hat hunt, and Jeep Jump Jive - a US Army Air Force Jeep playing the swinging sounds of the 1940s.

Armed Forces Covenant

During the period covered by the report (from May 2019 – May 2020), 3 ex-service personnel were housed under the Armed Forces Covenant. Currently there are 6 ex-service personnel on the housing register waiting for a property. They have all been awarded the Community Contribution (CC1) priority in line with the Housing Allocation policy. This is a high priority in recognition of the contribution that they have made to the community through their service

I have spent some time talking to the elderly parents of former British service men and what I discovered in our conversations over a period of weeks is disturbing to say the least.

The parent of one ex-service man, who, after ten years with the colours, found himself homeless, was refused consideration as a former resident by his home Council because of his time in the Forces and was regarded as being outside his Borough.

With this in mind, I will be making the issue a priority in my role as Champion of the Armed Forces for Havering next year. I wish to highlight our sincere desire to help our ex- service men and women with housing needs and to protect them from any system which does not show a Nation's appreciation for the services of our heroes.

Poppy Appeal Launch



In October 2019, Havering's Poppy Appeal was launched at the Town Hall for the first time with the unveiling of a poignant poppy installation created by Havering Council, schools, and local community groups.

I was pleased to join the inauguration of the unique art project, which involved six wire sculptures of soldiers covered in handcrafted poppies, lining the entrance to the Town Hall.

The Poppies used in the installation were created and donated by the Hornchurch Sea Cadets, the Avelon Road Centre, a day centre for adults with learning disabilities and pupils from Redden Court School, Whybridge Infant School, St Alban's School, Parklands Junior School, RJ Mitchell School. Children's centres around the Borough also produced poppies created from recycled plastic bottles, donated by Sapphire Ice & Leisure.

The Council's Events Team, working in partnership with the Havering's Grounds Maintenance Team Staff, organised the installation. Council staff from many other departments also gave up their free time to help weave poppies into the wire soldiers.

Armistice Day Parade and Service

Thousands of local residents and visitors came together to pay their respects to servicemen and women at a series of events across Havering marking Remembrance Sunday.

Around 2,500 people lined Main Road, Romford to see a march organised by the Romford branch of the Royal British Legion and led by the Royal British Legion Band and Corps of Drums Romford. They later congregated in Coronation Gardens for a service attended by the Mayor of Havering, Councillor Michael Deon Burton, who laid a wreath on behalf of the Council's elected Members and staff. Representatives from three different faiths each shared a prayer during the service.

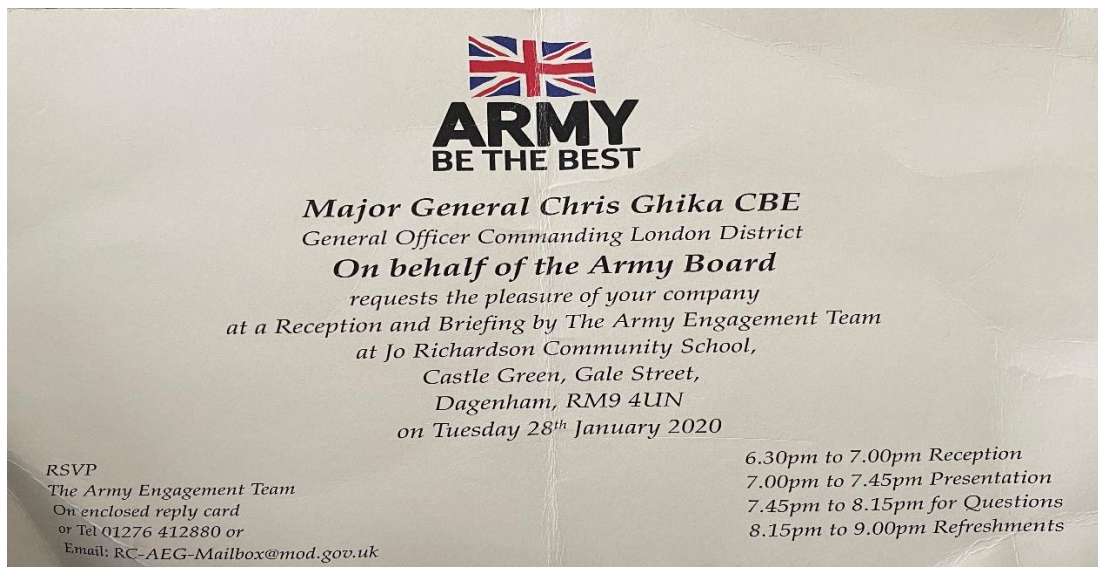
Other towns across the Borough followed suit, with services and parades taking place in Upminster, Hornchurch, Elm Park, Harold Hill, Harold Wood, and Rainham.

On Monday 11 November, a service also took place to mark Armistice Day in Market Place, Romford, highlighting 101 years since the end of the First World War.



Army Engagement Event

In January 2020, I had the honour of being invited to a very interesting and informative event by Major General Chris Ghika. Who would have thought- a humble Sergeant like me getting an invite from a General!



Virtual VE Day Celebrations

The Coronavirus pandemic put paid to the planned street parties that were to mark the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe. However, Havering residents were invited

to celebrate by decorating their homes in red, white and blue and holding events at home. Below, is a photograph of me taking the salute and my house proudly displaying the Union Jack.



Councillor Denis O'Flynn