

# REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY PARADE



**Report Reference** C-24-23  
**Meeting Date** 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
**Agenda Item** 9  
**Prepared by** Town Clerk

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### 1.0 BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO ITEM

A revised running order was employed for the 2024 Remembrance Sunday services. The principal change was for the Remembrance Parade to parade directly to the Centennial War Memorial for the 1045 service instead of parading to St John's Church for a 0930 service.

Following feedback from a member not on the Events Committee, the Town Mayor determined this should be reviewed by Full Council.

#### 1.2 HISTORY OF THE RUNNING ORDER

Unlike a number of comparable communities, the Remembrance Sunday services in Knutsford take place at a number of memorials across the town.

After the First World War, the people of Knutsford agreed that the fitting memorial would be the building and maintenance of a cottage hospital, thus the town's primary war memorial was the Knutsford and District War Memorial Cottage Hospital (opened 1922). Unlike many other communities, Knutsford did not have a central, traditional war memorial/cenotaph dedicated to the fallen of the whole town. The parish of St Cross erected a war memorial (the Cross Town or Over Knutsford War Memorial) dedicated to the fallen of that (parochial) parish in c.1920. In the 1970s, the private statue of Haron Baronian was relocated to the hospital. In 1973 the Airborne Forces Memorial was installed in Tatton Park<sup>1</sup>.

As part of the commemoration of the centenary of the First World War in 2014, the Town Council and Knutsford branch of the Royal British Legion looked to establish a central war memorial for the town by relocating the Haron Baronian statue from the War Memorial Cottage Hospital<sup>2</sup>. The Centennial War Memorial was dedicated in October 2018. The memorial brings together a comprehensive roll of honour to publicly display the names of the fallen in a central and accessible war memorial and focal point for remembrance services.

Until 2018, the format of Remembrance Sunday comprised:

0845 Service at St Cross Church

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<sup>1</sup> Since Tatton did not have a parish council, the Town Council has led the hosting of a service at this location (it is now within the area covered by Rostherne and Millington Parish Council).

<sup>2</sup> This later coincided with the planned sale of the building by the British Red Cross.

0920 Service at Cross Town War Memorial  
1000 Parade to St John's Church  
1045 Service at St John's Church  
1200 Parade back to Drury Lane  
1230 Service at War Memorial Cottage Hospital  
1300 Service at Airborne Forces Memorial

In 2018 a revised format was introduced to incorporate the new war memorial:

0845 Service at St Cross Church  
0920 Service at Cross Town War Memorial  
1000 Parade to St John's Church  
1045 Service at St John's Church  
1145 Parade to Centennial War Memorial  
1200 Service at Centennial War Memorial  
1220 Parade back to Drury Lane  
1245 Service at War Memorial Cottage Hospital  
1340 Service at Airborne Forces Memorial

In 2019, it was decided to make the service at the Centennial War Memorial the focus of the remembrance services by holding the 11am silence there. The new format then became:

0900 Parade to St John's Church  
0930 Service at St John's Church  
1030 Parade to Centennial War Memorial  
1045 Service at Centennial War Memorial  
1120 Parade back to Drury Lane  
1150 Service at Cross Town War Memorial  
1230 Service at War Memorial Cottage Hospital  
1315 Service at Airborne Forces Memorial

There were subsequently changes to the format of the parade due to the challenges of diverting traffic from an arterial road (which is a requirement for any duration of a formal closure, the current road closure uses a "temporary obstruction" process which is limited to 15 minutes) which meant the parade departed from King Street car park to do a full circuit of the town centre and did not reassemble nor parade back to the start.

The War Memorial Cottage Hospital was demolished in 2022.

#### **1.4 CHANGES FOR 2024**

In mid-2024, officers met with the Knutsford Branch of the Royal British Legion and the Knutsford Air Cadets to discuss arrangements for 2024. Arising from this, and previous feedback, an item was tabled at the July Events Committee meeting. The report to committee noted that:

*It is notable that few children attend the 11am service at the Centennial War Memorial which for many is the core focus of Remembrance Sunday. Whilst the parade is well attended by scout groups, many of the children do not go to the church service and so don't participate in the main act of Remembrance. Few veterans attend the church service.*

*There have been some calls for a service to be held at the new memorial garden at Centennial Place (the site of the former hospital). Although, it is noted that this site is not a dedicated war memorial.*

The committee resolved that the parade should parade to the Centennial War Memorial for the main service and that a civic church service should be held before the parade and that the Town Mayor should lay a wreath at the Centennial Place Memorial Garden. Following a meeting with stakeholders, the format for 2024 was agreed as:

- 0845 Service at St John's Church
- 1010 Parade to Centennial War Memorial
- 1045 Service at Centennial War Memorial
- 1145 Service at Cross Town War Memorial
- 1230 Service at Airborne Forces Memorial
- 1315 Town Mayor lays wreath at Centennial Place Memorial Garden

## **2.0 POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Attendees were invited to attend the morning community church service before joining the parade. The majority did not do so, and accordingly the parade not taking attendees to church resulted in a lower attendance at the church service. However, the early morning service at St John's is understood to usually have a lower attendance than the main 1015 service too.

The 2024 parade was very well attended, both by those joining the parade and those watching. The Centennial War Memorial service also had a strong attendance. Some of this will have been due to good weather, but it did appear that the later parade and heading straight to the war memorial had a positive impact on attendance.

## **3.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED**

Council should determine if it wishes to change the format of the Remembrance Sunday programme.