



Agenda Item - 8

Wells City Council

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Presented By (if different)	Haylee Wilkins
Subject	Remembrance Service and Parade
Date of report	24 th July 2025
For consideration at	Civic and Archives Committee
Date of consideration	31 st July 2025

Background

Remembrance Service and Parade sits firmly and proudly within the City Councils Civic Calendar, however, over time amendments have been made for the initial ease of delivery, which may require adjusting.

At one time, the procession would commence at the Town Hall, with Councillors, Clerk and Civic Staff processing down the High Street before taking part on the Church service, and then processing back through the High Street to take the salute at the mid-way High Street platform.

In 2024, the Council did not process from the Town Hall, instead meeting at the Church, robing and inwardly processing before taking part in the remembrance service outside of the church. The procession from the Church to the High Street midpoint took place and then Councillors disbanded from that location, whilst other dignitaries and representatives continued the procession to the Cathedral, and disbanded from that central point.

2024 Learning Points

The robing room within the church is small, and with up to 20 people, it makes for some difficulty in robing at the same time.

If robing at the Church, it then becomes difficult to move through the church to form part of the procession from outside.

There are some logistical challenges of robes, maces and staves being delivered, stored and collected at the church before the event.

Once processing out to the High Street mid-point, there is little in the way of protocol for councillors and staff, other than the Mayor to advise where and how to be placed.

At the end of the salute, councillors disband, with no advisement to the public (no one really knows what is happening).

With WCC disbanding from the central point, they are not included within the wider gathering at the Cathedral.

Proposed Amendments for 2025

1. The Town Clerk proposes that WCC procession commences at the Town Hall, with Councillors robing and processing in the normal manner down the High Street. In order to achieve this, the road closure times would need to be extended slightly and outside spaces staff could support this function to man barriers. This will allow WCC to showcase its involvement, and will instil additional civic pride within the day. This will also allow for the parade to form outside of the church alongside other dignitaries.
2. The Town Clerk to develop a standing protocol and placement to aid councillors at the mid-point salute.
3. Following the salute at the mid-point, the Council to reform and join the end of the procession and move back to the Cathedral. Following which, de-robing can take place at the Town Hall.
4. As both Somerset Light Infantry (now Somerset Rifles) (1956) and HMS Somerset (2004) have had or are due anniversaries of their Freedom of the City honours, the Town Clerk has made enquiries as to their availability to join the parade. HMS Somerset, whilst keen to take part, are not due to be in dock within the UK in November and as such are unlikely to be able to attend, however, Somerset Rifles have expressed an interest. The Town Clerk has made initial enquiries as to the requirements of the event, and specifically, the need for additional police safety checks (as with all military service events), and Avon and Somerset have advised the checks that would be required and the timeline for doing so, being 8 weeks before the event. As such, if Council would like to proceed in both marking their Freedom honour as well as formally inviting to them to this event, then a decision is required to allow the Town Clerk to complete the necessary engagement with other agencies.
5. The Town Clerk would suggest a campaign of information and historical references, via social media and the website, to advise members of the public of the event, its purpose, importance and value, whilst crowds formed, these were considered to be people within the space, or knew to gather at the memorial, the parade wasn't as widely known about. To showcase the event and traditions in this way would, it is felt, increase the appreciation and civic pride within the city.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the feedback from the 2024 event.
2. Review, discuss and form decisions associated with the Clerks recommendations in items 1-5.