



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Godalming to Honour its War Dead

After nearly 100 years Godalming will finally honour all those from the town who fell during 20th century conflicts.

Strange as it might seem, Godalming does not have a central war memorial that honours all those from the town that have died in the service of the country. However, after nearly three years of research, Godalming Town Council's Policy & Management Committee resolved at its meeting of 23 February to finally rectify this omission. The Committee agreed that commemorative plaques naming those from the town who fell during the First World War should to be installed alongside the existing plaques commemorating those who fell during WW2. It also agreed that the names of those who fell in subsequent campaigns during the 20th century should be added so that at last Godalming would have a fitting memorial to commemorate, in one location, all those from the town who fell.

Cllr Stefan Reynolds, the Chairman of the Policy & Management Committee said "Although the war memorial located in the Phillips Memorial Park has been the focus of Godalming's remembrance day since 1921, there is only a simple cross to commemorate those who died in the First World War and it was only decided by the Town Council in 1989, as part of the 50th anniversary commemorations of WW2, to add the names to the wall of the memorial of those who fell during WW2. Therefore I am delighted that we have decided to seek public subscriptions to add the names of the other 282 people who died in the WW1 and subsequent 20th century campaigns."

Cllr David Hunter, Mayor of Godalming added that "The disagreements between various groups during the period 1919 to 1921 meant that Godalming failed to provide what so many of the bereaved families of the fallen wanted; a single memorial to commemorate their loved ones. Finally, 100 years after the end of the First World War, we have the opportunity to fulfil their wishes. I would like to call on our community who lost relatives during the Great War or just have a sense of history to help us to provide both a fitting memorial and the means to ensure that it remains a focus of our remembrance for another 100 years by donating to the Godalming War Memorial Fund. The fund has been founded by the generous support of the Caudle Memorial Trust."

Mrs Zadie Caudle, widow of the late Peter Caudle said “Although born just a few year after the First World War, my late husband Peter, a lifelong Godhelmian, grew up surrounded by many of the Godalming families who lost fathers and sons during that terrible war. There are now very few of us left who still remember grandfathers who served during the First World War, not that it was called that then, and even fewer left whose fathers served in that war. We are the last generation who have a living memory to link us with those young men who served and died and I know that Peter would be extremely pleased that at long last we will have a fitting memorial to their memory located in the Phillips Memorial Park near his beloved Church Street.”

Anyone who wishes to discover if they have a relative from Godalming who died during the First World War can find out by visiting Godalming Museum and looking at the town’s role of honour, or by viewing it online at www.godalming-jbc.gov.uk/ancestry and going to the WW1 page.

Details on how to donate by online banking to the Godalming War Memorial Fund can be found by visiting www.godalmingtc.gov.uk or you can donate by sending a cheque made payable to Godalming Town Council and sending it to the council at Municipal Buildings, Bridge Street, Godalming. GU7 1HT, please do add your name and address to the back of the cheque and mark it War Memorial Fund.

Ends

In case of query please contact: **Andy Jeffery – Acting Town Clerk**
townclerk@godalming-tc.gov.uk
Release Date: 14 March 2017

Notes to the Editor:

Background of WW1 Memorial

In March 1919, Godalming Borough Council formed a committee of 10 councillors to determine the question of a war memorial. This committee resigned in the October of the same year after its proposals were roundly criticised and rejected at a Public Meeting in the Borough Hall. To resolve the situation, the Council called another Public Meeting and called on those present to form a new committee.

In the meantime, other organisations were quietly commissioning war memorials for those from their own community who fell during the war; the first recorded dedication in January 1920 being at St John’s in Farncombe. Subsequently other memorials were placed at Ss Peter & Paul Godalming, St John’s at Busbridge, The Hugh Price Hughes Memorial Church (later to become the United Church) and the Fire Station.

The new War Memorial Committee requested that the Council release land at Peperharow Meadow adjacent to the waterworks to become a recreation ground as a peace memorial. It is not known why this was rejected but in February 1921 this land was let for use as a sports ground. This was now the second plan to fail, so in October 1920 Cllr Dr Holland put forward a motion to the Council that the Lammas Land opposite the Phillips Memorial Park was purchased by the Council and turned

into a recreation ground with a river swimming bath to be regarded as a permanent public war memorial. Due to his absence from meetings the Council twice adjourned this proposal. The next mention of Cllr Dr Holland was the Council sending condolences to his widow.

A further plan in July 1921 to change the name of the Phillips Memorial Park to Memorial Park was also rejected. Finally, on 11 November 1921 the War Memorial Cross at the Parish Church of Ss Peter & Paul was unveiled.

Subsequent History

In 1989, Godalming Town Council resolved to commemorate the names of those from the town who fell in WW2. This culminated with the unveiling of the WW2 memorial located on the wall beneath the Memorial Cross on Remembrance Sunday 1992.

Centenary Commemoration of the First World War

In 2014, as part of its commitment to the commemoration of the First World War, the council agreed that it would investigate the possibility of adding the names of those who fell in WW1 on the wall of the war memorial adjacent to those from WW2. If the names of those who fell in subsequent campaigns are also added, this would provide a fitting memorial to commemorate, in one location, all those from the town who fell during 20th century conflict.

Whilst it could be possible to install additional memorial plaques to existing WW1 memorials located elsewhere in the town, it is the war memorial in the Phillips Memorial Park which is the focal point of the town's remembrance events.

1914 – 1918 Memorial Plaques

Since August 2014, both Godalming Town Council and Godalming Museum have made the names of those who are recorded as having fallen during WW1 available to the public, both online and in hard copy. A number of articles have featured in local publications and representatives of both organisations have attended public events to publicise the collation of the names. This has resulted in a number of amendments being made to the original list, however, it is now felt that the list of 281 names is as accurate as it is now possible to achieve.

Advice has been taken from both the Historic Buildings Officer of Waverley Borough Council and a local stonemason used by the Godalming Joint Burial Committee on the type of stone and engraving to be used.

The 281 names from WW1 plus those from subsequent campaigns will be distributed over four individual plaques, with two plaques being installed either side of the WW2 memorial. Additionally, the existing information tablet located below the WW2 memorial to be replaced with a new information tablet. The aim would be to dedicate them on Remembrance Day, Sunday 11 November 2018.