

AGENDA 13, Enc ix) Ashington's Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade

The town of Ashington witnessed a significant turnout on Sunday 9th November as hundreds of residents gathered for the annual Remembrance Sunday service and parade, demonstrating the community's enduring commitment to honouring those who served in the armed forces.

Service Overview

The ceremony took place on Sunday, 9 November 2025, at the Ashington Memorial Garden, bringing together residents across generations in a poignant act of remembrance. The event began with a parade assembling on Station Road, which proceeded through the town centre before arriving at the war memorial for the formal service.

Parade and Participants

Under the direction of Parade Marshall John Langan, the procession featured notable participation from local youth organizations, including Reiverdale Scouts, Ashington Girlguiding Division, Ashington Sea Cadets, and Dukes Combined Forces Cadets. The strong representation from young people was particularly noted by organisers as a positive sign of continued engagement with remembrance traditions among the next generation.

The parade route took participants along Station Road West and Kenilworth Road before reaching the memorial site.

The Ceremony

Ashington Churches Together organised the religious elements of the service, with Rev. Sam Lockhead and Fr. Vincent Waiga conducting the proceedings. A four-person Honour Guard from Zulu Company 5 Fusiliers maintained ceremonial watch throughout the service.

Musical accompaniment was provided by the Ashington Colliery Band, with vocal support from the Ashington Community Singers and the Ashington & District Male Voice Choir, creating a solemn atmosphere befitting the occasion.

The traditional two-minute silence, was marked by the Last Post, followed by the Reveille and Lament. During the wreath-laying ceremony, representatives from armed forces units and local community organisations paid their respects at the memorial, with Frazer Nicholson, Vice Chair of Ashington Royal British Legion, announcing the names of participants.

Official Recognition

The event was honoured by the presence of Deputy Lord Lieutenant Julie Cordon, whose attendance underscored the significance of the occasion. Mr. A. Vaziri, Royal British Legion Branch President, delivered the Exhortation and Kohima Epitaph during the ceremony.

Improvements

The council not having to order wreaths worked well and saved a lot of time. Most people were happy to order through the poppy shop or collect from the RBL at Asda.

New format order of service without the list of wreath laying allowed the council to print earlier than in the past, not having to wait for last minute changes to the list.

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Additional speakers near the west side of the garden worked well, they allowed those on the peripheral and outside the garden hear the service better.

Operational Challenges and Safety Considerations

While the service was successful, several operational challenges required attention.

Traffic management arrangements proved inadequate on the day, necessitating additional support from Northumberland County Council staff who were present for the service. Insufficient traffic management staff and signs were sent with the incorrect information on which roads needed to be closed, they had no details of the rolling road closure starting on Station Road.

Coordination and timing, the parade set off earlier than stated, which meant those in the parade arrived at the memorial garden before 10.30am.

The Deputy Lord Lieutenant was very disappointed she had missed the parade which was not due to set off until at 10.20am. When she arrived for the muster at 10.10am the parade had already nearly reached the Memorial Garden.

It is estimated that 1000 people attended the service and parade, with this amount of people involved the Memorial Garden was full well before the start of the service at 10.45am, increasing pressure on Rev. Sam to start slightly early as people had been standing for a while. This resulted in the two minutes silence being held before 11am.

Photography, it had been arranged for a member of Ashington Camera Club to take photographs during the parade and service, unfortunately he was prevented from entering the area near the Cenotaph by someone in a high viz, therefore he was unable to take photos of the wreath laying.

The Deputy Lord Lieutenant did not have a chaperone, this should have been someone notable from ATC or the RBL.

Conclusion

This year's Remembrance Sunday service in Ashington demonstrated the community's continued dedication to honouring those who served and sacrificed for our nation. The substantial turnout, particularly among young people, reflects the enduring importance of this annual act of remembrance.

Ashington Town Council and the Royal British Legion will meet in the new year to review the event to ensure that future services maintain the highest standards of organisation, safety, and respect.