

Remembrance Sunday 2025: Civic Wreath Laying and Associated Ceremonies

Purpose

To agree simple arrangements for Remembrance Sunday on Sunday 9 November 2025, to confirm who will lay the three traditional wreaths at church services, and to decide whether to adopt a fourth, non-denominational ceremony at Chigwell Cemetery on Council land. All observances will keep the national two-minute silence at 11:00am.

Background

Historically council has agreed the purchase of three wreaths each year. By custom the Chair lays a wreath at St Mary's, the Vice Chair at St Winifred's, and Councillor Hodds at All Saints. Council should first confirm that Councillor Hodds wishes to and is available to take on that role; if not, an alternative Member should be appointed. In the last couple of years there has also been a small, informal ceremony at Chigwell Cemetery on Council land that has not previously been authorised by Full Council. There is also a war memorial on Manor Road at the site of a public house bombed during the war.

Considerations

Civic acts in the Council's name should be approved by resolution, have a named Member representative, and be publicised fairly. Church organisers control participation at their services and invitation or permission is required for any organisation to lay a wreath. The same should apply at the cemetery, with the Council as landowner permitting a brief, inclusive, non-partisan, non-denominational observance, open to all and timed to share the 11:00am silence. The Council can keep only the three church wreaths, adopt and regularise a cemetery ceremony, or stand down the cemetery ceremony and instead lay a wreath at Manor Road. Staff are not required to enable any event and no overtime will be paid. All wreaths should be collated in the office and the memorial cards written by the Acting Clerk so they clearly state they are laid on behalf of Chigwell Parish Council.

Risk, legal, financial and equality implications

A short risk assessment will be completed in office hours by the relevant officer and held in the Council records. Public liability for a brief civic observance on Council land is covered by existing insurance. If a fourth ceremony is approved, one additional wreath can be met from the civic budget. A non-denominational format welcomes residents of all faiths and none and avoids any perception of party or personal advantage.

Communications

Local faith leaders and community representatives from Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and other traditions, together with a Humanist voice if available, would be invited. A concise notice will be issued on the website, noticeboards and social media by the Wednesday before Remembrance Sunday confirming locations, named Council representatives and that the two-minute silence will be observed at 11:00am at every venue. Church services remain the responsibility of their organisers.

Proposed recommendations

That the Council reaffirms the three church wreath arrangements for Sunday 9 November 2025, subject to first confirming that Councillor Hodds wishes to and is available to lay the wreath at All Saints. Council to agree an alternative senior member if she declines or is unavailable

That the Council adopts an official, non-denominational civic ceremony at Chigwell Cemetery on Council land, timed so those present can keep the national two-minute silence at 11:00am, with the wreath laid by a named Member appointed at the meeting or, failing that, by the most senior available Member not otherwise engaged.

That the Acting Clerk collates all wreaths in the office and writes the memorial cards for consistency.

That participation at all venues remains subject to the organisers' permission.

That no wreath is laid at the Manor Road memorial this year to keep attendance focused, and that options for marking that site in 2026 are brought back in the new civic year.

Draft resolutions

That the Council confirms the established protocol for church wreaths on 9 November 2025, asks Councillor Hodds whether she wishes to and is available to lay the wreath at All Saints, and delegates any necessary reallocation to the Acting Clerk.

That the Council authorises a fourth, non-denominational, interfaith cemetery ceremony on Council land, to include the national two-minute silence at 11:00am, and appoints a Member to lay the wreath.

That all Council wreaths are prepared and carded by the Acting Clerk, that church and cemetery participation remains by organiser permission, that a proportionate risk assessment is completed in office hours, and that no staff attendance or overtime is required.

That no wreath is laid at the Manor Road memorial in 2025 and that options for 2026 are reviewed.

Draft order of service for Chigwell Cemetery if approved

The appointed Member welcomes those present shortly before 11:00am and explains that this is a brief, non-denominational civic act on Council land, open to all. A short inclusive reading is given or a concise Act of Commitment to Peace. The Exhortation is spoken and, at 11:00am precisely, the two-minute silence is kept. The Kohima Epitaph is spoken. The Council wreath is laid, followed by any other permitted wreaths. The Member offers brief thanks and invites quiet dispersal.

Decision required

Members are asked to approve the recommendations, confirm whether Councillor Hodds wishes to and is available to lay the All Saints wreath, appoint the Member who will lay the cemetery wreath if adopted and confirm the Acting Clerk's role in wreath preparation, memorial cards, risk assessment and publicity/invitations

Suggested Act of Commitment to Peace

Remembrance Day – Chigwell Parish

Leader: In remembrance of those who died in war, and of all who bear its scars, let us commit ourselves to the work of peace.

All: We remember. We choose peace.

Leader: For a world where difference is met with respect, not violence;

All: We commit ourselves.

Leader: For neighbours of every faith and none to live as one community in Chigwell and beyond;

All: We commit ourselves.

Leader: For courage to listen, to speak truth with kindness, and to challenge hatred and injustice;

All: We commit ourselves.

Leader: For care of the wounded, support for the bereaved, and welcome for the displaced;

All: We commit ourselves.

Leader: For daily lives that sow hope—minds that learn, hands that serve, hearts that forgive;

All: We commit ourselves.

Leader: In memory and gratitude, we pledge to build a future shaped by peace.

All: Let peace begin with us