

Report for Napton Parish Meeting: 2024

From:-

The Parish Council's War Memorial Working Party.
(WMWP)



“Lest We Forget”



The WMWP was originally formed in 2007, initially to secure the future of the Great War Memorial Plaque that was fixed to the Old School prior to that building being sold at public auction. The Plaque was removed and incorporated into a new war memorial on land owned by the Parish Council at the junction of Chapel Lane, The Butts and School Hill. This memorial commemorates the servicemen from Napton who lost their lives in both WWI & WWII. The WMWP oversee maintenance on the new memorial.

Two other initiatives undertaken by the WMWP were:-

A) In the 1940's eight trees were planted in the village to remember the Napton servicemen who lost their lives in WWII. The WMWP has replaced those trees that were in a poor condition. Children from the school have helped plant replacement trees.

The WMWP placed plaques at each tree to commemorate the serviceman that the tree was originally intended for.

A Cross of Remembrance is placed at each tree every year on Armistice Day.

B) The WMWP has organised improvements on the site of the old Observer Post, Windmill Road.

There is a bench and picnic bench on site. A Visitor Information Panel has been installed.

Also, in liaison with the Parochial Church Council the working party organised the re-lettering on the Great War Obelisk in the lower cemetery.

On Armistice Day a Poppy Wreath is laid at The Obelisk.

All of the WMWP work is supported by public subscription from within the local community of Napton. Napton Parish Council hold these funds.

The WMWP organise the annual Remembrance Sunday service. At the service many organisations in the village lay a wreath and pupils from St. Lawrence School and Napton Brownies are involved in the service.

The WMWP coordinated the annual Remembrance Sunday Service on Memorial Green, at the junction of School Hill, The Butts and Chapel Green for 15 years.

This began with the on-site Service of Dedication for the new War Memorial in November 2008.

It followed on from WMWP's work throughout the previous eighteen months managing the building of the new memorial on that site.

However, during 2023 the WMWP proposed and planned a change to the 2023 Remembrance Sunday Service. It was proposed that the service would be held in St Lawrence Church instead of on-site at The Memorial.

An article to this effect was submitted to the April 2023 Parish Magazine

It is reproduced below:

Remembrance Sunday, 12th November 2023.

Lest We Forget

We realise it may seem a little early to be mentioning Remembrance Sunday, but we wanted to advise the village of a change to the usual format that we are proposing this year.

We have been coordinating an annual Remembrance Sunday Service on Memorial Green, at the junction of School Hill, The Butts and Chapel Green for 15 years, beginning with the on-site Service of Dedication for the new Napton War Memorial in November 2008.

This followed on from our work throughout the previous eighteen months managing the building of the new memorial on that site.

After consulting with Napton Parochial Church Council, it has been agreed that the service can be held in the Church.

This will remove many of the arrangements prior to the service, such as applying for a road closure order to Stratford District Council, road closure notices to houses in the area and road closure signage on the day. Chairs will not need to be transported to and from the site nor an electric supply laid on. However, it must be said that we have always had incredible help with the above tasks.

Another advantage of a service in Church will be the removal of the continual threat of inclement weather and some attendees standing on uneven sloping ground.

We plan to retain the usual elements of the service.

Besides the Act of Remembrance, local organisations will be invited to lay wreaths, the Brownies will be invited with their Standard and it is hoped that we will have the usual support from St Lawrence School.

Gathering at The Victory Club for light refreshments following the service will still be an important part of the event.

There is a War Memorial in the church, so it is appropriate that the wreaths can be laid there. The wreaths, or a proportion of them, could then be moved to the War Memorial on Memorial Green following the service.

The proposed change is to prepare for our eventual retirement in the not-too-distant future as we cannot do it forever. We hope that by taking it forward in this revised format it will secure an annual Remembrance Service in the village. This was not always the case pre- 2008.

When there was a Napton and District British Legion Branch the service alternated each year between the villages represented in the branch; resulting in a service here only every four years.

We are not suggesting that others couldn't organise the event as it has been, but we feel that by making the arrangements for the service more straight-forward it will guarantee the continuation of the annual service. Of course, whoever does take over after our retirement may want to revert to an outside service on Memorial Green.

We hope it will remain as well supported as it always has been because:-

Remembrance is still as relevant as it ever has been.

The change of venue was well received and St Lawrence Church was full.

The following report on the service was submitted to the December 2023 edition of the Parish Magazine:-

WAR MEMORIAL WORKING PARTY (WMWP)

Remembrance. "Lest We Forget"

ARMISTICE DAY, 11TH NOVEMBER 2023

At 11.00am on Saturday, 11th November, Armistice Day, a wreath with the inscription 'Remembering Napton's Sacrifice' was placed at the Great War Obelisk in the lower cemetery. Also, Crosses of Remembrance were

placed at the eight memorial trees commemorating the WWII Napton servicemen who lost their lives in that conflict.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICE

12th November 2023

For fifteen years the service had been held on site at the War Memorial at the junction of School Hill, The Butts and Chapel Lane.

This year, for various reasons reported in earlier magazines, the service was held in the church.

Due to the inclement weather this proved to be a very prudent decision.

However, whatever the weather, holding the service in the church was the correct decision.

It was so rewarding to see the church full to capacity.

The War Memorial Working Party are grateful to Helen Eadon and the Parochial Church Council for the help received leading up to the service and the wonderful Remembrance poppy decorations by Sue Watkins, Jayne Owens and the Knitting Group. The church looked grand.

Of course, the church has its own War Memorial in the North Transept which was appropriate for laying the wreaths.

We were pleased to welcome Rev. Jim Dobson again as Minister for this service. Jim conducted the service with reverence and his address was thought-provoking.

Villagers Tim and Jayne provided music and played the Last Post and Reveille.

As in previous years, Jim Sleight acted as event photographer to skilfully record the proceedings.

Bell-tower Captain Margaret Ingman and her team of ringers preceded the service by playing the bells of St Lawrence Church half-muffled, which added to the reverence of the day.

Again, the support from St Lawrence School staff and pupils was appreciated.

The children from St Lawrence School did so much to make yesterday's Remembrance Service an outstanding success.

Whether in the orchestra, reading or as members of The Brownies they carried out their duties admirably. They were excellent ambassadors for the school.

The school orchestra was ably assisted by Sue English.

The new Headteacher, Mrs. Hanna, attended. She was introduced to the congregation in the initial 'Welcome'.

A contingent of Napton Brownies were present with their leaders Amy Tuck and Jan Sanchez. They distributed the Orders of Service as the congregation arrived.

The Brownies then added to the poignancy of the event at the beginning of the service by parading their Standard along the Centre Aisle of the church to the Chancel.

It was good to see so many village organisations attending to lay a wreath. (*List below*)

The wreaths have been divided between the War Memorial in the church and the War Memorial on Memorial Green

It was an Act of Remembrance that reflected Napton's respect for the men from the Parish who gave their lives in the two world wars. The service also recognised the sacrifice that all members of the armed services make, both past and present.

It was also noted that after all this time there were people present at the service who were directly related to the villagers named on the memorial.

Wreaths were laid by:-

Representatives of Napton's Ex-Service Personnel

Represented by Janet Oakey (Wrens)

Napton Victory Club (also represented by Napton's Ex-Service Personnel)

Keith Britton (Army)

St. Lawrence School

Napton Parish Council

Napton Brownies

St. Lawrence Church PCC

Napton Women's Institute

Town Lands Charity

Napton Charities

Napton Village Hall
Napton Sports Association
Napton Cycle Ride Committee
Napton Pony Club
Napton Bell Ringers
On Behalf of the Hands Family

Each year the Remembrance Sunday Service notice in the magazine, prior to the event, invites anyone who would like to lay a wreath on behalf of a family member or village organisation during the service to contact one of the War Memorial Working Party.
Please consider this for the service in 2024.

Following the service, Napton Women's Institute members Dea Godley and Hilary Neal served refreshments at the Victory Club which were very much appreciated.
Thanks to Napton Victory Club and Barry for being so accommodating and helpful in setting up the room.

All in all, it was a combined village effort that befitted the reverence of the occasion.

Donations

Donations collected at the Victory Club on the day totalled £89.75p towards the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of Napton's War Memorials and the continuing ethos of Remembrance in the village.
All monies raised by the War Memorial Working Party are held by the Parish Council.



St. Lawrence Church North Transept with War Memorial plaque.

Following the service the wreaths were divided between the War Memorial in the church and the War Memorial on Memorial Green.

The WMWP report its activities to the Parish Council and in the Parish magazine. A member of the WMWP attends most Parish Council meetings.

The members of the War Memorial Working Party are Malcolm Thomas, Bernard Alsop and Denis Grant.