

Media Release: Thousands celebrate Armed Forces Day at Lydiard Park

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Thousands celebrate Armed Forces Day at Lydiard Park

Swindon came together in a powerful display of gratitude and unity on Saturday (28 June), as thousands gathered under sunny skies at Lydiard Park to honour the courage, commitment and sacrifice of the UK's armed forces.

Hosted by Swindon Borough Council, this year's Armed Forces Day held special significance as it also marked the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

The event brought together veterans, serving personnel, families, and members of the wider community to reflect, celebrate and pay tribute to those who serve, and have served, the country.

The event welcomed local dignitaries including Dame Sarah Troughton, Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, the Mayor of Swindon, Councillor Fay Howard, Swindon South MP Heidi Alexander, Swindon North MP Will Stone, and Leader of Swindon Borough Council, Councillor Jim Robbins.

Chelsea pensioner John Gallagher also made the long trek from London to be part of the celebrations, while an air raid siren which was used to signal the end of the Second World War also rang out on the day as a poignant reminder of the 80th anniversary.

The day was filled with heart-warming and uplifting moments — from high-energy dance performances and an interactive assault course, to tanks on display and a joyful mini concert.

Cadets, Scouts and Sea Cadets from across the region proudly participated, including the Wiltshire Army Cadet Force and Swindon & Royal Wootton Bassett Sea Cadets, demonstrating the vital role young people play in honouring and continuing the legacy of service.

Dozens of local stallholders, community organisations and charities also helped make the day a true celebration of togetherness. Among them were Help for Heroes, Swindon & Wiltshire Pride, and the Wiltshire Air Ambulance, alongside representatives from emergency services - all contributing to the vibrant community spirit.

To commemorate the day, Mrs Troughton and Cllr Howard planted a tree next to the main stage, a living tribute to those who have served the country and a symbol of hope for future generations.

Councillor Jim Robbins, Leader of Swindon Borough Council, said: “What an incredible day for Swindon. The support shown for our armed forces was moving and heartfelt. The joy on people’s faces said it all. We came together not only to honour our heroes, but to enjoy each other’s company and celebrate everything that makes our community strong.

“I want to personally thank everyone who made this event so special including our volunteers, stallholders, cadets, charities, emergency services, and most of all, our serving and former armed forces personnel. You did Swindon proud.”

Councillor Junab Ali, Armed Forces Champion for Swindon Borough Council, added: “We estimate nearly 10,000 people joined us throughout the day — an incredible show of support.

“Seeing so many local groups come together, and every branch of the armed forces represented, was both humbling and inspiring. From 90 stallholders to free bus services for veterans, this was a true community effort, backed by parish and borough councillors alike.

“Swindon truly stood shoulder to shoulder with its armed forces, and I couldn’t be prouder.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Pictures (credit Harry Harnett): thousands of people turned out to celebrate Armed Forces Day at Lydiard Park

Media contact: Kevin Burchall, Communications Lead – Media Relations. Email; kburchall@swindon.gov.uk, Tel: 07387 230818.



