

**REPORT TO ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL
FROM ABINGDON ROYAL BRITISH LEGION BRANCH**

2025 marked the 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ day.

We would like to thank the town council for its support towards the costs to honour these events with a grant of £5,300 from the Community budget. Abingdon Royal British Legion branch and RBL social club on Spring Road were the main organisers, with additional help from the Oxfordshire Veterans Group. This is a summary of what was arranged and also acknowledges the support of many people, as volunteers, town businesses, shops and other voluntary organisations.

We aimed to include all parts of the community from church bell-ringers, to the town criers, actors, singers, musicians, dancers, car and railway enthusiasts, Abingdon Rugby Club, and Morris dancers as well as veterans, cadets and our twin towns. Volunteers made bunting and many town shops and businesses were decorated. We also had help from the town council officers with publicity, and from museum staff and outdoor services and attendance of the Mayor at many functions. A series of photographs are available, taken by Martin Wackener.

8 May 2025 started with a VE flag being raised from County Hall with a town cry proclamation broadcast on BBC Radio Oxford. Youth Ambassadors from TAB attended to symbolise involvement of the younger generation. At noon, a short ceremony was held at the war memorial. Church bells rang out at 6.30pm. There was a concert at St Helen's Church that evening, featuring Abingdon Town Band. A special souvenir programme was produced for this event which included details of those who fell during the war from Abingdon.

10/11 May 2025 The 40-foot display model of the Operation Overlord preparations for the D-day landings was displayed at Abingdon RBL club and seen by many visitors. Pupils at Carswell School created a display about life as a military child which was also displayed there. A rally of MGs took place on the Market Place with an exhibition of the role of MG factory played in the war effort. On Sunday a Tea Dance was held at Preston Road Community Centre with live music.

ON August 15, a ceremony to commemorate Victory over Japan and honour those who served and fell in this theatre of war was held at the war memorial, attended by the Mayor and local organisations.

16/17 August 2025 included a "Party on the rugby pitch" with a fun bun throwing. The winning team will be invited to attend the next official town bun throwing event, whenever that may be. A live band played at the RBL Club and on Sunday a second Tea Dance was held.

The town council was fully acknowledged in all communications and publicity. Details were included in two editions of "Town Crier" magazine.

All events were free with donations to the Poppy Appeal or to assist in covering costs to make best use of the grant funds.

The grant-funded events raised £2,303.33 for the Poppy Appeal. A three-day collection at Waitrose by veterans raised a further £1,349.92 making a grand total of £3,653.25 and taking the total raised by Abingdon to £49,653.25.

The grant expenditure details are below:

ABINGDON ROYAL BRITISH LEGION VE/VJ Days				
4 April		VE/VJ Days Grant	Abingdon Council	5,300.00
12 April	100079	VE Day Expenses	Fabulous Flowers - chq not presented	
12 April	100080	Penny Clover	VE Various Expenses	116.44
12 April	100082	Clare Oldfield	VE Various Expenses	101.64
16 April	100081	Mr M R Machenier	VE Photographer	600.00
23 April	100083	Thomas Leach Colour	Posters & Programme of Events	874.20
6 May	100084	Clare Oldfield	Abingdon Drama Club	100.00
6 May	100085	Clare Oldfield	Abingdon Town Band	100.00
6 May	100086	Clare Oldfield	Expenses	99.15
6 May	100087	Chris Mead	Club - Model Railway	350.00
13 May	100088	ARBL	Expenses from Scott Cooper (print cartr	43.24
13 May	100089	David Hughes	Perspex for poster	165.29
17 May	100090	Bob Griffiths	The POPPY Appeal	202.50
17 May	100091	Bob Griffiths	The POPPY Appeal	95.00
17 May	100092	David Stone	Tea Dance Music	250.00
17 May	100093	R Sykes	Tea Dance Expenes	86.00
17 May	100094	Clare Oldfield	Expenses	80.00
22 May	Giro	Royal British Legion	Credit	18.00
13 June	100095	ARBL&HQ LTD	Room Hire and staff charges	315.00
18 June	BACS	Ron Sykes	Tea Dance proceeds to the Poppy Fund	258.00
SUB-TOTAL				3,578.46
See Note under:				
'12 July	100096	Abingdon PCC St Helen	VE Day Concert 8 May 2025	110.00
12 July	100096	Abingdon PCC St Helen	1 PRS fee re concert 8 May 2025	58.53
12 July	100097	The Poppy Appeal	Wreath for Town Council	28.50
8 Aug	100098	Thomas Leach Colour	Banners and Posters	275.60
8 Aug	100099	cancelled		
8 Aug	100100	Rebecca Napier	Party on the Pitch - 16 August 2025	95.00
9 Aug	100101		OPA	20.00
9 Aug	100102	David Storm	Tea Dance Music	250.00
9 Aug	100103	Preston Rd Com centre	Room Hire	86.00
17 Sept	100104	Bob Griffiths	The POPPY Appeal	577.91
17 Sept	100105	ARBL	Wildflower Whisky Music	220.00
SUB-TOTAL			Total GRANT SPENT	5,300.00
Cheques '100088 for £43.24, '100090 for £202.50 and 100091 for £95 cashed after the year end, please see St				