

Dear Clerk / Chair,

In July, I proposed a motion at Swindon Borough Council to strengthen our support for the Armed Forces community and accelerate the Council's work towards Silver accreditation under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

An important part of that motion was encouraging parish and town councils across Swindon to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and consider working towards Bronze accreditation.

You can read the motion under Agenda Item 23 here:

<http://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=284&MIId=13076&Ver=4>

The Armed Forces Covenant is a national commitment that those who serve, have served, and their families should be treated fairly and should not face disadvantage because of their connection to the Armed Forces.

I would really encourage your council to consider joining us.

For a parish or town council, this does not need to be complicated. It starts with signing the Covenant and deciding what practical pledges are right for your council and community.

These might include recognising military skills and experience when recruiting, supporting reservists, promoting local support, recognising Remembrance and Armed Forces events, or listening to veterans, reservists and Armed Forces families about barriers they have experienced.

To help you get started, I have attached a draft motion (from Haydon Wick Parish Council) which you can use or adapt, along with the official MOD Covenant template and example pledge linked below. You do not need to start from scratch.

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, including the requirements for Bronze:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme>

Signing the Armed Forces Covenant, including the official template and example pledges:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sign-the-armed-forces-covenant-and-make-your-pledge>

Wider Armed Forces Covenant guidance and support:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-supporting-information>

If your council decides to sign the Covenant, I would love to join you for the signing. I would also be happy to help involve the local press so we can recognise your commitment, promote your accreditation and raise awareness of the wider work taking place across Swindon.

This is about more than signing a document or receiving an accreditation. It is about listening to our Armed Forces community and looking at the practical, proportionate things each of us can do locally.

I hope your council will consider joining us.

Please get in touch if you would like to take this forward.

Kind regards,

Leanne