Isle of Wight Armed Forces Day - 2027

From Ian Dore

Date 2026-10-12 15:44

Summary Headers Plain text

Dear Clerk / Chair,

Would you kindly circulate this to elected members and, where appropriate, place Isle of Wight Armed Forces Day 2027 before the Council or relevant committee while 2027 / 28 budgets are being considered?

AFD is returning in 2027, and we are starting the conversation now for one simple reason. By the time the event programme comes together early next year, many council budgets will already have been set. This is not simply another local event, it is the Isle of Wight's Armed Forces Day. Supporting veterans, serving personnel, reservists, cadets and Armed Forces families from across the Island.

In 2025, the full-scale event attracted an organiser estimate of around 14,000 people in a single day, making it one of the Island's largest free public events. RAF displays, parachute teams, military units, bands, a major parade, historic displays, charities, cadets, reservists, and family activities brought thousands to the event, generating substantial media and public interest including the BBC and ITV. Although hosted locally, its gained UK recognition and is growing.

For 2027, the ambition is significant again.

During this year's pause, we have been reviewing possible locations, land and infrastructure, military and MOD participation, aviation opportunities, military bands, performers, static assets and displays, cadet participation, charities, transport, welfare and public facilities. There are many exciting possibilities, but as always safety and deliverability come first. The eventual location and programme will depend upon land availability, military allocations, suitable assets, operational requirements, safety planning and the many approvals involved in staging an event of this scale. No location or final programme has been decided at this stage.

What we do know is what AFD brings to the Island:

- **a major public event that remains free to attend.**
- **thousands of people together in one day, generating footfall and activity;**
- **a major platform for veterans, military charities, cadets, reservists and young people;**
- **civic pride and an opportunity for the Island to visibly stand behind its Armed Forces community;**
- **considerable media, online and promotional reach for the organisations that help make it happen;**
- **national and local military engagement that Islanders would otherwise often have to cross the Solent to experience**

Although it is an MOD requirement, that first point matters enormously to the team and I. Many Island families and young people simply cannot justify the cost of travelling to mainland events of this kind. Keeping AFD free means that military aviation, bands, displays, history, careers and engagement can be brought to them, rather than becoming something only available to those able to travel. This is very much in keeping with the national purpose of Armed Forces Day. Inclusive, accessible public engagement.

We would therefore be extremely grateful if your Council could consider making provision to support Isle of Wight Armed Forces Day 2027.

An event like this, with stringent safety requirements, does come at a cost. As a guide, we hope Town and Parish Councils might consider support in the region of £500–£1,000, according to their size and circumstances. Any contribution would, of course, be valued. Military participation and allocations normally become considerably clearer during the first two months of the year, and knowing which Island councils intend to stand behind AFD, will allow us to plan accordingly. Councils supporting AFD 2027 will be formally recognised across appropriate event communications, online channels and event material.

If your Council has a grant form, application process, funding deadline or requires any particular supporting information, please let me know and I will happily provide it. AFD has grown into something the Island can be genuinely proud of. Our ambition for 2027 is to build on that, and we very much hope your Council will be part of it.

Best wishes,

Ian

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