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**Greater Churches Network**  
**An Inclusive Church**



## **A Military First for Shropshire**

### **St Chad's Church Shrewsbury signs the Armed Forces Covenant**

Shropshire's Civic Church – St. Chad's Church in Shrewsbury is the first church in the UK to sign the Armed Forces Covenant. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York signed the Covenant in 2014 on behalf of the entire Church of England, but St Chad's is the first individual church to follow their lead.

The formal signing will be at 5.00pm on Wednesday 8th June.

The [Covenant](#) will be signed by a churchwarden from St Chad's, on behalf of the whole congregation and Colonel R L Maybery QGM from 11 Signal and West Midlands Brigade on behalf of the armed forces.

Dignitaries from Shropshire and beyond, including the Archdeacon of Salop: The Ven Paul Thomas, the High Sheriff of Shropshire: Christine Holmes, The Revd Steven Whiting (Representing the Chaplain-General) and Councillor Tim Barker, Chair of the Shropshire Armed Forces Covenant partnership will be attending.

Father Mark Chadwick, Vicar at St Chad's Church said: "We all owe a great debt to those who serve this country in the Armed Forces and it's important that every organisation works to ensure that they do not face any disadvantage. [Our Covenant](#) pledge confirms the commitments we have had to the Armed Forces for many years."

St. Chad's have committed to supporting military families by adopting a flexible approach to meeting families for weddings or baptisms, understanding the restrictions of being posted abroad and ensuring that Godparents who cannot be present at a service are included. The church also supports the Covenant by the employment of veterans (two of our car park attendants served in the armed forces), by working to maintain the military chapel as a place for quiet reflection and by recognising and remembering the sacrifice made both on Remembrance Sunday and throughout the year.

Councillor Tim Barker, Chair of the Shropshire Armed Forces Covenant partnership said: "Shropshire Council are delighted that St Chad's Church have shown commitment to further support our Armed Forces community. The Church are huge supporters of our Forces and we fully endorse their willingness to help, not least the pledge to adopt a flexible approach for Baptisms and Weddings taking in to account deployment issues."

Brigadier Robin Anderton-Brown, Commander of 11 Signal and West Midlands Brigade said 'I am delighted that one of our principal churches in the region is the first in the whole country to sign the Armed Forces Covenant. This public statement of their special commitment is greatly valued by the Ministry of Defence and will be warmly appreciated by the military community in Shropshire.'

The Bishop of Shrewsbury, Rt Revd Mark Rylands said "I applaud the congregation of St Chad's who are pioneering in signing the Armed Forces Covenant as a parish. Those serving in our armed forces and their families are uprooted and moved around the country frequently: the welcome and care that any church can offer is a small token of our gratitude and the respect we have for them."

Charities and Businesses wishing to sign up to the Covenant can get involved by visiting online: <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/>

If you would like to discuss pledging your support, but don't know how, you can contact [David.Fairclough@Shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:David.Fairclough@Shropshire.gov.uk) for more information.

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#### Editor Notes

Should you wish to discuss anything Covenant related, please contact David Fairclough, Shropshire Council – at [David.Fairclough@Shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:David.Fairclough@Shropshire.gov.uk) or tel: 01743 252 483

Should you wish to discuss anything in relation to St Chad's, please contact Claire Crackett at [claire@crackett.me.uk](mailto:claire@crackett.me.uk) or tel: 07989654134

## **Armed Forces Covenant**

The Armed Forces Covenant sets out the relationship between the nation, the government and the armed forces. It recognises that the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the armed forces and their families, and it establishes how they should expect to be treated.

### ***The Covenant's 2 principles are that:***

- the armed forces community should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services.
- special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

The covenant exists to redress the disadvantages that the armed forces community may face in comparison to other citizens, and to recognise sacrifices made.

### ***St Chad's Commitments***

The specific commitments made by St Chad's are:

- Looking favourably upon employee requests for leave and flexible working by spouses with partners on deployment, and compassionate leave for any bereaved spouse – including attendance at an inquest.
- Affirming the important work of Reserve Military Chaplaincy and supporting those who choose to serve in this way.
- Seeking to support our employees who choose to be members of the Reserve Forces, for instance, by seeking as far as possible to accommodate their training and deployment.
- Recognising and remembering the sacrifices made by others by marking Remembrance Sunday, and other such occasions.
- Ensuring that wherever possible our building and facilities are accessible to all in the Armed Forces community, including veterans with disabilities.
- Welcoming families requesting Baptism who feel they have a connection to St Chad's, regardless of where they might be posted.
- Support military families by making it clear that Godparents need not be present at a Baptism service thus allowing those on deployment to continue their family commitments.
- Adopt a flexible approach to meeting families for Baptism or Weddings, understanding that deployment or postings may make attendance at St Chad's difficult.
- Working with local military associations and regiments to maintain the Military Chapel within St Chad's, a place for quiet reflection, remembrance and prayer for the whole community, especially those with a military connection.
- Holding weekly WW1 remembrance services from August 2014 to June 2019 and encouraging all who would like a life remembered (from whatever conflict) to come or submit names to be included in our prayers. This weekly act always includes the prayer for the Armed Services.

For more information on **The Archbishops' Council and the Armed Forces Covenant** go to: <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/international-affairs/armed-forces-covenant.aspx>