

Chichester District residents encouraged to celebrate VE Day at home

With social distancing measures still in place, residents in the Chichester District are being encouraged to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day at home on Friday 8 May, but there are still plenty of ways to celebrate.

The Novium Museum has curated a special virtual exhibition highlighting some of the main celebrations which took place in Chichester on VE Day 1945 and exploring how our communities have commemorated VE Day in the past. The exhibition is available online so that people can enjoy it from the safety of their own homes.

The exhibition features photographs, objects and first-hand accounts from residents about their VE Day and wartime childhood memories. Virtual visitors will also be able to hear two local residents, Michael and Anne, talk about their VE Day and wartime childhood memories.

The Novium Museum's online Victory in Europe exhibition can be viewed online at www.thenovium.org/ve75

The government has also produced a toolkit of activities and recipes to inspire people to get involved in VE Day celebrations. Ideas include: making your own bunting; baking a wartime recipe; holding a virtual afternoon tea over a video chat platform; and having a picnic in your front garden. People can access the toolkit online at www.ve-vjday75.gov.uk

Last year, Chichester District Council's Grants and Concessions Panel made up to £250 available to each parish in the district to help them mark this important event locally. With planned events now unable to take place due to the coronavirus outbreak, many parishes have decided to use the grant funding for legacy commemorations, such as planting trees and installing public benches and plaques.

- Wisborough Green Parish Council will use the funding to plant a Horse Chestnut Tree in the village centre this autumn with a plaque to commemorate the 75th anniversary of both VE and VJ Days.
- Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council have commissioned a commemorative bench to mark VE Day which will be unveiled to the public later this year.
- Sidlesham Parish Council have produced a booklet of detailed accounts of the lives of Sidlesham residents during the Second World War, with a special focus on the entertainment and meals provided to troops stationed in the village during the war.

"Whilst events and gatherings will not be possible this year, we hope that residents will make the most of the resources available to celebrate VE Day at home," says Councillor Roy Briscoe, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Culture at Chichester District Council. "It's important that we show our appreciation and support for those who gave their lives during the Second World War and celebrate this historic occasion to help keep this memory alive for years to come."

“If you are on social media, you can follow the activity using #VEDay75ChiDistrict and we would love you to share how you are celebrating VE Day with us, by posting pictures or videos using the hashtag.

“However you choose to celebrate, please ensure you stay at home and follow the government’s social distancing guidelines, to help protect our local health services and key workers.”

People can find out more about VE Day in the Chichester District by visiting <https://www.chichester.gov.uk/VE75>