

Email received regarding the previous resolution of the Committee.

Dear Mr Liddle,

My name is Glenn Parsons, I am a barrister practicing on the North-Eastern Circuit and I am the chair of the North- Eastern Circuit Diversity Outreach Programme, which is an initiative designed to promote diversity at the Bar of England and Wales.

I am writing in support of the proposal brought forward by Gifty Burrows, from Africans in Yorkshire, for a permanent memorial in Filey, to mark the stationing of nearly 5000 servicemen from the Caribbean at Hunmanby, during the second world war.

Two of my uncles, Gilmour Westcarr and Edwin Samuels were stationed at the base and it was in part as a result of the warm welcome that they received from the locals in Filey that they both decided to return to the UK after the war, to help Britain in its post war re-generation efforts. It was therefore my initial enquiry as to whether there was already a memorial to their service in Filey, that prompted Gifty to set about her quest to ensure that there was one.

It is a project that I, and many others in the Caribbean community feel very strongly about, as the fact that our forebears voluntarily travelled thousands of miles from their homes to help Britain in her time of need, is something that is not properly recognised. This strength of feeling was re-enforced by the recent apology from the Secretary of State for defence, Ben Wallace, who publicly apologised for the lack of recognition of the selfless acts of service by ethnic minorities during the first world war. It can therefore only be a matter of time before the same apology will be made in respect of those from the Caribbean who served and fought in World War II also.

It is for these reasons that I am particularly disappointed to find that the council, who initially seemed very enthusiastic about the proposal, when it was first suggested last year, now appears to be backtracking on any commitment to make this a memorial dedicated to service personnel from the Caribbean. This stance is all the more surprising in my opinion given that the proposal garnered immediate support from Councillor Helen Swiers who pledged £1000 in funding, as well as the Filey Ward Councillor at Scarborough Borough Council and the head of Finance at SBC. Furthermore, the Air Museum has also pledged £500 towards the memorial and the Barristers of the North -Eastern Circuit have also pledged to make a contribution to the memorial, once the plans have been passed. I am also aware that Gifty herself has spent a great deal of time obtaining quotes for the works required, at the behest of the council.

However, it is my understanding that the council will now only sanction a general memorial plaque honouring all allied forces, but making no special mention of Caribbean service personnel.

May I respectfully suggest that such a plaque will do nothing whatsoever to specifically address the issue raised with the secretary of state Ben Wallace, regarding the lack of specific recognition of the contribution of ethnic minorities to the war effort. However, worst of all in my view, Filey council is in grave danger of failing to properly recognise and preserve a very important part of the social history of the town, for future generations. Anyone who has read the press cuttings from the time and seen the photos, as I have, must be struck by the very commendable way in which the town received and welcomed the visitors from far away islands and the impact their presence must have had on Filey at that time. I am also in touch with a gentleman who still lives in Filey who remembers the servicemen being stationed in Hunmanby and whose family invited some of the men to their home for tea. A social historian, who is very interested in this story is in the process of capturing first-hand accounts for posterity.

I therefore think that future generations will be both puzzled and regard it as a very great shame, that there is no permanent recognition of this almost unique piece of social history.

I am also concerned that the council is failing to allow proper consultation on this important issue. I am aware that there was to have been a zoom meeting on 5th May 2021, for which this matter appeared as Item 6 on the 'Agenda', and to which I was sent a link. However, Item 6 was subsequently taken off the agenda for that meeting and despite Gifty's enquiries with the council as to when the next hearing was going to be held, the next thing we were informed was that a decision had been taken without wider consultation, that the reference to 'Caribbean service personnel' was to be omitted from the plaque.

Can I please urge the council to rethink this course! Can I also respectfully request that I be allowed 10 minutes of the council's time to attend at the next meeting and make personnel representations to the assembled council, as to why this issue is so vitally import to the Caribbean Community and to Filey itself.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course and to be notified as to the next date for the council meeting.

Regards and best wishes

Glenn Parsons

Park Square Barristers

Leeds