

BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF PEN-Y-BONT AR OGWR

Town Clerk
LEANNE EDWARDS
Deputy Town Clerk
DEBRA JONES
Tel: (01656 815757)
Email: bridgend.tc@bridgend.gov.uk
COUNCIL OFFICES
CARNEGIE HOUSE
WYNDHAM STREET
BRIDGEND
CF31 1EF



Clerc y Dref
LEANNE EDWARDS
Cynorthwywr i Glerc y Dref
DEBRA JONES
Ffon: (01656 815757)
E-bost: bridgend.tc@bridgend.gov.uk
SWYDDFEYDD CYNGOR
TY CARNEGIE
STRYD WYNDHAM
PEN-Y-BONT AR OGWR
CF31 1EF

PRESS RELEASE

26th January 2022

HMS Urge Commemoration Events in 2022

In 1941 Bridgend residents took part in the Bridgend and District Warship Week, and through raffles, whist drives and dances, raised £300,000 (the equivalent of approximately £15 Million today) to officially adopt the U Class submarine HMS Urge.

The people of Bridgend were proud of their submarine, the first of many they would adopt through WWII. They sent regular parcels of food and gifts to her crew and received letters back to say how grateful the crew were for the passion with which Bridgend had adopted their boat, and how it constantly reminded them of who they were fighting for.

On 27th April 1942, HMS Urge, left the island of Malta on what was to be her final mission. On board HMS Urge that day were 32 crew, 11 Royal Navy passengers and a war correspondent. Shortly after leaving Malta, HMS Urge was declared missing.

Bridgend Town Council is committed to remembering HMS Urge. A plaque featuring the Royal Navy crest from HMS Urge which was presented by The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to Bridgend to commemorate the adoption of HMS Urge during Warship Week, is proudly displayed in the Council Chamber. In Spring 2017 the Council was awarded grant funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a project in Bridgend Town Centre to mark the role that Bridgend played in World War II. As part of this project, a public talk about HMS Urge was held at Carnegie House, the Town Council commissioned a mural of HMS Urge on the wall of the River Ogmore and installed a Heritage Walkway comprising of information panels; one of which focuses on the story of HMS Urge.

In October 2019, the wreck of HMS Urge was discovered off the coast of Malta. The Ministry of Defence said it recognised the wreck site "as the last resting place of HMS Urge and those who lost their lives in service of their country". The wreck will now be treated as an official war grave and protected by Maltese, British and international law.

Following the discovery of the wreck, plans were made for an official commemoration in Malta in April 2020. The event was organised by the families who lost their lives on HMS Urge and Heritage Malta with support from The Royal Navy. Representatives from Bridgend were invited to the event and the Bridgend Town Mayor & Consort at the time were due to attend. Unfortunately, the event was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The memorial event in Malta has now been rescheduled for 27th April 2022 to mark the 80th anniversary of the loss of HMS Urge. An invitation has once again been extended to the Bridgend Town Mayor and/or representatives from Bridgend. Although the full program has yet to be finalised the event will culminate with the unveiling of a memorial at Fort St Elmo on the evening of the 27th of April 2022.

As the event is due to take place during the pre-election period, advice was sought on this matter. Council was subsequently advised that given that this is a significant, date driven occasion, each of the political parties should be given equal, or proportionate, representation in the invitation list or in the opportunity to attend the event.

In addition to this, an invitation has been received from The Friends of the Royal Navy Submarine Museum for the Mayor or a representative of Bridgend to attend an HMS Urge commemoration event at Submarine Museum in Gosport on 10th May 2022.

The invitations were discussed at a meeting of Bridgend Town Council on Monday 24th January 2022 and Council unanimously resolved to accept the invitations. The current Mayor and Mayoress of Bridgend Town Council were appointed to attend the event in Malta and the event in Gosport as representatives of Bridgend to pay respects to the crew and passengers who lost their lives on HMS Urge.

The Mayor said *“I consider it an honour and a privilege to be representing the people of Bridgend, on the solemn understanding that we may pay our final respects to the courageous and heroic people who were lost that day while serving their country. We will Remember Them”*.

For more information about this Press Release, please contact Leanne Edwards, Town Clerk, Bridgend Town Council at bridgend.tc@bridgend.gov.uk

NOTES FOR EDITOR:

More information about the history of HMS can be viewed at:

Bridgend Town Council website:

<http://www.bridgendtowncouncil.gov.uk/hms-urge.aspx>

Royal Navy Website:

<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/news/2019/october/31/191031-ww2-submarine-urge-found-off-malta>

Draft minutes of the Town Council meeting will be available on the Town Council website 10 working days after the meeting