

BROCKENHURST PARISH COUNCIL
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Saturday 29th September 2018

Statement by Brockenhurst Parish Councillor Harry Oram:

Following recent Press reports I would like to retract the statement I made at the Brockenhurst Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 18th September. I realise that I was mistaken in believing that the PC had specifically voted not to have a Silent Soldier due to the depiction of a gun.

I offer a full and sincere apology to my fellow councillors, particularly the Chairman Pete Wales, and to the members of staff, who have received unjustified and unwarranted criticism and abuse.

I also regret the potential economic effect that my action may have on the village and Brockenhurst Business Association.

Response by Brockenhurst Parish Council Chairman, Peter Wales:

Following recent adverse media coverage of the issue of a Silent Soldier, I would be grateful if the statement and my response could be given wide media coverage.

I would like to clarify that this Parish Council has not issued any ban on the display of Silent Soldiers, and we very much welcome the one to be displayed by Brockenhurst Business Association.

This is a village noted for its strong military connections and we are proud to host the Tile Barn Centre with its facilities for Armed Services personnel who have suffered in the service of our country. We have received many commendations for the manner in which we maintain our Commonwealth War Graves. We hold a much appreciated ANZAC Service at the graves each year, in conjunction with the Royal British Legion and attended by the NZ High Commissioner and their Armed Forces. Additionally we have renovated our War Memorial garden in a timely fashion.

Cllr. Harry Oram is highly regarded in the local community and as such anything he says is taken seriously. I have fully investigated his claim,

resulting in the personal statement which he has now issued. I know Cllr. Oram as a straightforward, honest person who people like and trust. I therefore admire his public admission of his mistake in order to set the record straight and fully accept his apology.

I would like to thank the local community, not least the local branch of the Royal British Legion, the Church and Brockenhurst Business Association for their unstinting support at this difficult time.

I can confirm that councillors have agreed to purchase an additional Silent Soldier. Its display at a prominent village site will be discussed with the local branch of the RBL shortly.



