



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Harwell Branch

BRI 805

**Monthly Branch Committee Meeting
Held on 22nd January 2025
In the Committee Room at the Village Hall High Street Harwell
At 17.30 Hours.**

ATTENDANCE:

T. Pearson – Chair
P. A. Cox - Secretary, Harwell Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) and Welfare Representative.
S. T. Haycox - Treasurer
H. Benton - Chilton Poppy Appeal Organiser

COMMITTEE: R. J. White – appointed President at this meeting.

MEMBERS: None.

Preliminaries

Reginald White Chaired the meeting.

1. WELCOME EXHORTATION AND KOHIMA EPITAPH

Reginald White gave the Exhortation and silent tribute; he ended with the Kohima Epitaph.

2. APOLOGIES: J. G. Street.

3. MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2024 COMMITTEE MEETING

There were the following corrections:

Item 5.1: Branch Funds Legacy Paragraph: “County Treasurer and **MSO**” changed to County Treasurer and “**Membership Engagement Officer (MEO)**”

Item 6.1 Full Branch Meeting: “County Membership **Support** Officer” changed to “County Membership **Engagement** Officer”.

Item 6.1.1 Date of Full Branch Meeting: Second para: “should mentioned” changed to “should **be** mentioned”

Item 6.1.4 “should **be** also be” changed to “should also be”.

The corrected minutes were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE DECEMBER 2024 MINUTES

4.1 APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT

The Chair had asked Reginald White if he would be willing to be appointed President prior to the meeting. He had agreed.

The Chair duly presented Reginald White with the Presidential Chain of Office so installing him as President.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

The Chair presented Hazel Benton with a Branch Certificate of Appreciation. Hazel Benton said that she was very surprised and very much appreciated the award.

The Treasurer said that he had presented Committee Member Geoffrey Street with a Branch Certificate of Appreciation at his home earlier in the month. Mr Street also very surprised and very much appreciated the award.

4.3 THANKS TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Secretary said that he had written letters of thanks to Reginald White for his service as Chairman and Peter Davies for his service as Vice Chairman and Ceremonial Officer.

He received a reply from Peter Davies that it had been an honour to serve the Branch and Committee in such a public facing role. He had served not for praise or reward, but to ensure that those who paid the ultimate sacrifice were remembered. He is delighted he was not only able to play a part in Harwell's acts of Remembrance but was able to create a format which has been well received and hopes will continue.

4.4 NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Secretary reported that Geoffrey Street and Reginald White had both agreed to be Committee Members and signed the MS1 form. The Secretary sent this to County in December. The County Membership Engagement officer replied that, ideally, we should have at least 4 committee members. The Secretary is assuming from this that the Branch has sufficient Committee members to continue.

4.5 FULL BRANCH MEETING

The Chair reported that she had contacted the Harwellian Club about hosting a meeting, reply awaited. When they reply, we can go forward with sending the invitation to all members.

The Secretary said he had drafted a letter with a GDPR statement, which includes:

- Invites the member to a meeting.
- Asks members to volunteer as committee members, with a list of the few requirements and commitments.
- Emphasises that without more committee members, the Branch will close.

It was suggested that the Chilton PAO checks the GDPR statement prior to sending.

Following discussion, the Chair proposed that the meeting is held on 13th March at 7 or 7:30pm. **Agreed.**

5. FUTURE OF THE BRANCH

5.1 Recruitment to Branch and Possible Closure

The Chair said that we could either put in maximum effort for the next 6 months to recruit new members and Committee members, or decide not to, and work on how to close the Branch.

It was stated that if no one new joins, we will close in the very near future due to lack of Committee members.

The Chair proposed that we should decide on a cut-off point.

The Treasurer said that the Legion financial year ends on 30th June, so we could decide at the June meeting. **Agreed.**

The Chilton PAO asked what would happen if the Branch closed down?

The Chair said that the D Day Commemoration is a Harwell Campus event and responsibility, and the Remembrance and Armistice Commemoration are Harwell Parish Council responsibilities, so they would continue. The Membership Handbook states that members would transfer to another Branch, so she assumes that this would be the closest Berkshire and Vale Branch.

5.2 Didcot Army Cadets Open Evening

The Chair reported that she will be attending this event which was straight after this meeting. She was invited by Sjt. Jason Capone-Taylor the previous day. It is a big event, with the Mayor of Didcot and Deputy Mayor attending. She will aim to recruit more members and broaden engagement.

5.3 Other Events

The Chair suggested some other Branch events, such as a coffee morning, or a talk at the White Hart, something to get members together. **Agreed.**

The Treasurer asked if the Legion had recruiting staff. The Secretary said that there was a County Recruiting Officer and he would contact them.

The Chilton PAO said that we should include reference to the D Day service for communications in Chilton.

6. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AND ARMISTICE 2024

The Secretary asked that the report for the newsletters should be noted, in Appendix A at the end of these minutes.

It was stated that Sjt Jason Capone-Taylor had stepped in at very short notice as Parade Marshal, and he had done a fantastic job.

Agreed by All Present

There are a few tasks to complete, and a few minor changes to consider for next year.

6.1 Possible New Parade Marshal

The Chair proposed that the Branch formally offers the role of Ceremonial Officer and Parade Marshal to Sjt. Capone-Taylor. They have discussed this informally. Following his appointment, he should attend a Parade Marshal course. We could also offer to co-opt him as a committee member:

PROPOSAL: That Sjt Jason Capone-Taylor is offered the role of Branch Ceremonial Officer and Parade Marshal and co-opted to the Committee in due course.

Proposed: Chair Seconded: Treasurer Agreed Unanimously

The Chilton PAO asked who would run the D Day service.

The Chair said that Peter Davies was willing to continue running the Commemoration as an Air Cadet Officer for the next few years.

The Treasurer said that we could no longer afford to pay for the D Day flypast as things stand.

7. ENROLLMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

The Secretary said that there were no new members since the December meeting. This agenda item dated from when new members had to attend a meeting to join the Branch.

8. SECRETARY'S REPORT

8.1 Christmas Message

The Secretary sent a Christmas Message to the Branch membership via email, as requested by the Chair.

8.2 Branch Archives

The Secretary is yet to contact the Oxfordshire Local History Centre to transfer old documents and minute books from the storage boxes in the Club. Kath Luker has given him a contact which he is yet to follow up.

The Chair said that she had emailed the Harwellian – reply awaited.

8.3 Printing Costs

Since the last meeting, the Secretary has printed and distributed the December 2024 Minutes and Agendas for this meeting, and correspondence summaries for the last few months.

There has been no County newsletter since July 2024 and he is not printing and delivering materials to Geoff Street while he is unavailable. So, there was a low volume of printing this month.

9. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

The President asked after Sandra Pateman.

The Secretary replied that Sandra Pateman had stepped down as Membership Secretary in late 2022. According to the Legion rules, if there is no Membership Secretary, the Secretary fulfils this role.

The Secretary reported:

Branch Membership stands at 43

This is a decrease of 4 since the December meeting. When members leave, all their details are removed from the database held on the MAP so you cannot tell who has left. He suggested keeping a separate database. It was stated that this should not be necessary.

9.1 Welcome Letter to New Members.

The Secretary suggested that he writes a welcome letter to send to any new members. The Chair said that she received her membership card from the Legion.

10. TREASURER'S REPORT

10.1 Branch Funds

The Treasurer reported: Funds held (according to the latest statements) are:

HARWELL BRANCH

B.F.I. Account	£ 866.40*
Current Account:	<u>£ 667.14**</u>
<u>Total:</u>	<u>See below.</u>

The BFI account: Headquarters issue a statement every quarter. This total comes from the latest statement dated 31st December 2024, which is before the £500 was transferred. The balance is now **£366.40.**

The **Current Account total:** includes the £500 transferred from the BFI:

So, the total of funds available is: £1033.54.

We also have the legacy, and receive an annual statement. However, there is currently no way to access this fund.

10.2 Payments and Donations

The Treasurer said that the Secretary has sent him the details to transfer the £201 payment to the Gardening Club for the Silhouette. He will set up the transfer and it can be approved online.

He has the chequebook to pay for the wreaths and make a donation for the crosses put on the War Graves. See AOB item 15.2.

10.3 Signatories for Bank Account

The Treasurer said that as Peter Davies and Sandra Pateman have resigned, that leaves the Treasurer, Secretary and President as the remaining signatories.

The Chair agreed to be a signatory as a backup.

The Secretary offered to scan in any bank statements required by County.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

The Secretary said that he had circulated monthly Correspondence reports, County Newsletters and Central News to Committee members while meetings were suspended. He suggested that now we are meeting again, he just reports significant correspondence at the meeting.

The Chair asked that all incoming emails are circulated when received. The Secretary apologised and said that he been busy and had email problems over the past couple of months, which are now resolved.

11.1 Correspondence from County Office and National Headquarters

Central News January 2025 - Includes details of the Annual Conference in Harrogate.

12. CEREMONIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

See Item 6.

13. STANDARD BEARER'S REPORT

The Secretary reported that the Standard had been paraded at the Remembrance Sunday parade and High Street service.

14. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER'S REPORT

14.1 Harwell Village and Campus

The Harwell Poppy Appeal Organiser reported:

The Bucket Collection at the Remembrance Sunday Service by the Chair and Chilton Poppy Appeal Organiser raised **£195.08**.

The Chilton PAO asked about the other collector at the Parade.

The Harwell PAO replied that Paul Parlett had attended with his collecting box and tray and the contactless terminal. These donations are included in the house-to-house total.

There were two house to house collectors this year, one new for this year. Two people responded to the Harwell News advert for house-to-house collectors, but one was unavailable. He will advertise on Facebook next year, and ask the membership.

A total of 34 collecting boxes and collecting buckets were distributed in Harwell and the Campus, we are nearly back to the 2019 number.

There were two new locations this year: The White Hart of Harwell had one box, and two boxes for the Rutherford Laboratory fireworks. There are a few more locations to ask next year.

£53 was collected by contactless machine in the two weeks.

The total for Harwell Village and the Campus is £ 1879.72.

The total for 2023 was **£ 1740.20**, so we are nearly **£140** up this year.

The Harwell PAO thanked the Chilton PAO in particular, for distributing and collecting the boxes and trays on Harwell Campus. Also, for arranging for the counting of the boxes at the counting centre.

The Harwell PAO also thanked all the others who helped or donated.

14.2 Chilton Village and Curie Avenue Shops.

The Chilton Poppy Appeal Organiser reported:

Chilton Poppy Appeal 2024

During the Poppy Appeal 2024, there were 10 House to House collectors, 7 small businesses and one school.

One person was a new House to House collector who had responded to the request for collectors in the local newsheet, The Chilton Chronicle.

One business changed ownership from McColls to Morrisons who supplied Poppies corporately so we were not able to put a box in.

The amounts collected were:

House to House	£961.56
Small Businesses	£379.50
School	£142.26
Total	£1,483.32
Contactless machine	£ 238.00
Chilton Total:	£1721.32

The Chilton PAO also delivered boxes on behalf of the Harwell PAO to businesses on Harwell Campus.

14.3 Overall Total House to House School and Business Collection

Total donations by QR code in Harwell and Chilton: **£252.50**

Harwell Total:	£ 1879.72
Chilton Total:	£ 1721.32
QR code Collections:	£ 252.50
Total	£ 3853.54

14.4 Remembrance Wreaths

The Harwell PAO reported that 13 wreaths were supplied, £270 was paid / donated by cash and cheque and £83 by QR code, invoice and BACS to date. **Total Wreaths: £378.**

The total of the prices for the wreaths we supplied was £315.50, so £62.50 extra donations were made by the organisations so far. See also AOB Item 15.2.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 Further Awards

The Branch Committee discussed further awards that could be made to Branch Members.

15.2 Donation for D Day and Remembrance Wreaths and Crosses

The Treasurer asked how much the Branch should pay to the Poppy Appeal for:

- The Legion wreath laid at the D Day Commemoration in June.
- The two Legion wreaths laid on Remembrance Sunday.
- The 67 wooden Poppy crosses placed at the War Graves for Remembrance.

The wreaths cost £27.50 each, total £82.50 for 3, and the crosses are provided for a donation.

Discussion ensued and the following proposal was agreed:

PROPOSAL: £100 is paid to the Poppy Appeal for three Legion Poppy Wreaths and 67 wooden crosses.

Proposed: Chair Seconded: Chilton PAO Agreed Unanimously

15.3 Visit of Legion County Committee Member

The Secretary said that County Committee Member Del Milham had been in touch a couple of times last year to request a visit to a Branch Meeting. County Committee members make visits to Branches on a regular basis.

The Chair proposed that we should ask them to attend after the March meeting, when we know where we are heading.

Agreed by All Present.

16. DECIDE DATE AND VENUE OF FEBRUARY MEETING

16.1 February Committee Meeting

The Chair suggested that we meet on 13th February 2024, at 5:30pm in the Village Hall Committee Room.

Agreed by All Present.

There being no further business the President closed the meeting at 18:20 hours.

Minutes approved at the Branch meeting held on _____

Chair _____

APPENDIX A

Sunday's Remembrance Parade – 10th November

On Sunday 10th November Harwell Village recognised Remembrance with a Parade along the Village High Street to the War Memorial where a Commemorative Service was held.

The Parade marched from Townsend to the War Memorial in the High Street, under the command of Sjt Jason Capone-Taylor from Didcot Army Cadet Force acting as the Parade Marshal. The parade included members of the Harwell Branch RBL, Harwell Parish Council, Western Valley Parish Council and local representatives from the VoWHDC, Didcot Cadet Forces (Army and Air), Harwell Scouts and Guides, joined by other Harwell organisations: Oxford Manor Lodge, the Bowls Club, Rugby Club, Gardening Club, Harwellian Club and the WI.

The attendance was higher than last year, encouraged by the better weather. The Service at the War Memorial was conducted by Rev. Brendan Bailey. The laying of the wreaths was led by Angus Horner, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Oxfordshire, with Dr Tony Hughes playing the Last Post to signify the start and end of the two-minute silence.

A collection for the Poppy Appeal went around ahead and after the service, thanks go to Mrs Hazel Benton and Ms Tracey Pearson for their part in walking around with the collection buckets which raised **£195.08**. Thanks also to Paul Parlett who raised further funds with a tray of Poppies and merchandise.

Following the service held on the High Street, the Parade marched to St Matthew's Church, where upon arrival the Standards formed a Guard of Honour at the entrance to the Church.

After the Church Service, the Deputy Lord-Lieutenant and Harwell Parish Chairman, joined by the RBL Branch Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, attended the War Memorial at the Commonwealth War Graves in Harwell Cemetery where a short moment of reflection was held before a wreath was laid.

Photos of the event can be found on the Branch Facebook page, and Branch Treasurer's Flickr account, linked below:

[Harwell RBL Branch Parades Facebook Page](#) / [Simon Haycox Flickr Album](#)

11th November, Armistice Day 2-minute silence

A short commemoration was held at the High Street War Memorial on Monday 11th November at 11:00. About 20 people attended, together with pupils and staff of Harwell School, and members of the Harwell Branch RBL.

The High Street was closed by volunteers from the Parish.

Branch Chairman Reginald White conducted the Ceremony and recited the Exhortation and Kohima Epitaph. The Last Post and Reveille were sounded by Dr. Tony Hughes and the Two Minutes Silence was observed. The Chairman thanked all present for their attendance.

Harwell Parish Council and Harwell Branch RBL thank all who contributed to the Commemorations.