



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Harwell Branch

BRI 805

**Monthly Branch Committee Meeting
Held on 21st August 2025
In the Committee Room at the Village Hall High Street Harwell
At 17.15 Hours.**

ATTENDANCE:

A. Logue	- County Parade Marshal and Legion Independent Examiner
R. White	- President
T. Pearson	- Chair
P. Cox	- Secretary, Harwell Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) and Welfare Representative.
S. Haycox	- Treasurer

COMMITTEE: None.

1. WELCOME

T Pearson opened the meeting and welcomed Angela Logue, County Parade Marshal and Legion Independent Examiner to the meeting.

2. EXHORTATION AND KOHIMA EPITAPH

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

3. APOLOGIES: H. Benton, J. Capone, and P. Sedwards.

4. MINUTES OF THE JULY 2025 COMMITTEE MEETING

The minutes were circulated prior to the meeting. There were the following corrections:

Item 9 VJ 80 Day

3rd para – “..the Rose and Crown” changed to “The Crown at Chilton.

Item 10 Website

2nd para – “..pulled down...” changed to “..closed down..”

last line – “..said congratulated..” changed to “congratulated”

Item 16 – Date of next meeting Changed from July to August.

The corrected minutes were approved as a true record and signed by T Pearson

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE JULY 2025 MINUTES

None.

6. FUTURE MEETINGS

T Pearson said that the AGM will be on Thursday 20th November. The suggestion is that we will knock on members doors to invite members when we deliver the AGM notices. We could also try another Branch meeting with invitations to all members at some point.

A Logue suggested that we could hold a Branch meeting Teams online.

7. D DAY 2025 REPORT AND LETTERS OF THANKS

P Cox reported:

7.1 New Layout of Gardens and Paths

As part of the improvements to the Campus, and along with the new Artwork, the Campus are changing the layout of the gardens and paths surrounding the Memorial.

This includes a new layout of the paths to reassemble the experimental aircraft catapult adjacent to the memorial and new trees to cut down the road noise during the service.

The design is by Adam Frost, Gardeners World Presenter and 7-time Chelsea Flower Show gold medal winner.

Copies of the design and covering email were distributed prior to the meeting.

They have had to modify the design due to underground services, so the work has been delayed. The Campus have now applied for planning permission.

The meeting discussed possible changes to where the Standards and wreath layers could stand, and march on and off at the Commemoration.

7.2 Letters of Thanks

P Cox has written and sent the last 16 letters as listed at the last meeting.

He has also written a letter of thanks to P Davies. He thanked T Pearson and H Benton for checking the letter.

Replies

Replies have been received thanking us for organising the Commemoration from the Church, Civil Nuclear Constabulary, Soldiers Sailors and Airmen Families Association, and Night Fright C17 who said that they hope they can do a flypast at some point once the aircraft is restored.

The First Aiders from St John Ambulance also sent their thanks, and asked us to book for next year as soon as possible to ensure they can attend.

The Managing Director of Harwell Campus sent an extremely generous letter of thanks which was circulated to the Committee Members.

7.3 Report

P Cox will forward the report to members. We could also post it on facebook and the website.

7.4 Timetable

Version 2 of the timetable is complete and was distributed this afternoon.

8. VJ 80 DAY REPORT FRIDAY 15th AUGUST

T Pearson and R White apologised that they could not attend.

P Cox reported:

Details were emailed to members a week prior to the Commemoration.

H Benton, R Benton, P Cox, S Haycox, and P Sedwards met at the High Street War Memorial at 12 noon to coincide with the National Silence. A small number of villagers also attended.

P Cox gave the Exhortation, the silent tribute, and the Kohima Epitaph, and laid a VJ80 wreath.

All present stayed on the pavement. Steve Hale again talked to drivers from the Village Hall direction about what was going on. The drivers stopped of their own accord.

S Haycox, P Sedwards, P Cox and Mr M Sedwards then went to the War Graves in Harwell Cemetery and repeated the Commemoration and laid a wreath.

S Haycox took some photographs which P Cox will circulate.

9. REMEMBRANCE AND ARMISTICE

P Cox reported:

9.1 Road Closure

Harwell Parish Council are willing to submit the road closure requests as usual. We should also remind them about Traffic marshals.

The Parish Clerk asked if the timings should be the same as last year. The only recent change is that the parade gathered 5 minutes earlier in 2024 than 2023.

9.2 Requests for Help

Requests are usually sent to:

Bugler – for Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day.

Bag Piper – P Cox has not talked to John McFarlane Horgan for a while and thinks he has given up playing.

First Aider - from scouts.

9.3 Meeting with Padre.

Branch and Church representatives meet with the padre to talk through details of the parade and service, and coordinate words of command etc. T Pearson will attend.

9.4 Parading Groups

P Cox suggested that we invite the same organisations and representatives as last year:

Civic and Veterans Representatives:

Deputy Lieutenant for Oxfordshire
Vale of the White Horse District Councillors
Harwell Parish Councillors
Western Valley Parish Councillors
RBL Harwell Branch

Contingents and sentries:

Didcot Detachment Army Cadet Force (ACF)
2410 (Didcot) Sqn Air Training Corps (ATC)
Harwell Scouts.
Millbrook District Girl Guides.

Representatives from Village Organisations:

Harwell Bowls Club	Harwell Rugby Club
Harwell Gardening Club	Oxford Manor Lodge Care Home
The Harwellian Club	Harwell Women's Institute

We also asked Harwell History Group and Harwell Arts and Crafts Group, who did not attend due to changes in circumstances.

The Parade Marshal for 2024 was Jason Capone of the Didcot ACF. If the Parade marshal is wearing RBL uniform they need to have passed the RBL Parade Marshal course.

T Pearson said that J Capone would be Parade Marshal. She will send the documentation to the participating groups and representatives.

10. BRANCH WEBSITE

T Pearson said that there is no further update. All articles have been transferred to the Harwell Branch page on the RBL main website. The only items still to post are the minutes.

A Logue suggested that the minutes could be stored on the MAP. It was unfortunate that the previous committee had not met or produced minutes for some time.

She also reminded Committee members to use their RBL Community email addresses.

11. SECRETARY'S REPORT

P Cox reported:

11.1 Documents from Previous Secretary

P Cox has not yet shredded the membership lists and other documents.

ACTION: P Cox to shred membership lists and other documents as appropriate.

11.2 July Minutes and August Agenda

The July minutes, August Agenda and Correspondence report were written and circulated.

11.3 Printing.

The Agenda and Correspondence report for this meeting, and last month's minutes were printed and distributed, a comparatively low volume of printing.

11.4 Meeting Room

The village hall staff said that the account name must be an email address. One or more people can access it. They can send invoices to other email addresses if required.

There is a discount on 8 bookings.

One of the email account names we could use is the Harwell Treasurer email, but that is not working yet. Hopefully we will work something out for the next meeting.

So, he has just booked the room for this meeting and the Village Hall staff are holding over our payment for this meeting to next month to include in the discount.

11.5 Branch Report for 2025 annual Harwell Parish Council meeting

ACTION: P Cox to send to T Pearson to put on our website.

11.6 Branch Annual General Meeting and County Conference – See also AOB

The AGM needs to be between 1st October and 30th November. We need to send a notice and nomination form to all members 21 days before the meeting.

P Cox said that delegate forms for the 2025 County Conference were due back to County on 2nd December so an AGM in November should be early enough.

A Logue agreed and said that Branch funds can be used for the delegate's lunch.

11.7 National Conference 2026 Brighton 8th - 10th May 2026

A Logue said that Branch funds can also be used to fund part of the delegate expenses for accommodation and travel. The delegate is decided at the Branch AGM, but accommodation should be booked soon.

11.8 Welfare

No enquiries received since the last meeting.

11.9 Membership

The Branch has 44 members as of the 17th August weekly report on the MAP.

The welcome letter is being written.

11.10 Branch Standard

The Standard has not been paraded since the last meeting.

11.11 Correspondence

P Cox reported that correspondence received since the July meeting includes:

Correspondence from Legion County Office and National Headquarters:

Membership Newsletter August 2025

Articles include:

- VJ Commemoration at the National Memorial Arboretum Friday 15th August.

- Asian Heritage Month - remembering the crucial contributions of 2.5 million men and women from South Asia who joined the Allies during WWII.
- Legion Central Band Turns 80.
- Veterans Honoured with the Legion D'honneur during State Visit.
- Volunteers needed for the Poppy Appeal.
- Remembrance Sunday Cenotaph Parade.
- Highlights from Annual Conference are available.

Central News August 2025

Articles include:

- Advice on raising funds for the Legion on online platforms such as GoFundMe – they automatically go to the HQ General fund, but can be redirected to an individual Branch.
- Inform HQ if you are inviting celebrities, influencers, or members of the Royal Family, to Remembrance.
- Standard Bearers attire is the responsibility of the Chair of the Branch, County etc. Legion Standard bearers must wear attire as in the Ceremonial Handbook rather than other uniforms.
- Reminder: Membership Fee increase to £22.
- Branch Disbursements Report (of membership fees) is on the MAP.
- Membership Handbook – new edition out in September.
- Election nomination packs for 2025/26 and Annual Conference 2026 October Special Circular will be issued in October.
- The Legion offers any remaining Cenotaph Parade tickets to eligible veterans who are not RBL members or affiliated to a service or unit associations.
- Annual Conference highlights video, and full videos of each session are available.
- The RBL's Central Band has a concert on Sunday 12 October at Cadogan Hall in London.
- Remembrance Parade Guidance: The Legion and Local Government Association (LGA) have jointly composed a guidance letter which is available on the LGA website.
- Request for feedback on the County and Branch Toolkit issued recently.
- The Royal British Legion proudly supports South Asian Heritage Month (18 July – 17 August) with special content on the website, especially with VJ 80 this year.
- Back from the Brink – Solihull Branch – an example of a Branch that was saved by strong relations with the local community.
- One year since our first centenarian memberships – honorary membership to those over 100 years old. Article includes a particular member 101 years old.

Reminder of National Membership Fee Increase

- As agreed at the 2024 Annual Conference, the fee will by £2 each year from 2024 to 2028.
- Increase from £20 to £22 from 4th September 2025.

Berkshire Weekly Accounts Update 18/8/25

- If a Branch has a transaction above £500, they need to be audited by an independent examiner.
- Drop-in accounts sessions provisionally booked for 2nd and 23rd Aug at Tilehurst.
- No completed accounts received.

Berkshire Weekly Accounts Update 2/8/25

- Ony 2 complete accounts received so far.
- Notes on what Bank statements are required and on sending in accounts.

- More drop-in sessions at Tilehurst.

Berkshire accounts mid-season update 2025 19/8/25

- Only 4 complete accounts received so far.
- Others have been submitted incomplete for various reasons.
- Branches are encouraged to submit accounts as soon as possible.
- Good Branch Guide and Year End Accounts pack.

Berkshire accounts drop-in session Saturday 2nd August 10-4pm

- At Tilehurst RBL Club.
- To get Branch accounts audited or help with accounts.

IT Messages problem 4th August

- Members may have received emails on 4th August from the IT Service Desk (HALO) about previous email support tickets. These messages were sent in error during the launch of the new system.
- Please delete and ignore any messages from the IT Service Desk for the time being.
- We will notify you once the issue has been fully resolved and normal service resumes.

Lloyds Bank Accounts

Information for Branches opening new Treasurer accounts and Branches being migrated to community accounts that charge fees.

Correspondence from Other Organisations

July / August Harwell News

Includes report about D Day Service.

Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire Annual General Meeting - Wednesday 1st Oct 2025

This is a charity supporting families with children under 5. It does not appear to have a direct link with veterans or the armed forces. We have not attended but seem to be on their mailing list. Registration required.

Moderna Opening Ceremony Wednesday 24th September.

Invitation to Press Launch. Registration required.

P Cox said that the committee members have other commitments, particularly on weekdays, this was passed to David Drew, County President. S Haycox said that he may be available.

12. TREASURER'S REPORT

S Haycox reported:

12.1 Branch Funds

Funds held according to the latest statements as of 30th July 2025 are:

HARWELL BRANCH

Branch Funds Initiative (BFI). Account	£ 370
Current Account:	<u>£ 750</u>
<u>Total:</u>	<u>£ 1120</u>

12.2 Audit for 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025

S Haycox said that he had attended the drop-in session at Tilehurst, which was very helpful. They had completed the annual return spreadsheet with no error messages.

The BFI Statements and minutes for December 2024 to June 2025 were available for inspection.

A Logue talked through the accounts spreadsheet and made comments:

Summary of Branch Assets

Branch Current Account	Opening Balance: £ 81.67	Closing Balance: £ 271.30
BFI	Opening Balance: £ 857.73	Closing Balance: £ 370.10
Totals	£ 939.40	Closing Balance: £ 641.40

Decrease in Branch Funds £ 298

Summary of Income and Expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Membership subscription fees.	£ 107.50	Poppy Appeal Events	£ 328.49
BFI Interest.	£ 12.37	Room Hire	£ 89.38
Total	£ 119.87	Total	£ 417.87

Net movement in cash £ 298.

Restricted Funds

None. A Logue said that we can earmark money e.g. money raised for a specific thing. The money transferred from the Legacy account for the D Day flypast falls under this.

Additional Information

Large Amounts

£201 was donated for a 'Tommy' Silhouette at Harwell Memorial.

A Logue said that the Committee should understand that Branch funds cannot be used in this way in future.

Branch Funds Initiative Calculation

Opening Balance	£ 857.73
Interest Q1	£ 4.32
“ Q2	£ 4.35
“ Q3	£ 1.86
“ Q4	£ 1.84
Total Interest	£ 12.37

Withdrawal Q3 only £ 500.00

Closing Balance **£ 370.10**

Report of the Independent Examiner

Exceptions

No minutes for July 2024 to December 2024 due to new Committee taking over in December. Tommy statue was brought before new committee was in place, and the new committee now knows that funds cannot be used for items for the Poppy Appeal.

There were no further comments from the meeting so the accounts were approved.

A Logue said that the spreadsheet needs to be sent to County Chair R Edgington. The bank statements need to be signed to confirm what is in each account.

The bank statement for July 2024 was signed by R White as he was Chair then.
The bank statement for June 2025 was signed by T Pearson as current Chair.
The authority to disclose bank accounts form was signed by S Haycox and P Cox.
The Branch Certificate for the accounts was signed by T Pearson and S Haycox.
A Logue signed the Independent Examiner's report.

Action: T Pearson will scan in the signed documents and send these with the spreadsheet to County Chair R Edgington.

A Logue asked if the Branch bank account was set up for internet banking.
S Haycox said that it was.

A Logue asked about the Treasurer's RBL Community email account
S Haycox said that he had been unable to use this due to a clash with his work email. The clash was now resolved and he will use the RBL Community email from now on.

A Logue said that S Haycox should now have access to LOMAS.

S Haycox thanked all involved for their help.

13. To discuss the purchase of a new laptop for the treasurer to use, including Microsoft office. (Max price £250).

The Chair said that the laptop would be for the Treasurer's use, and would be passed on to the next Treasurer in due course.

Action: S Haycox to obtain a laptop.

14. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER'S REPORT

14.1 Contactless Donations Using Toucan App

A Logue suggested that the Toucan app could be used by collectors. This app can be installed on personal mobile phones. The app has the same display as the contactless terminals and can accept card donations in the same way. A code is required from S Brown, County Poppy Appeal Manager to activate the app.

P Cox reported:

14.2 D Day 2024 report

P Cox has not yet checked the last outstanding payment.

14.3 D Day 2025

The wreaths that were received damaged will be sent back shortly.

14.4 D Day Wreaths

There are a couple of receipts to send for card payments and a lost property ring which has not been claimed to go to Campus security.

14.5 Berkshire and the Vale Poppy Appeal Seminar 2025

H Benton and P Cox cannot attend due to personal circumstances.

14.6 VJ 80 Day 2025 Pub Collection

P Cox read the following report on behalf of H Benton:

I liaised with The Crown at Chilton about commemoration for VJ80. They held a Hog Roast afternoon on Sunday 17th August with a "wartime songs" singer. They committed to donate £1 for every Hog Roast sold and £1 for every pint of three types of beer sold.

A fantastic offer and commitment! I have not got the amount being donated yet. I will let the committee know once it is confirmed.

14.7 VJ 80 Day Wreaths

Poppy Appeal HQ have raised the price for wreaths with a badge to £28.50. Two wreaths with VJ 80 badges were provided, total £57.

S Haycox provided a cheque for £57 to the Poppy Appeal after the meeting.

14.8 2025 November Collection

P Cox and H Benton are working on the merchandise and wreath order for this year, which is due in by the end of the month.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 Uniform for Standard Bearers

A Logue said that Branch funds can be used to purchase the uniform including black suit, beret, beret badge, lapel pin, sling badge, and gauntlets.

15.2 Travel Expenses

S Haycox asked about travel expenses for the Accounts Seminar.

A Logue said that mileage is payable at 45p per mile.

Also, for Annual Conference, part refunds for travel are paid by National HQ, this amount is dependent on distance travelled. All costs would be borne by Branch. The 2026 Conference is at the Brighton Centre on 8th-10th May 2026. She suggested that accommodation is booked soon.

County Conference is at Newbury RBL Club on January 24th 2026 and delegates for County Conference can claim for lunch.

16. CONFIRM DATE AND VENUE OF AUGUST MEETING

S Haycox said that he is now available for meetings later in the evening.

T Pearson said that the next meeting will be on Thursday 21st September, at 17:15 in the Village Hall Committee Room. She will speak to committee members about meeting later in the evening.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 18:30 hours.

Minutes approved at the Branch meeting held on _____

Chair _____