



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY

ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNTY CONFERENCE

Held at

OVER COMMUNITY & CONFERENCE CENTRE

On

SATURDAY 25th JANUARY 2020

Attendance

Number of Delegates from Branches **24**

Number of Members & Visitors **52**

Number of Standard Bearers **15**

MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT OFFICER

Welcomed everyone to Conference and asked for upstanding to carry out the act of Remembrance

Parade of Standards

COUNTY PRESIDENT

Recited Legion Exhortation

LAST POST

Followed by a minutes silence

REVEILLE

COUNTY PRESIDENT

Recited the "Kohima"

SERVICE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

County Padre

COUNTY CHAIRMAN

Invited the Parade Marshal to march out the Standards

HM VICE LORD LIEUTENANT OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Mr Richard Barnwell

Vice Lord Lieutenant addressed Conference

PRESIDING:

Col (Ret'd) Roger Herriot OBE, DL – County President

PRESENT:

Vice Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, RBL Trustee Mr Philip Moore, Vikki Barr Armed Forces Covenant Development Officer Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Cllr. Mac McGuire Chairman CCC, County Officers & Committee, Branch Delegates, WS County Committee Members and Guests.

BRANCHES REPRESENTED BY DELEGATES

Chatteris, Cherry Hinton, City of Ely, Comberton, Earith, Bluntisham & Colne, Fulbourn & Teversham, Haddenham & Wilburton, Histon & Impington x 2, Huntingdon, Kimbolton, Littleport, March, Over, Peterborough, Ramsey & District, Sawston & Pampisford, Sawtry & District, Soham, Somersham, St Ives, Warboys, Waterbeach & Landbeach, Whittlesey.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY CONFERENCE
HELD AT OVER CONFERENCE & COMMUNITY CENTRE – 25th JANUARY 2020

COUNTY PRESIDENT - Welcomes Guests

On behalf of The Royal British Legion Cambridgeshire I would like to welcome, Her Majesty's Vice Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire Mr Richard Barnwell, The Chair of Cambridgeshire County Council Mr Mac McGuire, our guest speakers Philip Moore RBL Trustee, Vikki Barr Armed Forces Covenant Development Officer Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, County officers of The Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire women's section and all members present and their guests.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the County Chairman and his committee for all their hard work over what was a particularly busy year.

- 1. PRESIDENTS ADDRESS** - Presidents Annual Address (see Enclosure 1).
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - MSO informed the Conference that there had been apologies from Barrington Branch, Thorney Branch and St Neots Branch.
- 3. APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS** - The County Chairman informed the Conference that there was a requirement to nominate 2 Scrutineers, in the event of a close vote that may require a count to establish the correct vote. All items would be carried out by a show of voting cards from the delegates. Two attendees, non-delegates put themselves forward.

4. MINUTES OF 2019 ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNTY CONFERENCE

The County Chairman - requested the minutes from the previous Conference 2019 – to be taken as read and adopted as true record.

| Proposer (Delegate) | Seconder (Delegate) | Vote | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Chatteris Branch | Littleport Branch | For 24 | Against 0 | Abstain 0 |

5. MATTERS ARISING

The County Chairman – requested any matters arising from minutes of previous Annual Meeting of County Conference. The MSO had not received any items in advance and there were none put forward on the day.

6. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

County Chairman, Mr Alan Scott, presented his Annual Report to Conference (see Enclosure 2).

7. TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT

The County Chairman invited the Treasurer to present her report and the end of year accounts. County Treasurer presented her annual report (see Enclosure 3).

Representatives from the following Branches presented cheques to the Treasurer.

| County/Branches | County Welfare Fund |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Fulbourn & Teversham | £2000 |
| Over & District | £3000 |
| | Standard Bearer School |
| Over & District | £50 |

The County Chairman – Thanked the Branch representatives for their generous donations.

8. ADOPTION OF REPORTS

The County Chairman requested adoption of the Chairman’s Report, the Treasurers Report and 2019 Cambridgeshire Accounts.

| Proposer (Delegate) | Seconder (Delegate) | Vote | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| St Ives Branch | Histon & Impington Branch | For 24 | Against 0 | Abstain 0 |

9. GUEST SPEAKER – PHILIP MOORE – RBL TRUSTEE

The County Chairman invited the RBL Trustee to address the Conference. Mr Philip Moore gave his address of which the ‘Legions Notes to Conference Speakers’ are enclosed (**see Enclosure 4**).

Following his presentation Mr Philip Moore answered questions from the floor.

The County Chairman thanked Philip for his informative presentation to Conference.

10. MOTIONS/DISCUSSION POINTS TO CONFERENCE

The County Chairman informed the Conference, that there was one (1) Discussion Point to be presented to Conference.

10.1. Kimbolton Branch BR0608 – Our discussion paper refers to the Strategic Review document November 2019 update that was published on the MAP system. The Kimbolton branch would welcome the views of other branches regarding the impact of the proposed changes. It appears to us that decisions have already been made without any supporting evidence; for example.

“The Legion is now consulting with staff members about proposals on closing our four Break Centres in Portrush, Southport, Bridlington and Weston-Super-Mare and discontinuing our home maintenance ‘Handy Van’ service.”

We would expect to see the reasons why these facilities are closing and to have been briefed by HQ and involved in the review. We would like to hear from those branches that have used the poppy van and the break centres – and encourage the county to pass on our views to HQ.

Outcome – RBL Trustee, Mr Philip Moore, spoke further to Conference about the Strategic Review decisions.

BREAK FOR LUNCH & RAFFLE - Raffle Raised £192

11. COUNTY WOMEN’S SECTION REPORTS

11.1. RBLWS Cambridgeshire County – Vice Chairman - Mrs Linda Mitchell presented her report. (**see Enclosure 5a**).

11.2. RBLWS Huntingdonshire County - Chairman - Miss Audrey Manchett presented her report. (**see Enclosure 5b**).

12. AREA MANAGERS REPORT

The Area Manager was not requested to attend County Conference but had produced a report; this was in the delegates pack and is enclosed. (see Enclosure 6).

13. COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER’S (CFR) REPORT

Mr Tony Twigger addressed Conference and a copy of his report is provided (see Enclosure 7).

14. ADOPTION OF COUNTY PLAN 2020 – 2023 and COUNTY BYE-LAWS

The plan reflects the business of the County and its aims and aspirations. The Chairman requested that the delegates propose and adopt the updated document.

| Proposer (Delegate) | Secunder (Delegate) | Vote | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Cherry Hinton Branch | Sawston & Pampisford Branch | For 24 | Against 0 | Abstain 0 |

ADOPTION OF COUNTY BYE-LAWS

The Bye-Laws have been updated for 2020, the Chairman requested that the delegates propose and adopt the updated documents.

| Proposer (Delegate) | Secunder (Delegate) | Vote | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Somersham Branch | March Branch | For 24 | Against 0 | Abstain 0 |

15. ELECTION OF COUNTY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

County Chairman informed the Conference that the Members wishing to form the new County Committee are provided within the Delegates pack. He asked the Conference Delegates if there were no objections to Propose, Second and Vote, the nominated volunteers for election.

COUNTY OFFICERS

The term of Office for County Vice Chairman is due completion at the January 2020 Annual Meeting of Conference.

The current County Chairman, Mr Alan Scott, still has 2 years left in post following his election at the 2019 Annual Meeting of Conference.

Paperwork was sent out in July 2019 reference nominees for election for the County Vice Chairman position; the required date for returns was Monday 11th September 2019. On that date the MSO had received no nomination for the position of County Vice Chairman.

This post will stay vacant until the first Committee meeting of 2020 when an appointment will be made to cover the post until Election for 2021 Conference.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS – NOMINEES

Members Elected this Conference for a 3 year term:

| APPOINTMENT | NOMINEE | BRANCH | Term |
|------------------|-------------|-------------------|--------|
| Committee Member | Mr W Newman | Whittlesey Branch | 3 Year |

| | | | |
|------------------|------------|-------------|--------|
| Committee Member | Mr B Moyes | Over Branch | 3 Year |
|------------------|------------|-------------|--------|

| Proposer (Delegate) | Secunder (Delegate) | Vote | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Kimbolton Branch | Over Branch | For 24 | Against 0 | Abstain 0 |

Afternote: MSO has altered the Proposer and Secunder for the above as they were incorrect in the initial Minutes sent out after Conference – 25/02/2020

16. APPOINTMENT OF COUNTY CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The County Chairman stated there was a requirement for 3 members (not County Committee Members) to be appointed to the Conference Committee. The commitment for these positions is not exacting and will involve 2-3 meetings in the year. The following member put their names forward:

| APPOINTMENT | NOMINEE | BRANCH |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Conference Committee Member | Mrs M Thompson | St Ives Branch |
| Conference Committee Member | Mr M Chennels | Sawston & Pampisford Branch |
| Conference Committee Member | Mr B Jones | Chatteris Branch |

17. ELECTION OF COUNTY DELEGATE TO NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The County Chairman stated that at present the Committee had not discussed this appointment. With the agreement of the Conference this decision will be taken forward to the first County Committee meeting.

| Proposer (Delegate) | Secunder (Delegate) | Vote | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| City of Ely Branch | Cherry Hinton Branch | For 24 | Against 0 | Abstain 0 |

18. VOTE OF THANKS

The County Chairman gave a vote of thanks to guest speakers and guests, Conference Committee, those who have assisted with the running of the raffle and for an excellent turnout to all those present.

19. DATE & VENUE OF NEXT ANNUAL MEETING OF COUNTY CONFERENCE

The County Chairman informed those present that Conference 2021 would be held at Over Community and Conference Centre. A date would be arranged and shared at a later date.

20. COUNTY AWARDS – The County Chairman announced the winners of awards, the presentation conducted by County President. A list of the recipients is enclosed (**Enclosure 8**).

21. **INDUCTION OF COUNTY STANDARD BEARER** - County President performed the Charge and induction of the returning County Standard Bearer Mrs May Fowler.
22. **CLOSE** - The County Chairman - As all relevant business had been transacted, declared the Annual Meeting of County Conference closed.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM
The Standards Retire

MSO

Dax Francis

County Chairman

Enclosures:

1. **County President's Address**
2. **Cambridgeshire County Chairman's Report**
3. **County Treasurer's Report**
4. **Guest Speaker – Corporate Address**
- 5a. **RBLWS Cambridgeshire Vice County Chairman Report**
- 5b. **RBLWS Huntingdonshire Chairman Report**
6. **Area Managers Report**
7. **CFR Report**
8. **County Awards**

Distribution:

Cambridgeshire County Officers
Cambridgeshire Committee Members
Cambridgeshire Branch Secretaries

Copy to:

Membership Plans & Co-ordination
Mr John Boisson – Membership Council Rep East Anglia & Essex
Mr John McCarthy – Area Manager East Anglia & Essex
Mr Tony Twigger – Community Fundraiser

Cambridgeshire County President's address – Col (Ret'd) Roger Herriot OBE, DL

Vice Lord Lieutenant, Chairman Cambridgeshire County Council, RBL trustee Philip Moore, Vikki Barr Armed Forces Covenant development officer, ladies and gentlemen.

2019 was as ever a busy year for the RBL and 2020 shows early signs of being even busier! I have been honoured to represent the County in my capacity as President on numerous occasions and also used my position as a Deputy Lieutenant to promote the Legion at every opportunity.

I have been particularly interested in promoting Youth Affiliation and I would like to thank Colin Elsdon for his splendid work to date. Youth engagement is essential to us if we want to survive and I know that support from youth organisations has always been a part of the legion. Colin and I attended the Scout jamboree in Huntingdon this year and following that we officially affiliated Cambridgeshire Scout group later in the year, taking the number of affiliated organisations to 44.

I look forward to seeing many affiliated youth groups attend the awards ceremony on 21st March; I note from Colin that only two awards have been submitted to date. To expand the youth affiliation Colin is arranging a RBL Affiliated youth groups standard bearers competition on Saturday 4th April. I hope that this will be fully supported by all branches with affiliated youth groups all 44.

I was delighted to take part in a battlefield tour of Monte Cassino run by the Royal Anglian Regiment. As so much of the focus was on D Day it was eye opening to see the terrain and understand how hard the series of battles were. I was happy to give a short talk on the trip to Sawston Branch.

As a veteran of Operation Banner I attended the 50th anniversary commemoration at the National Arboretum, a very moving ceremony not dampened by the torrential rain simulating conditions in NI. The RBL are to be commended for the organisation of the event.

I have been delighted to attend some of the branches for their committee meetings and to present awards at Huntingdon to Mr Tony Clancy who has been poppy selling for over 40 years without a mention or recognition. I was delighted too to attend the Cambridgeshire women's section conference and enjoyed their guest speaker. (I still have a little chuckle occasionally).

The poppy launch was in Cambridge in 2019 and I was pleased to welcome the Mayor of Cambridge councillor Geri Bird to the event. The grand arcade booked and paid for a group of re-enactors of Home Guard who attended in uniform with weapons and sandbags. The mayor's picture behind the Vickers machine gun was a treasure. The remembrance parades went well with a few exceptions, and as you know I get the reports from the DL's attending. If you buy the VLL a drink he will regale you with the story of the moving saluting dais!!

I was saddened to hear that the Cambridge memorial had all the wreaths thrown into the botanic gardens some evening after the event and my thanks to both the City Council and Cambridgeshire Police for collecting them and putting everything back in order. Unfortunately this seems to be the world we live in today, maybe we need to educate youth more.

This year the focus is on VE and VJ day with events across the County, Cambridge city are planning an event which is very welcome, and there will be a major event at Ely cathedral on 19th July, so make a note in your diary.

It is disturbing that the RBL has had some negative publicity recently and I know some branches have issues with lack of support, I hope that Philip can reassure us as to the current situation as it is worrying when long serving and loyal members of the RBL feel that their efforts are wasted and talk of resigning.

Finally, as County President, I just wanted to record my personal appreciation for all that you, as volunteers, do for the Royal British Legion year in, year out. I know that you get great satisfaction from a job well done, but I know that in the words of most Company Sergeant Majors, you do it in your own time, and often without immediate recognition. You will have seen the fulsome tributes written about your efforts, but it is important that you are also told at occasions like this that you do fantastic things for, or on behalf of the Legion, and also for those who depend on them when life is hard. I am very grateful to you and will always say so.

Thank you.

County Chairman's Report – Mr Alan Scott

Introduction and welcomes

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Richard Barnwell | Vice-Lieutenant for Cambridgeshire |
| Councillor Mac McGuire | Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council |
| Philip Moore | Board of Trustees Royal British Legion |
| Vikki Barr | Armed Forces Covenant Coordinator |

Organisation

Approximately 3,500 members, down 7.5% over year

46 branches

1 branch closure (Arbury) during year

Concern over some other branches

County Committee well manned (14 elected members) but no vice chairman at present.
Urgently need County Recruiting Officer

Some branches successfully recruiting new members

Active branches retain their membership and recruit new ones; inactive branches do not

Strategic Review

Philip Moore to present later

Administration and Finance

Most branch returns in on time. Concern over a small minority of branches

Need to improve support to clubs and branches with clearer guidance to branch officers

Welfare

County well covered by Volunteer Case Workers

Need more branches to sign up for BCS.

County responds every quarter to requests for Almonisation.

Welfare fund is healthy but branches encouraged to donate surplus welfare funds to county for Almonisation.

Branches to be aware of new £200 crisis grant.

Training

Need to get more county committee members on county management courses

Need to get more branch officers on branch management courses

Provide basic local management training to new county and branch committee members

Work with neighbouring counties to deliver training

Organise local briefing sessions on key topics and spread best practice

Remembrance and Ceremonial

Excellent feedback on remembrance events around county

Well supported by Lieutenant's office and by most local authorities

Management of road closures is an issue in some locations

Excellent support from Lieutenancy and from CCC

Training of novice and youth standard bearers

Comradeship

County officers and committee members to visit branches and clubs

Encourage branches to put on simple comradeship events

Work with other such as breakfast clubs

Arrange social events with neighbouring branches

Armed Forces Covenant

RBL representation on AFCB Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Vikki Barr to present later

Communication

Encourage branches to communicate more effectively with their members

Use social media more effectively

Use Office 365

Improve PR through local media and opinion formers

Summary

There's a lot to do

We only have a few volunteers to do it

Don't be afraid to use your initiative

Exciting year ahead!

County Treasurers Report to Conference

Copies of the audited accounts for the financial period to Jun 2019 have been sent out to Branches and delegates have a copy in their packs today. There have been no questions arising so I would ask that the accounts are accepted.

County Welfare Fund: Jul 2018 to Jun 2019

The County makes payments to Head Office towards Welfare in Cambridgeshire. County makes a grant then we wait for the request for payment. Currently we have two payment requests outstanding, covering the period from April 2018 to March 2019. Together they come to just over £14,000.

We would like to say thank you to all Branches who have made donations to the County Welfare fund, and as always we do welcome further contributions from the Branches. During the last financial year we received donations from Thorney Branch, Hills Road College and the ANZAC Society.

The Branch Funds Initiative – remains at 2% (1.9851), and is still a better return than High Street Banks and is still the best place for your branch's excess funds.

Independent Examiners: We still need Independent Examiners in Cambridgeshire.

In Cambridgeshire there is still only me! (And I still need a refresher course) So a volunteer or two would be wonderful.

Remember Independent Examiners are free of charge except for travel and/or postage so please get in touch through Dan when you need your accounts checked.

And if you need help, please do get in touch sooner rather than later so that we can get things sorted. Again contact through Dan.

Finally, well done to the treasurers out there, and I thank everyone for their support

County Treasurer
Lorna Jones

County Welfare

Grant from County by area

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|----------|---|----------|---|----------|
| Peterborough | £ | 4,887.81 | £ | 1,923.38 | £ | 6,811.19 |
| Cambridge | £ | 1,920.95 | £ | 307.47 | £ | 2,228.42 |
| Chatteris | £ | 98.50 | £ | - | £ | 98.50 |
| Ely | £ | 230.74 | £ | 829.65 | £ | 1,060.39 |
| March | £ | 1,449.50 | £ | - | £ | 1,449.50 |
| Wisbech | £ | 1,486.79 | | | £ | 1,486.79 |
| Saint Ives | £ | - | £ | - | £ | - |
| St Neots | £ | 631.92 | £ | 100.00 | £ | 731.92 |
| Huntingdon | £ | 235.33 | £ | - | £ | 235.33 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|----------|---|-----------|
| £ | 10,941.54 | £ | 3,160.50 | £ | 14,102.04 |
|---|-----------|---|----------|---|-----------|

Grant from County by type

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|----------|---|----------|---|----------|
| Housing | £ | 946.08 | £ | 231.32 | £ | 1,177.40 |
| Training | £ | 100.00 | £ | - | £ | 100.00 |
| Crisis | £ | - | £ | 100.00 | £ | 100.00 |
| Debt | £ | 1,100.96 | £ | 484.50 | £ | 1,585.46 |
| Mobility | £ | 6,305.56 | £ | 1,942.67 | £ | 8,248.23 |
| Funeral | £ | 290.90 | £ | - | £ | 290.90 |
| White Goods | £ | 672.40 | £ | - | £ | 672.40 |
| Brown Goods | £ | 1,525.64 | £ | 402.01 | £ | 1,927.65 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|----------|---|-----------|
| £ | 10,941.54 | £ | 3,160.50 | £ | 14,102.04 |
|---|-----------|---|----------|---|-----------|

Guest Speaker – RBL Trustee Mr Phillip Moore – Corporate Address

The Legion took *Remember Together* as the theme for Remembrance in 2019. We wanted to remind people of the crucial role played by the Commonwealth, Allies, and Resistance in defending Britain's freedoms and values.

We marked the 75th anniversary of the events of 1944 which led to victory in Europe and the Far East. In particular, the three mighty battles that turned the tide of war: Normandy in France, Monte Cassino in Italy, and Imphal and Kohima in Northern India.

Above all, we wanted to salute the veterans of 1944. Yet, their attendance at events brought challenges. In particular for D-Day 75, how could we make the voyage to France convenient, comfortable and safe for over 300 veterans, many nearing their 100th birthday? The answer was a cruise ship, the MV *Boudicca*. We chartered the vessel to carry 600 veterans and their family to events in the UK and across the channel to Normandy. The voyage drew national attention. By the time the trip had finished, the veterans had appeared in more than 1,000 media stories and received more than 24 hours of TV coverage. It was recognition well deserved.

On dry land, the Legion led our vets through a week of D-Day events in Portsmouth, Bayeux and at the National Memorial Arboretum. And veterans who fought in the four-month battle for Monte Cassino were honoured at the Arboretum, while the so-called Forgotten Army of the Far East was honoured by the Legion in partnership with the National Army Museum. We wanted to represent the many nations that fought at Britain's side so we made sure these events involved veterans of many nations. History would have turned out quite differently in their absence.

But Remembrance in 2019 wasn't all about looking back to the Second World War.

In August, the Arboretum hosted a commemoration marking 50 years since the start of Op Banner in Northern Ireland. More than 3,000 veterans attended to honour those who served in the longest campaign in British military history. The Arboretum also hosted the launch of Tribute Ink, an exhibition that shows how today's Armed Forces use tattoos to record the service and sacrifice of their comrades. This groundbreaking exhibition goes on national tour from January 2020 and is well worth a look. Visit the Legion website to find out when it will be near you.

Next year, we will mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day in May and VJ Day in August. The Legion will be hosting veterans at the heart of national events for both. VE 75 will focus on veterans in London over the May Bank Holiday weekend, while on 15th August we will move to the Arboretum for VJ 75. And we will be providing you with advice and toolkits so that similar events can be held in towns and cities across the UK.

Our members and volunteers sit at the heart of The Royal British Legion. We have a strong community of over 225,000 members and they play a vital role in Remembrance, fundraising, and charity work across the UK and overseas. We also have 120,000 dedicated volunteers who contribute 2.5 million hours each year, providing support for the Armed Forces community. In 2019, we asked our members for their comments and suggestions and received nearly 19,000 replies. Now we have the task of turning these into improvements which we can report to you next year. We're always looking at how we can communicate better. We have increased face to face meetings and newsletter subscriptions. We also have more than 2,000 branches using Office 365 and a very active community on the Yammer social network. The digital experience for members will be a priority going forward.

But life isn't all about online social networks. We realise that members want branches that reflect their interests. Our new LGBTQ+ and Allies branch was a big step in making membership in the Legion welcome to all – especially as 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the Armed Forces lifting its gay ban.

A word about safeguarding. The Legion takes safeguarding seriously, and we have introduced dedicated new systems and training. Because of this, more incidents are being recorded than ever before. We are committed to making the Legion a safe place for our beneficiaries and our people. So remember – if you are a member involved in face to face work with beneficiaries, you must be included in safeguarding training. And if you see, hear, or feel something is just not right – report it. For more, contact safeguarding@britishlegion.org.uk.

Members and volunteers play a vital role in fundraising. And you've never done a better job when it comes to the Poppy Appeal. I'm very pleased to tell you that the 2018 Poppy Appeal raised nearly £52 million, the largest amount in our history. The result was boosted with some help from the Centenary year, accompanied by the Legion's *Thank You* movement that generated 500 community events. Most of these community events and collections are thanks to our dedicated members and volunteers. In total, we distributed 40 million poppies, 7 million pins and 27,000 school packs. And our use of contactless raised more than £200,000, the most ever.

Meanwhile, our corporate partners gave us great support. M&S raised more than £1.2 million from poppy products. Sainsbury's sold heritage brands, helping the Legion to raise another £3m. The Poppy Shop continues to grow with a turnover of £5.6m. This ranged from sales of the popular Women of The First World War brooch to a range of products for D-Day 75. We are also very grateful for individual donations, including £20 million left to the Legion by 900 generous people in their wills.

In the coming year, we will be looking at our portfolio of products to make sure they are delivering best value for the charity. And we will be raising funds across the UK through activities to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day. The money you help us raise provides life long support to the Armed Forces community.

In 2019, we responded to more than 180,000 enquiries through our helpline and 104,000 visits to our Pop-In centres. We've assisted even more through Veterans' Gateway, the collaborative service we launched in 2017 to direct veterans to the help they need. It has answered 140,000 enquiries and referred nearly 40,000 people to partners for help – the top three partners are the Forces Pension Society, the Legion and SSAFA. In addition, more than 600,000 web site visitors have searched for information and advice, the top three areas of need being around finance, housing and mental wellbeing.

With such a wide range of people and needs, it's impossible to cover all of what we do – but here is a sampler of what we do: We helped 1,300 veterans with hearing loss from service with nearly £5 million towards state-of-the-art hearing aids. A further 67 veterans with physical injuries from service received £500,000 for physiotherapy, wheelchairs, and other equipment. Membership help through Branch Community Support reached 4,000 socially isolated people. Nine hundred branches have now signed up and between them have paid 10,000 visits.

There were no Invictus Games in 2019, so the UK ran its own national trials in July. These involved more than 300 athletes and nearly 600 friends and family, who were supported by the Legion. We gave grants to 24,000 people. Some got free books for families supplied by the Women's Section. Others got access to specialist nurses for those with spinal injuries. We are seeing an increase in people with complex multiple needs. In the coming year, we will focus on working with our partners to provide a network of care. We will be helped by a new management tool that will coordinate the efforts of more than 90 Armed Forces charities. We are also looking forward to supporting Team UK and their families to the international Invictus Games at the Hague in May 2020.

Of course, sometimes the best help the Legion can deliver is persuading Government to do its bit. Our campaign team continues to make the case for a question in the census about membership in the Armed Forces community. Come the 2021 Census, we want to know where they are. In September we launched our new Housing Best-Practice Guides. These help tackle the challenges that service leavers and veterans can face when it comes to housing. Using our guides, we hope local authorities will reduce homelessness among the Armed Forces community.

Our 2018 report, *Loneliness and Social Isolation in the Armed Forces Community*, revealed that a quarter of respondents often or always felt lonely. As a result, questions on loneliness are now included in regular Armed Forces surveys for the first time. We hope to build a long-term picture of how Armed Forces families experience loneliness and how we can support them. Growing up in a military family can be tough

for some children. That is why we joined forces with an alliance of groups focused on the needs of children from military families. Already, we succeeded in having universities identify service children in university application forms and provide them with any specialist support they may need.

On Commonwealth Day in March we launched our *Stop the Service Charge* campaign. It calls on the Government to scrap visa fees for Commonwealth personnel and their families when applying to settle in the UK after four years of service. This campaign has gained a lot of national media coverage. The MOD and over a quarter of MPs have pledged their support. The Home Office are looking into the issue and we hope for a positive result. In the coming year, we will continue to press our case on the census and visa fees for Commonwealth personnel and we will launch a new campaign to ensure that military compensation is not included when calculating income for state benefits.

We can see the extraordinary success and contribution of our charitable work. And we want to do more. Through our strategic review, we want to enhance our Remembrance and campaigning work, building on successes I've already highlighted. We want to provide more consistent support and deliver locally, regionally and nationally. We want to get more involved with local communities, volunteers and members. And we want to reach more diverse communities, especially those from the Commonwealth.

We are doing a strategic review because we need adapt to the changing Armed Forces community. We need to remain cost-effective and we want to ensure the long-term sustainability of the charity. I'm sure we all want the Legion to be here for the next 100 years as well.

We have a diverse set of beneficiaries – geographically spread, with a wide age range, and a broad spectrum of needs. Our services need to respond to that, from the intensive support of a care home to one-off advice. We plan to invest more in personalised case work, to strengthen our collaborative work by funding external specialist and localised organisations, and to reinvigorate our care model for older veterans.

However, to enable us to refocus our funding to where it has the greatest impact, we need to stop some of our current work. As you are aware, The Legion has consulted with staff about proposals put forward in November to close our four Break Centres in Portrush, Southport, Bridlington and Weston-Super-Mare and discontinue our home maintenance 'Handy Van' service.

I can confirm the decision has now been taken by the Board of Trustees to cease operating the break centres and Handy Van services. I would like to assure you the decision has not been taken lightly and is made with sadness as we know the services are much loved and some colleagues will be leaving the charity as a result. The affected staff have all contributed greatly to our work. They are part of our community and we are doing all we can to support them in their next steps.

One of the most important questions we must ask, indeed any charity should ask, is “Are the services we offer doing the best for the people we support, or can we have a greater benefit by doing something else?”

Ceasing these services will provide £5.8 million annually which will be diverted to address the urgent needs people are coming to us with. We will fund more through our external grants programme to specialist organisations and I am pleased to share with you today that we have agreed to provide £1 million a year for the next 3 years to support the vital work of Combat Stress.

As part of our Strategic Review, The Board of Trustees have established a Northern Ireland Advisory Committee to continue to review how best to meet beneficiary needs in the area. We recognise there is a unique situation for our community in Northern Ireland, because of both historic issues and current challenges, which make it difficult for veterans to find the support they need. Our aim is for the committee, made up of Legion staff and key external stakeholders, to co-ordinate with the recently reconvened Northern Ireland Assembly and liaise with the newly created Veterans Commissioner.

Although the break services will no longer operate across the Legion, the Board of Trustees have made the decision to temporarily utilise the Bennet house building in Portrush as a non-residential facility for Poppy Club, local community and other charity activity. The building will be available to help support beneficiaries in the area until July 2020 when our service provision in Northern Ireland will be re-evaluated using existing research and a new report due to be published by Queens University Belfast.

Ultimately the Board of Trustees have the responsibility to ensure that the organisation makes best use of our resources to deliver the greatest benefit for the people we support. They can see the full scope of work to be done both in terms of geography and in terms of the range of needs. To keep improving, to keep providing the most impactful services to help create better futures for our armed forces and their families, we need to work together, as One Legion. A vital part of our strategic review aims to improve how we deliver our services to our different groups of people. It could be to the people we support. It could be the comradeship of our members. It could be our supporters raising funds for our cause. Our people, tools, processes, culture and structure each play a part in determining our ability to deliver on what we do.

We have acknowledged that our greatest opportunity in this area is to design an operating model that provides a much more joined up charity - One Legion. One Legion recognises that our different audiences are often not mutually exclusive but overlap. A member can be a beneficiary and is quite often a donor that also likes to participate in Remembrance. We will be driven by a single-minded strategic ambition with a focus on impact and effectiveness and the satisfaction of the people we serve. We're going to leave behind the approach that calculated the sum of different parts of the organisation designed and built in isolation.

We have a new vision: *To bring together the nation, communities, and individuals to create better futures for our Armed Forces and their families.*

A shared vision is important so that everyone in the Legion can be clear about who we are, what we do and how our work contributes towards that.

You, as members, are vital to helping us achieve a One Legion team approach. We want to work collaboratively with you to continue being a force for good in the years to come, to create better futures for our armed forces and their families.

RBLWS County Vice Chair's Report – Mrs Linda Mitchell

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, in the absence of the Cambridgeshire County Women's Section Chairman Marie Skells I thank you for the opportunity of addressing Conference.

Last June we were saddened with the news of the death of Debbie Williams our County Standard Bearer, I would like to thank all the RBL Standard Bearers who supported us at her funeral.

The County Committee is still active and meets quarterly but with less members. To save on expenses we now look to have some of our meetings away from Cambridge.

In April last year we organised an enjoyable, and very well supported Tea Dance, one of our Vice-Presidents, who is 98 led the dancing and whilst we didn't make a lot of money it was well worth organising just to get the membership together. We also held a Carol Concert at St Mary's Church, Westry, a lovely service which was supported by the Women's Institute choir. Thank you to the Standard Bearers who attended.

Our Annual Conference was held at the beginning of November, our speaker was Lucy Lewis an excellent speaker who was the first lady Bomb Disposal Officer in the Royal Engineers.

Membership numbers have decreased over the past year with two more branches closing and another talking of closing. Generally, the membership are not happy with the new renewal process, there have been a lot of different permutations on how receipt of the new cards were received. Many initially didn't get a letter telling them how to renew or how to speak to anyone at Novacraft, who understood the issues.

We were told that those of us who were members of the RBL, would from 2019, use that number for their Women's Section membership, however this didn't happen to everyone and new numbers were issued with new renewal dates. Without any warning to us or request for permission, some, but not all, of us who pay their RBL renewal by direct debit automatically had their Women's Section fee deducted as well which many of us think was illegal. Others who pay their RBL subscriptions by bank transfer also had to pay their Women's Section fee at the same time. The system would not allow the amount to be altered. Both ways caused problems to those who were not going to renew their Women's Section membership.

Some cards were not issued because the records for some of the members sent with the accumulated cheque were not complete. We were not aware that the date of birth was now mandatory and we need to know why. We no longer get any information from Head Office/Central Committee so can no longer tell our members how their money earned from fund raising is being spent.

A County seminar was held in Haig House in September and we had a delegate there. During discussions she suggested that members needed to know what was going on, such as more information on membership renewal; more information on membership numbers and where the money is being spent. Our Delegate was told that a letter would be sent out to all branches by the end of October sharing this information.

By the middle of November with no correspondence received our delegate rang the National Vice-Chairman and was told that they weren't sending a letter as it would cost too much for the postage. With the amount of time and money spent on the renewal fiasco postage should not have been a concern. At the very least, they could have contacted the seminar delegates and asked them to cascade down the change of mind. We in Cambridgeshire are deeply concerned at the lack of consideration to the membership and the effect this will have on our membership going forward.

I will be attending National Conference in Winchester next week, where I will be proposing a motion concerning the upkeep of the Women's Section garden at the National Arboretum which is currently in a very bad state. I hope that we might also get an update on the current state of the Women's Section. Finally, the Women's Section will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary in 2021 and we have been asked to keep the 24 July free for a service at the National Arboretum. In view of this I sincerely hope that we can resolve the renewal process.

On behalf of our County Committee I thank you Mr Alan Scott, County Chairman and Daniel Francis, MSO for including us in anything that you think is of interest to us, I wish you success for the coming year.

Linda Mitchell
Vice-Chairman
Cambridgeshire County

RBLWS HUNTINGDONSHIRE COUNTY CHAIRMAN's REPORT – Miss A Manchett

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO PRESENT THIS REPORT ON BEHALF OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE COUNTY
Of which I have been the chairman for 26 years.

With the centenary year of the Armistice the end of the First World War 2018 when the Royal British Legion invited the public to be involved in the Thank You campaign and to give thanks to the 1st W. W. generation, we saw record numbers attending Remembrance parades up and down the country, 2019 was relatively quieter in some ways for us, but with the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of VE DAY next year and I know some of you are already planning events I am sure we will have another impact on the general public awareness, having said that 2019 saw the 75th anniversary of D-Day and other momentous events of 1944 a very dramatic year which led to the victory the following year, this gave us the opportunity to say thank you once again to our veterans, our heroes for their bravery, courage and sacrifice. We were asked to remember the commonwealth and allied nations who have supported and worked alongside us over the years therefore the theme for remembrance last year was Remember Together.

Now to the Women's Section of the Royal British legion as we are still worth fighting for and the battle continues, I thank all our members who have stayed faithful to the organisation and continue to work for the benefit of the organisation and its needs, we still have a difficult time ahead of us as discussions with the RBL continue with the re- building of our future, we all enjoy what we do best, that's fund raising but more important we know how to have fun doing it. We are told we are a wonderful part of the RBL. Becoming incorporated into the RBL membership system we were assured that membership renewals would be much easier, I can assure it has been far from easy, you may be interested to know all 4 of our branches have experienced problems renewing their memberships, we even asked the question do they really want us. Ramsey Branch ended up writing to the National Chairman of the R.B.L. to sort it out as we were getting no where with telephone calls, other Branches and individuals have made numerous calls, trying to speak to someone who understands our problems is almost impossible and if you write you don't get an answer yes truly it has been and still is in some cases a nightmare for us, we are aware that head office have been working together to bring the administration of the WS in line with the RBL membership joining up as one data base, all members this year received individual renewal letters and membership cards we ask ourselves how much this has cost our charitable organisation. That's enough on that front we are still waiting on some members cards to be issued.

As an organisation we enjoy and value each others friendship several of us have experienced difficult times during the last year, and I say thank you for your thoughts and kindness shown to us, we do appreciated it. Our President and myself represented our County at various events during the last 12 months including flag raising ceremonies at Huntingdon to mark the various events; I also attended the laying up and Dedication Service of new Branch Standard in Huntingdon.

In July our president, secretary and myself along with some of our ladies from St.Ives attended the Summer Reception held at Buckden Towers organised by the Saint Georges Association to which we are always made very welcome. As I have already mentioned our members continue to support to the WS and remain very active in their branches and manage to entertain their members with interesting speakers.

Once again we held our County Annual party in July, which raised £243. It was another very enjoyable evening with a great entertainer Pat Campbell, an evening spent amongst friends.

Last November the County organised a Christmas Fayre this was a new venture for us but proved very successful with many different and various stalls participating it was truly a magical array of decorations

and gifts, raised £472. We held our County Conference in September followed by a tea party with musical entertainment this was enjoyed by all our members and guests present.

A total of £1,700 has been donated from the Branches during the last year, our thanks go to our ladies who always give generously supporting our fund raising events and raffle's, every raffle is not successful without prizes, and to those who donate prizes we do say a huge thank you.

In addition to this our ladies continue to support the Poppy Appeal organising events and donating this money raised separately and some hold joint events with their RBL branch.

I now say thank you for once again to each and every one of you the members for your continued support and your friendship and peace be with you all.

Audrey Manchett

County Chairman

EAST ANGLIA & ESSEX – AREA MANAGER REPORT

1. Introduction

It has been a very busy year for the Legion in East Anglia & Essex. I am delighted to present this annual report to you, outlining the key achievements for the year, how we have performed against delivering our plans and most importantly how we have served the Armed Forces Community in the Area.

I would like to thank every member from across the County for your hard work and support throughout the year, without which, we would not have delivered our plans or achieved so much.

2. Highlights and progress against last years plan

There have been a number of highlights during 2018/2019.

Our Pop In continues to be well used by those in need, with 4651 people coming through our doors with one query or another. Whilst a number of other Area's report that they feel the majority of their footfall comes from the general public seeking merchandise, ours is different. During Poppy Appeal the majority of our footfall is undoubtedly for merchandise. Outside of Poppy Appeal though, the vast majority is made up of beneficiaries coming through the door seeking help.

Huge numbers of "Calls for Help" from the Armed Forces Community continue coming in to our contact centre, where they try to deal with as many as possible at first point of contact. That said, there are invariably calls that are of a more complex nature that need to be assigned to us to assist with. 1289 of these Calls for Help came to us over the last year and I'm pleased to say that 1093 of these have been solved, with the remainder actively being worked on by experienced staff and volunteers, working with the beneficiary to get them to a place they feel secure and capable of managing independently.

The delivery of welfare and membership support has continued with a high level of dedication and professionalism. Cases have continued to become increasingly complex, requiring a greater amount of volunteer and staff time in order to reach a successful outcome. There is still room for improvement with Branch Returns, with a significant number of Branch Accounts not submitted on time. I am however pleased to see there hasn't been as many complaints or investigations this year.

Branch Community Support (BCS) is improving, with a number of branches launching their own Local Touchpoints, supported by the Area Office team. I'm so proud of the members that have managed to do this, with their continuing hard work and dedication to ensure they're a success. This is the start of work I'd like to continue this year, to support branches in their efforts to become a central part of their local community. We still have a great deal of work to do in this regard, in particular with Hospital & Home Visitors and Telephone Buddies who provide an essential service in tackling social isolation. Sadly, at present, demand for this service vastly outweighs the number of branches and volunteers able to supply the service. We're unable to directly assist the majority of those contacting us for this type of support. My hope is that the training we roll out this year for BCS Reps and those delivering this service will increase the number of those wishing to be involved with BCS. I will detail my further thoughts on BCS later in this report.

Our regional Benefits Debt & Money Advice (BDMA) Team assisted 553 people. This led to our beneficiaries being £3.5 million better off in benefits claimed and debts written off. 475 beneficiaries with complex independent living needs in our region, such as problems with social care and inability to safely move

around inside their home were assisted by our Independent Living Advisers (ILA). Our War Pensions and Compensation Team assisted beneficiaries to obtain 189 awards, resulting in almost £2 million going into our beneficiaries' pockets that would not have been paid to them.

For me personally, the highlight of the year was D-Day 75. It was a roaring success with many feeling its one of the "best things" the Legion has ever done. We had 36 Veterans across East Anglia & Essex, more than any other Area, looking to attend the commemorations with a family member or carer. Each of which required a visit from us to discuss the trip and assess their ability to cope aboard the MV Boudicca – a ship that was certainly not designed for 90+ year old veterans with mobility issues. This placed tremendous pressure on the team who were already working at capacity assisting beneficiaries. Nevertheless, over a couple of weeks we travelled the length and breadth of East Anglia to meet with these veterans and their families to carry out our assessments. What an honour this was and possibly the best boost for Team Morale I have seen in my six years with the Legion.

Despite the extra work placed upon individuals and the fact that they had to work evenings and weekends to fit these visits in, each and everyone of the team reported back how truly grateful they were to have the opportunity to meet these heroes! Of course, some now in their latter years were not as mobile as they had been, but they were still full of spirit and fight! Each had fantastic stories from their service and of their full lives. We were truly in awe at their accomplishments and how they continued to live their lives to the fullest. It's fair to say that these visits really rejuvenated everyone's sense of why they get up each day to go to work for the Legion.

My favourite story from these visits came from Alan Hill, our Advice & Information Officer (AIO). He visited a 98 year old veteran and his son at their home. The veteran, full of vigour and life, wanted to demonstrate how he was still "fit as a fiddle" and insisted that the whole visit be conducted outside whilst he stood at attention in his garden. Part way through this he explained how he used to be a Marine boxing champion and how he'd still be able to "take" our AIO in a fight! He then demonstrated his skills by shadow boxing him for several minutes until the veteran's son rescued Alan from a potential thrashing. Despite Alan being a tall physically fit gent who spends his evenings in the gym, he explained that he felt the 98 year old veteran could indeed have 'taken him'!

From a marketing perspective, D-Day 75 helped us promote the Legion to an incredible level. There were over a billion opportunities to see what the Legion was doing across various media platforms, with 1022 specific pieces of mainstream media coverage, including more than 24 solid hours of TV coverage. It's estimated that it would have cost more than £10 million to buy an equivalent level of advertising and importantly, on two thirds of the media coverage our key messaging about the Legion does get through.

3. Case Study

There have been hundreds of beneficiaries and cases that we have assisted with over the last 12 months. Just one of the many that I recall is for a family that contacted us in when they were in a great amount of turmoil.

We were contacted by the wife of a veteran who was suffering from undiagnosed complex PTSD & other mental health problems. The situation at home had been getting increasingly worse, with Mr having no mental health support and unwilling to seek any, having tried previously and been let down with huge waiting lists and no one getting back to him. Despite all her best efforts, Mrs was simply unable to cope. His health was such that he was in and out of work, which caused huge financial pressures on them. With neither able to cope they even went through a period of separation, despite them loving each other and their two young children very much. They were trying to make another go of it, but the financial situation, with the sporadic income was just getting worse, as was the Husband's mental health. They found themselves in accommodation they could no longer afford with Mr going through increasing episodes where he simply could not engage with anything, becoming increasingly angry, fearful, depressed and unable to cope with life.

The wife, proactive and committed, was trying to manage everything. Mr was doing his best and tried to work when ever he could as a self employed plumber. They needed support from the state though and had to try and engage with the benefits system, often faced with robotic responses and delays. The amount of paperwork and evidence required for a benefits application is substantial. The DWP is also not the greatest with efficiency. Mrs did all that she can persevere with this, but the knock backs had a detrimental effect on her husbands mental health. They would cause him to be disengaged and unwilling to comply with the DWP requests, his health further spiralling out of control.

The claims process is a lengthy one so they were without money for significant periods of time. Mr would pick up work where he could and of course reported it to the DWP, as he should. Unfortunately, the system is not designed for flexibility of income during initial application stages. Getting money through the assessment period would impact on their claim and essentially reset everything so that they had to start again.

Everything got too much and Mr tried to end his own life. It was shortly after this that the Legion were alerted by the wife who requested support from us. As well as our Case Officer we involved an Outreach Officer who specialises in supporting those with Mental Health issues. Despite this, in the early days of our involvement, before he starting believing there may be light at the end of the tunnel, he made a further attempt to take his life. Our Outreach officer was able to use his relationships with other agencies to ensure Mr received support from the NHS Complex Treatment Team. This is obviously just the start of a long road for the beneficiary, but it was the first step in moving him out of crisis and keeping him alive.

With the support of our Benefits Debt & Money Advice (BDMA) Team they began to negotiate the benefits terrain. Our Case Officer was providing them with funds for electricity and supermarket vouchers, so that they could at least get food for themselves and their children whilst all of this was going on. Whilst the Outreach Officer worked intensively with the husband, the Case Officer worked closely with the wife and provided huge amounts of emotional support and encouragement, as she tried to deal with the issues facing her family and look for somewhere more affordable to rent, as the current property was simply not financially sustainable. There was an urgency involved in finding somewhere as the Landlord was unwilling to be helpful and wanted to cut his losses. Sadly the Council were unable to support, other than placing them into B&B accommodation tens of miles from the children's school – the whole family in one room – which would have been disastrous for them, as neither beneficiary could have coped with it.

After knock backs from multiple landlords, Mrs eventually found somewhere they may be able to live, if only she could come up with the deposit needed to rent the property. The Legion stepped in to provide this and assist with the removals. It was an empty property and whilst the clients had some furniture, the white goods belonged to the previous landlord. We assisted with these to ensure they have the basic items they needed to cook, store food and wash their family's clothes. We also assisted with a bed for one of their children, as the current one was decades old and broken.

We supported them to move into new accommodation and get their home set up to a basic level. Our BDMA team continued to work with them to deal with the various debts that had racked up trying to get by before we got involved. They assisted with the whole benefits process, using their expert knowledge to address problems they knew would arise before the DWP raised them, eventually leading to benefits being in payment and a structure in place for the clients to adequately notify the benefit department of changes in their circumstances as and when Mr had income from work.

Mr continues to receive mental health support and is actively engaging with everyone he needs to. They have a stable home which they can afford and the children are able to get to and from school. Mrs recently advised they know they still have a long road ahead and each day still presents its challenges, but it's been years since they felt this well equipped to deal with all of these as a family. She feels their lives are unrecognisable now from what they were before she started receiving our support.

In addition to the grants made, hours and hours and hours of time has been spent by our Case Officer, BDMA and Outreach Officer pouring over paperwork, liaising with other organisations, explaining matters to the beneficiaries, agreeing actions & following these up, as well as providing emotional support and a listening ear to the clients to get them in the position they are now in. This has not only been worth it, but was absolutely essential to be able to assist these beneficiaries into a place where they are resilient enough to independently manage the significant challenges they face.

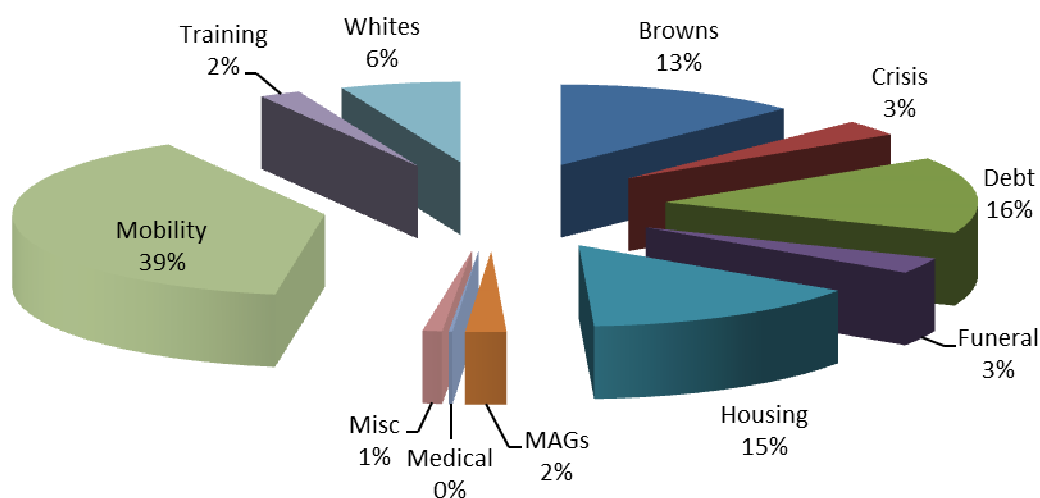
It is these types of cases and this level of support that has become standard for us. This is not an isolated situation and many of those we support are going through equally challenging times. Many of the cases we have are even far more complicated than this. This is now our day to day work.

4. Statistics and Beneficiaries

The table and chart below shows the grants made during 2018/19 in the East Anglia and Essex Area. You will see that the average age of our beneficiaries is decreasing rapidly – only a few years ago most of our grants went to people who were aged over 65. In the last year a third of our clients were under 40. The average size of a grant has increased to £1,179. 80% of our cases are linked to Army Service, whilst the remainder are evenly split between the RAF and Navy at 10% each. Maintenance Annuity Grants (MAGs) are grants from the Regimental Associations to the elderly hence the average age is 78.

| Area - East Anglia and Essex | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Category | Number | Value | Average Age |
| Mobility | 296 | £300,460 | 73 |
| Debt | 113 | £118,162 | 46 |
| Housing | 128 | £113,415 | 52 |
| Browns | 206 | £97,382 | 48 |
| Whites | 168 | £47,884 | 49 |
| Funeral | 31 | £24,773 | 57 |
| Crisis | 154 | £24,523 | 44 |
| Training | 17 | £16,442 | 37 |
| MAGs | 49 | £16,255 | 78 |
| Misc | 29 | £7,758 | 51 |
| Medical | 6 | £1,553 | 57 |
| Grand Total | 1197 | £768,607 | 55 |

Categories by value spent



The table below shows the grants made during 2018/2019 in Cambridgeshire. Although there are a large number of cases that have been around mobility such as scooters, stair lifts and adaptations to properties, we continue to see an increase in cases concerning homelessness where we have had to assist with housing and then household items. Hence mobility only represents 36% of the total cases in Cambridgeshire. We are working as close as we possibly can with local authorities and other organisations and we're actively working with covenant boards to highlight these issues and address them.

| County - Cambridgeshire | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Category | Number | Value | Age |
| Mobility | 86 | £75,836 | 70 |
| Browns | 41 | £20,605 | 50 |
| Housing | 21 | £18,550 | 46 |
| Debt | 18 | £18,425 | 45 |
| Whites | 27 | £8,512 | 49 |
| Funeral | 5 | £4,340 | 66 |
| Misc | 9 | £3,799 | 64 |
| Crisis | 16 | £3,468 | 39 |
| MAGs | 11 | £3,040 | 76 |
| Training | 2 | £1,594 | 45 |
| Medical | 1 | £359 | 59 |
| Grand Total | 237 | £158,527 | 58 |

It's difficult to fully explain the complexity of the cases we see each day now. In my time with the Legion I have seen these changes dramatically. There is no such thing as an "easy case" now. Even cases that would have been considered simple in previous years, are now becoming complex and time consuming due to the often chaotic and complex nature of the clients seeking help. Many have mental health or other support issues that are simply not been addressed by statutory services or other support organisations, like they would have been in previous years. It feels like statutory services are busting at the seams with huge waiting lists for any type of support. A lot of the charitable services that used to exist to support with these have disappeared due to lack of funding. Those that remain find they can't cope with the volume of people

now needing their support. This leads to greater numbers contacting us for support, presenting with a greater number of needs.

We are working as hard as we can with all of these important stakeholders to assist the armed forces community, but it is getting harder and harder each day. I see the toll this is taking on our staff and volunteers who want to ensure every beneficiary has their needs met, they work tirelessly to do this, constantly fighting an incoming tide of cases that use up more and more of their time. I'm pleased that the Strategy Review announced by our Director General is going to tackle this head on to ensure we are equipped to deal with new landscape in which we work.

5. Looking Forward

I don't feel we have achieved what we needed to with Branch Community Support (BCS) in 2018/2019 across the area, so this will be a priority focus in 2020. I genuinely believe that BCS could be a huge benefit to our community and to our branches. I feel it could be one of the best recruiting tools we have for membership!

Research shows that there a significant proportion of people, including those within our younger generations, that have an appetite to volunteer their time to a cause. What better cause than the work of The Royal British Legion! However, people today are not as interested in joining a membership organisation. Interest in attending meetings or helping to run a branch has dwindled – they want to get an increased sense of achievement and accomplishment for the time they donate. I want our branches to be at the heart of their local community, I want the community to see the invaluable support that you can offer, such as tackling social isolation, and want to them join their local branch in order to help you with this. I'd like to see if we can add value to our membership proposition, by reaching those that are seeking a cause and have them think, "I want to join my Legion branch so that I can go out and do this".

I'm committing to provide all those currently involved with BCS, and those looking to join, with training and support from the Area Office so that they can run Local Touch Points, be a Hospital & Home Visitor or a Telephone Buddy. We want to support you to go out there and do what you do best... and be recognised for it! Shouting about the good work we do and making sure the public sees it at a local level is the key to promoting our membership and convincing others to join our fantastic organisation. Engaging with Community Covenant Boards and highlighting the issues faced in East Anglia and Essex will continue to be a focus. I will be attending as many Community Covenant Board meetings as possible to support our County Chairman in the fantastic work he is already doing, holding up a mirror to those in power to address the needs of the Armed Forces Community.

We will be looking at ways to make our Pop In and Area Office facilities a more central point for the whole community – not just the Armed Forces. I'd like the space we have to seen as a community hub by everyone, as well as where our veterans and serving personnel can come for much needed support. I want to help integrate our civilian community with are armed forces community to help them better understand the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women – to create relationships within our Local Communities but also help our message reach further than ever before.

We want to better understand the needs of our Serving Population, especially those in rural areas, by working closer with the bases and stations around East Anglia to ensure that those in need of any type of support can access it.

We will continue to support those that come to us for assistance and work to improve our services, looking at ways to become more efficient and capable of responding faster.

Once again, thank you all for your hard work in the last year. Your support, encouragement and advice has guided us through another successful year, changing the lives of those who need us most. 2020 will not be

without its challenges, but with the dedication and support of members in Cambridgeshire, I am sure we will meet these challenges head on and overcome them.

With my best wishes and kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. McCarthy." The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

John McCarthy
Area Manager
East Anglia & Essex

Community Fundraiser's Report -Tony Twigger

Mr President, Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for inviting me to address your County Conference again this year.

Reflecting on this year's Poppy Appeal, this being my 6th year as a CFR and 1 year as a PAO once again I am astounded at the generosity of the general public towards the Poppy Appeal and the high esteem in which we are held. I am also amazed at the dedication and commitment of our PAOs and volunteers who year on year commit hours of their time with no thought of reward just the satisfaction of knowing they are helping and supporting the Armed Forces community and their families.

2018/19 Poppy Appeal saw the highest amount of money collected 'ever' in the 99 years history of the RBL and that is down, in part, to the people in this room. To whom I express my sincere thanks

Financial

The final figures for Huntingdonshire 2018/2019 Poppy Appeal - £221,920 previous year £189,690

The final figures for Cambridgeshire 2018/2019 Poppy Appeal – £655,890 previous year £595,397

Combined figures for 2018/2019 - £877,810 (previous year £785,087) up by £92,723

National for 2018/2019 over £51million (previous year £47,367,362)

Poppy Launch

In Cambridge town centre, my wife and I liaised with John Lewis, The Grand Arcade and The Lion Yard, Shopping Centre to have three prominent spots for collecting tables. Fantastic arrays of poppies were displayed on the floors and columns of the Lion Yard and £500 was donated by the Lion Yard manager Roger Allen to the Poppy Appeal. A further £3000 was donated to pay for two days of WW1/2 re enactors who set up displays and interact with the public around our table... the Mayor was also captured on a 'Vickers' machine gun threatening the public to donate!

Two celebrate from East Ended join us on a table and one day we had the original 'Ghost Busters' car on display right next to us.

The Salvation Army Band played in the shopping centre on Remembrance Sunday. (My thanks again to my wife Debbie, who stepped in at the last minute as the Cambridge PAO to raised over £41k)

PAO Gaps:

- Stibbington (£8k) – Joined with Yaxley
- Cambridge City (£40k) CFR + Debbie covering
- Cambridge Colls (£25k) Split
- Over (£4K) – Joined with Willingham
- Ickleton – (£1.5k) Joined with Hinxton
- Witchford – (£1.8k) Joined with Ely
- Doddington – (£2k) Joined with Benwick
- Gt Paxton – (£3k) Joined with St Neots

Papworth Everard – (£1.5k) Joined with Elsworth

Barton – (£2k) Joined with Comberton

Girton – (£4.5k) working on

New PAO's 2018/19: (20) Yaxley, Girton, Soham, Ely, Littleport. Trumpington, Whittlesey, Haslingfield, Fordham, Cambridge, Eye, Wisbech, Peterborough, Brampton, Bar Hill, Gt Gransden, Barrington, Orwell, Buckden and Benwick

The 2018/19 Poppy Appeal struggled with the local RBL branches consolidating or closing , PAOs taken ill, retirements,, poor communication from past PAOs on gaps and a shortage of volunteers in Cambridge.

This year so far I have had 4 PAOs step down for various reasons.

Thanks to all those who stood in and filled the gaps for missing PAOs

PAO Seminar

“Many thanks for the PAO Seminar yesterday. The presentations from Wayne around Veteran Suicide and Dan’s information were really useful.”

Gordon Gemmell –PAO Huntingdon

My Seminar this year will take place in May this year

Regional Fundraising

“We are making significant change across both Community Fundraising and the Poppy Appeal. Some of this change has been difficult and could have been done better, but it is happening and we all need to be patient, work collaboratively, and trust each other – we will get it right.”

Simon O’Leary - Assistant Director Poppy Appeal

We have a project manager for the PA which should make things come into place and a new on line ordering system which will hopefully be fit for purpose.

For budgeting purposes I would like to be informed of future events planed for this year which I could help promote.

Last year I tried to promote how we all can work more as team members and maybe have organising specialists to take care of particular aspects of the work i.e. Statics, Shopping Centres etc. this is ongoing.

I would like to say thank you to all those who have worked so hard during the Poppy Appeal and throughout last year, making the appeal so successful.

Tony Twigger - CFR Cambs & Hunts

PRESENTATIONS & AWARDS – 2020 CONFERENCE

The Arthur Rickwood Trophy- *County Standard Bearers –2019 Competition*

Winner: Mrs May Fowler (Sawston & Pampisford Branch)

The Denis Wilson Cup. *(Deputy County Standard Bearers Cup – 2019)*

Competition Runner-Up – Mr Tom Brown (City of Ely Branch)

Lee Trophy. *(County Youth Standard Bearer - 2019 Competition)*

Not contested

County Standard Bearers Competition 2019 – Competitor

Certificate of Participation: Mrs Jenny Moyes Over & District Branch & Mr Paul Thorbinson Fulbourn & Teversham

The Major Upjohn Trophy. *(Highest increase in membership in the 2018/2019 year)*

Winner: Yaxley Branch

The County Efficiency Trophy. *(Small branch in the 2018/2019 year)*

Winner: City of Ely Branch

The County Efficiency Trophy. *(Large branch in the 2018/2019 year)*

Winner: Histon & Impington Branch

The Rose Bowl Trophy. *(Highest increase in Poppy Appeal in the 2018/2019 year)*

Winner: Cheveley Branch

The Gautrey Trophy. *(Highest amount per head poppy Appeal in the 2018/2019 year).*

Winner: Sawtry & District Branch