



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Harwell Branch

BRI 805

**Monthly Branch Committee Meeting
Held on 9th October 2025
In the Committee Room at the Village Hall High Street Harwell
At 18.15 Hours.**

ATTENDANCE:

R. White	- President
T. Pearson	- Chair
P. Sedwards	- Vice Chair and Ceremonial Officer
P. Cox	- Secretary, Harwell Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) and Welfare Representative.
S. Haycox	- Treasurer

COMMITTEE: H. Benton, Chilton Poppy Appeal Organiser.

MEMBERS: T. Hart

1. WELCOME

T Pearson opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

2. EXHORTATION AND KOHIMA EPITAPH

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

3. APOLOGIES: J. Capone.

4. MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 2025 COMMITTEE MEETING

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

Item 7.5 Jewel - second line.

“Warn” changed to “**worn**”. and “**Reginald’s** East’s” changed to “**Reginald** East’s”

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

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2025 MINUTES

Noone present had heard anything further about the Moderna Opening Ceremony.

6. REMEMBRANCE AND ARMISTICE 2025

T Pearson reported:

Everything is being put in place. The Parish Council are working through their items including Road Closures.

6.1 Parading Groups and Requests for Help

The White Heart of Harwell has made a request to parade and lay a wreath.

6.2 Parade Marshal

J Capone is not available over the Remembrance Weekend so is unable to be Parade Marshal. T Pearson advertised for a volunteer on Facebook.

Mr Tim Hart replied and was accepted. Mr Hart is Chair of the Harwell Feast Committee, so he is very familiar with parades on Harwell High Street and Temporary Road Closures.

All present thanked him for stepping forward.

6.3 Timetable

A revised timetable has been distributed with updates from the Branch and Harwell Parish Council.

7. SECRETARY'S REPORT

P Cox reported:

7.1 Website

P Cox has drafted a letter of thanks to D Marsh for his work since 2010. He will send it once the payment for the website has gone through.

D Marsh suggested that Harwellrbl.co.uk can just have a notice and link to the new website.

7.2 VJ day Friday 15th August

P Cox has sent the report to members by email.

7.3 Presidents Jewel and Ceremonial Equipment:

P Cox has obtained from Poppyshop:

New ribbon for Presidents Jewel: £ 11.99

Slide bar for Presidents Jewel: £ 6.99

Sling Badge for yoke: £ 12.00

Total less 15% members discount (£4.64) and delivery (£4.50): £30.84.

See Treasurers report.

He will arrange for engraving of the sling badge and slide bar.

7.4 Documents from the Previous Secretary

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

7.5 October Agenda and Correspondence report, and Sept Minutes

These were circulated by email and printed copy.

P Cox obtained new black and colour cartridges, not in use yet. The last black and colour cartridges were started in July.

7.6 Meeting Room Payment

The Village Hall administrator has sent an invoice for the 12 bookings from August 2025 to July 2026 of £136.08 which includes a 10% discount of £15.12.

P Cox has already paid £37.80 for the August, September and October meetings. The Village Hall terms and conditions allow you pay in instalments if you pay in advance.

£136.08 invoice less £37.80 paid by P Cox = £98.08 to pay.

We can continue to pay in instalments in advance of each meeting or pay the rest in one payment. See Treasurers report.

Cancellation:

No charge if cancelled 4 weeks or more before a booking

50% of booking charge is due if cancellation is between 4 and 1 weeks before a booking

100% of booking charge is due if cancellation is 1 week or less before a booking.

7.7 AGM

From the Management Handbook:

We need to send a notice, Nomination form, and agenda (possibly minutes too) 21 days before the AGM. This would be the 23rd October. Some branches also ask if members are attending – this might be worth doing due to the small size of the venue.

Currently we have 44 members and have the email addresses of 22, so we need to post or deliver printed copies to the other 22. The Treasurer obtained 3 books of second-class stamps earlier in the year, so it is just the cost of printing and envelopes.

Discussion ensued:

What happened up to now with nominations and Committee Membership?

P Cox said that we used to hold meetings at the Harwellian Club and they let us put up a Committee Nomination sign-up list and AGM Notice in the Club. Notices were also put up at local shops.

The Club has been remodelled and no longer has a meeting room. We now meet at the Village Hall so need to send out notices and nomination forms to each member. During the Covid restrictions there were no Branch meetings or AGMs and Committee members rolled over, until meetings were resumed in December last year.

- T Pearson said that we could visit all local members and invite them to attend, otherwise it will just be the current committee standing for election.
- T Hart said that we could prioritise those members we do not have an email for.
- We could compose a flier to distribute with the service sheets at the High Street Remembrance Sunday service. It could have an invitation to join the RBL and invite members to attend the AGM.
- The flier could be distributed by H Benton and P Sedwards with the bucket collection.
- We should print about 100 sheets. P Sedwards said that he could arrange some printing.

Elections and Appointments at the AGM

Elected: Chair, Vice Chair (optional), Secretary, minimum 3 Committee Members (up to 7).

Appointed by the New Committee: Treasurer, President (up to 3-year term), Standard Bearers. Branch Community Coordinator (welfare), Membership Secretary.

Other Officers:

Parade Marshal. The Committee can suggest candidates, but they must do the Parade Marshal course to be appointed.

Poppy Appeal Organisers are appointed by the Poppy Appeal Team (usually the County Fundraiser - Sarah Brown in our case).

**The Secretary asked if all present were willing to continue in office.
All present agreed.**

The Secretary asked if all present were happy with 1-year terms of office (terms can be up to 3 years, the President usually serves a 3-year term. All terms can be repeated).

**T Pearson proposed that all terms are 3 years
Agreed Unanimously.**

AGM Agenda:

The Management Handbook suggests:

- Review previous year's activities (reports by officers)
- Agree next year's activities
- Elect officers and committee members
- Nominate candidates for elections for Membership Council
- Vote on candidates for county appointments
- Debate and agree motions for Annual Conference - to be taken to County Conference for approval.
- Agree accounts.

We also agree Branch Membership and Joining fees, and the Treasurer's paying limit without referral to Committee. Also sign the MS1 Officers and Committee form.

Meeting After AGM

Until 2019 we had a Branch Committee meeting straight after the AGM to receive any monthly updates and appoint the appointed officers. We did not meet in December.

However, all Officers are now elected and appointed at the AGM so there is no need for a separate meeting.

P Cox suggested that we could consider any urgent business under Any Other Business at the AGM and cancel the December meeting booked for 8th December.

Agreed Unanimously.

P Cox has drafted a notice, agenda and nominations form.

7.8 Welfare

One enquiry to trace someone. The person being traced was not a Branch member so the enquirer was referred to the Harwellian Club.

7.9 Membership

The Branch has 44 members as of the latest report on Sunday 5th October.

Mr Tim Hart has recently joined the Branch. All present welcomed him to membership.

October Renewals. Up until a few years ago, all members used to renew annually on 1st Oct. Currently this affects 36 members of which 30 have renewed to date. 6 are still to renew. 8 members renew in other months.

7.10 Correspondence

P Cox reported that correspondence received since the September 2025 meeting includes:

Correspondence from Legion County Office and National Headquarters:

Membership Newsletter September 2025

Articles include:

- New Legion Strategy to 2035. Video, and introductory online sessions.
- Countdown to the Poppy Appeal, raising funds for the armed forces. Lots of ways to support from wearing a Poppy to raising funds.
- Protecting our Poppy – criminals make money by selling fake goods online saying they are donating to us but do not. Report anything suspicious to Eang@britishlegion.org.uk.
- Visit Poppyshop.org.uk for official Poppy Appeal poppies, wreaths, and merchandise.
- Remembering Bosnia 30 years on. Ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum on Sunday 14th December.
- Members from Dorset providing care packs of toiletries etc for veterans admitted to hospital. Hospital staff keep an eye out for veterans and put them in touch with local Armed Forces Charities.
- 2026 National Elections – 4 trusteeships and 7 membership council representatives to be elected – nominations open 1st October.
- Successful Legion campaigns in 2024.
- Peoples Postcode Lottery interactive game show to profile the Legion at 7:15pm on 4th October on ITV.

MS1 Forms for Branches 2025 versions

Annual forms to be filled in at the AGM and returned to County.

- MS1 – to confirm Branch details – contact details, time and place of meetings, Officers names and addresses. Officers and Committee confirm acknowledgement of responsibilities.
- MS1B – Signed by Standard Bearers and Parade Marshals – responsibilities as above and confirmation of physical capability to handle Standards and parade.
- Other forms for County Supported Branches (those that cannot recruit a full committee).

Membership Handbook – September 2025

- New Handbook, changes, and additions documents.
- One change is the minimum number of committee members has decreased from 7 to 5 (recommended maximum 11 and absolute maximum is 15).

Annual Conference 2026 October Circular

- At the Brighton Centre, Brighton 8-10 May 2026.
- One delegate per branch who can vote on conference motions.
- Attendance open to all members to visit (non-voting) in person and online.
- Venue details, What's On, registration and attendance, awards, main sessions.

- Award application forms.

Armistice Day Lecture: Colonial Soldiers of the First World War. Experience, Literature, Commemoration

- By Professor Santanu Das of All Souls College, Oxford University.
- On 11th November 2025. 6.30pm in Room G27, Edith Morley, Whiteknights campus, Reading University.
- Free entry, there will be a collection for the Poppy Appeal and Poppy merchandise will be available.

October 2025 Central News

- 2025 Public Liability Insurance Certificate now available.
- New Sexual Harassment Policy in response to government legislation.
- Umbraco content freeze on week of 6th October (Branch websites on Legion website).
- Poppy Appeal Field Pack available with key messages for this year's appeal.
- The Legion's position on different coloured poppies.
- Process for using BFI or Legacy funds to support RBL work.
- Chair's brief of the August Membership Council Meeting.
- September 2025 edition of the Membership Handbook now available.
- Legion Strategy to 2035, join our virtual roadshows to hear more.
- Service of Remembrance for Bosnia to be held in December.
- Black History Month – Highlighting crucial contributions during WW2.
- New member welcome and pre-lapsing membership calls.
- Information now available within membership listings if your members have served.
- Branch Certificate of Appreciation template is on the MAP.
- Overseas Onboarding pack is on the MAP,
- Advice on Branch community email use (for Branch Officers).
- New committee and challenges – Llanelli Branch's revival.

Correspondence from Other Organisations

October 2025 Chilton Chronicle

- Includes request for Poppy Appeal Collectors.

October / November 2025 Harwell News

- Includes request for Poppy Appeal Collectors, Harwell Remembrance Details and Request for Parade Marshal.

8. TREASURER'S REPORT

S Haycox reported:

8.1 Branch Funds

Funds held according to the latest statements are:

HARWELL BRANCH

Branch Funds Initiative (BFI). Account	£ 370
Current Account:	<u>£ 309</u>
<u>Total:</u>	<u>£ 679</u>

We may need to make another transfer from the Legacy Trust to the current account.

8.2 Payments and Receipts

- S Haycox tried to pay D Marsh for the website, but it did not work. He has asked Mr. Marsh to confirm the details.
- Room Hire: £98 to pay to the village hall for room hire.
- £30.84 for the Jewel Ribbon and Slide Bar (see item 7.3) and £37.80 for the village hall hire fees (see item 7.6) to P Cox.
- We have paid £382 for bed and breakfast accommodation for our representative at the National Conference at Brighton.
- The £100 donation notified from the Parish Council still has not arrived.

8.3 Signatories on Current Account

S Haycox has got the forms from Lloyds Bank to add P Sedwards as a signatory.

9. STANDARD BEARER REPORT

P Sedwards reported:

9.1 Standard Bearer Course

The course was interesting and challenging. About 8 people were present including his daughter V Sedwards who is a Colour Sergeant in the Army Cadets. She carried the Branch Standard at G Street's funeral and may be available to carry it again in future.

At the course it became apparent that the Branch yoke is too short for him to use. We also should have a brass insert.

He will attend more training days to keep up to speed.

9.2 Parade Marshal Course

P Cox will ask Angela Logue, County Parade marshal to provide details of Parade Marshal and Standard Bearer courses.

10. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISERS (PAO) REPORT

H Benton reported:

10.1 VJ 80 Day 2025 Pub Collection

P Cox has written a receipt and letter of thanks which are on the noticeboards at the Crown at Chilton and the George at Upton.

10.2 Remembrance Collection Chilton 2025

The National Launch is on 23rd October and the collection ends on Armistice Day Tuesday 11th November.

10.2.1 The Crown at Chilton and George at Upton

H Benton has visited both pubs and the year-round boxes she left there had little in them. So, she will bring a tray of Poppies and merchandise to both pubs for November. She consulted County Poppy Appeal Manager Sarah Brown about the George at Upton as it is not in the Harwell and Chilton District. She said that it is acceptable to collect there.

10.2.2 Chilton House to House Collection

H Benton has contacted all last year's collectors. One collector has stood down. She has advertised for more collectors in the Chilton Chronicle – no responses so far.

There is very little cover for Chilton Field. There is one volunteer who can cover part and H Benton will cover as much of the rest as she can.

T Pearson added that the lower age limit for collectors has been raised to 18. T Hart said that we will let her know of anyone available.

H Benton will offer the “Toucan” mobile phone app to her house-to-house collectors, which turns a mobile phone into a contactless card terminal. However, most of her collectors do not have a suitable mobile phone. We also need the code for our District to make it work.

10.2.3 Chilton Business Collection

She will deliver and collect boxes and trays to the Curie Avenue Shops, Chilton School, Graden Centre as usual. She could also deliver boxes to the Campus if needed.

10.2.4 Counting of Collecting Boxes

S Brown can collect the boxes and take them to be counted at the County counting Centre, the same as the last few years. They also pay in the money and send the amounts in each box back to us. The appeal has been extended to Armistice Day so there is less time to collect the boxes from the collectors and businesses before they are picked up from us.

P Cox reported:

10.3 D Day 2025

P Cox has sent the **receipts** for card payments.

Harwell campus security said that they can accept the lost property or else take it to Didcot Police Station. H Benton said that it is a low value item.

P Cox is yet to send back the damaged wreaths. There may be more in the order for Remembrance.

10.4 Merchandise Order

P Cox has ordered more of the restricted quantity items from S Brown. The merchandise order is due to arrive next Saturday.

The school packs for Chilton and Harwell schools have already arrived.

10.5 Contactless Terminals.

S Brown was able to arrange a second terminal for our district.

10.6 Wooden Crosses for Harwell Commonwealth War Graves

P Cox has some from last year and he has ordered more with main order. He will put these out once Geoff Richardson the CWGC Gardener has tidied the War Memorial gardens during the week before Remembrance Sunday.

10.7 Harwell Shops and Harwell Campus Businesses

P Cox will provide collecting boxes and merchandise to locations at the Campus (RAL, NRS, MRC, Ricardo) and the Harwell village shops, Harwellian Club and the Hart. He will also ask Moderna. It was suggested that Mitie may like a box. P Sedwards said that a box could be put out at the RAL Social Club Fireworks display.

10.8 Harwell House to House Collection

P Cox will contact last years house-to-house collectors and has advertised for help in the Harwell News. He may do a facebook advert.

T Pearson and T Hart suggested contacting the Explorer Scouts which are the oldest age group. T Hart said that he may be able to collect.

10.9 Remembrance Sunday Buckets,

H Benton said that she can collect. T Pearson will be in the Parade and P Sedwards will be the other collector. A Harwell house-to-house collector usually attends with a merchandise tray if he is available.

10.10 Wreaths

Wreath orders received from WI, Scouts, Guides, Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, History Group, Harwellian Club, Oxford Manor Care Home and Harwell RBL.

Providing own wreath: Vale WHDC, Didcot ATC, Gardening Club, and Harwell Parish Council.

T Pearson added that one organisation cannot attend. The Hart of Harwell is attending and providing their own wreath. She is awaiting confirmation from the other organisations.

P Cox said that the deadline on invitations for wreaths, (and to add the wreath order from Poppy Appeal HQ) was yesterday. The wreaths are due on Thursday. He has included a couple of spare plain wreaths, and he can order more if we are quick.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Membership

The President said that he had sent his renewal and had not received his membership card. P Cox said that he will check the next membership report to see if it had been received.

11.2 Expenses

S Haycox said that any other expenses e.g. for printing should be submitted. H Benton said that in future we should only print agendas etc. for meetings for those not on email which would save some printing.

12. CONFIRM DATE AND VENUE OF NOVEMBER MEETING

T Pearson said that the next meeting will be the AGM on Thursday 13th November, at 18:15 in the Village Hall Committee Room.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 19:44 hours.

Minutes approved at the Branch meeting held on _____

Chair _____