



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Harwell Branch

BRI805

**Monthly Branch Committee Meeting
Held on 13th December 2024
In the Committee Room at the Village Hall High Street Harwell
At 14.30 Hours.**

ATTENDANCE:

P. A. Cox - Secretary, Harwell Poppy Appeal Organiser and Welfare Representative
S. T. Haycox - Treasurer
H. Benton - Chilton Poppy Appeal Organiser

COMMITTEE:

MEMBERS: T. Pearson – appointed Branch Chair during this meeting.

Preliminaries

The Secretary offered to Chair this meeting.

No Objections.

1. WELCOME EXHORTATION AND KOHIMA EPITAPH

The Secretary opened the meeting by welcoming all present; he asked those present to bear in mind the members who had died since the last meeting, especially President Reginald East and Committee Member John Belton, and all who served and suffered in the service of our Country.

This was followed by the exhortation and silent tribute; he ended with the Kohima Epitaph.

2. APOLOGIES: R. J. White, J. G. Street.

3. THANKS TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Secretary said that Reginald White has stepped down as Chairman and Peter Davies has stepped down as Vice Chairman and Ceremonial Officer. The Secretary offered to write letters of thanks to both.

Agreed.

4. NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Secretary proposed that Tracey Pearson is co-opted onto the Branch Committee. PROPOSED: Secretary SECONDED: Treasurer CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Hazel Benton, Peter Cox and Simon Haycox stated that they will continue in their current roles.

Tracey Pearson said that she was willing to become Chair.
Agreed.

The Chair, Treasurer and Secretary will talk to Reginald White and Geoff Street about continuing as committee members. If they agree, this will bring us up to the required 3 Officers and 3 Committee Members.

All present signed the relevant parts of the MS1 form. The Secretary will send this to County when complete.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT / ACCOUNTS

5.1 Branch Funds

The Treasurer reported that accounts stood as follows:

HARWELL BRANCH

Current Account:	£ 167.17
B.F.I. Account	<u>£ 857.73</u>
<u>Total:</u>	<u>£ 1024.90</u>

The Treasurer explained:

The Current Account: is with Lloyd's bank and holds the Branch's float.

The BFI account: holds the Branch's savings. The funds are pooled with savings from other Branches by the Legion headquarters financial team into a single account to get better interest. An application form is required to access the funds. The balance is from the last available figure in June 2023. £4.23 interest was received in the previous quarter.

The interest rate is not very high. The meeting discussed moving the funds, but Legion rules prohibit Branches having any other savings accounts.

Legacy Account: The Branch was left a significant legacy about 8 years ago, this is also held by Legion HQ in a pool similar to the BFI, and an application form is required to access the fund. The Treasurer and County Treasurer and Membership Engagement Officer (MEO) are looking into arrangements to make a withdrawal from the fund.

Current sums to be paid:

- £201 to the Gardening Club for the Soldier Silhouette obtained by the Gardening Club from RBL Industries and put in place at the War Memorial in October 2024. The Treasurer has informed the Gardening Club that the transfer of funds is delayed but will take place.
- £82.50 to the Poppy Appeal for the Legion wreath laid at the D Day Commemoration in June and the two Legion wreaths laid on Remembrance Sunday.

- A donation to the Poppy Appeal for the 67 crosses placed by the Secretary on each War Grave in Harwell Cemetery for Remembrance.

The Treasurer proposed that he transfers £500 from the BFI to cover the payments and donations listed above.

Proposed: Treasurer Seconded: Chilton PAO Agreed Unanimously.

5.2 Annual Accounts:

The Treasurer said that the Branch financial year ends on 30th June each year. He has submitted the accounts for 2023-2024 to County.

6. NEXT MEETINGS

6.1 Full Branch Meeting

There has not been a full Branch meeting or AGM for some time, and there are only just enough Committee members. So, it was agreed that a full Branch meeting is called as soon as is practicable to confirm the Officers and Committee in place and recruit more Committee members. This would be very similar to an AGM.

There will also be an AGM at the required time which is during October or November 2025.

It was stated that the Branch is in danger of closure, even with the proposed meeting. The Branch could continue as a County Supported Branch with two “points of contact” – in which case all Branch funds are sent to County and they control spending, or it could be merged with another Branch such as Didcot.

All present said that they will remain positive.

The Chair said that she had been in touch with the County Membership Engagement Officer about the situation, and he had been very helpful.

6.1.1 Date of Full Branch Meeting

The Chair suggested that the meeting is held in early March, e.g. w/c 10th March, to fit in with publication dates of local newsletters and to compose and circulate other publicity and notices. The meeting should be in the evening to allow more people to attend.

It was stated that the relevance of the Branch to each village should be mentioned e.g. D Day in Chilton as this was missed off the recent adverts for more members.

6.1.2 Location of Full Branch Meeting

The Secretary had obtained costs and other details for meetings at the Harwellian Club, Church Hall, Church Meeting Room and the meeting rooms in the Village Hall.

The Chair suggested that the meeting is held at the Harwellian Club. This would give an identified central location for the Branch and refreshments would be available. She offered to discuss this further with the Harwellian Club Management Committee.

6.1.3 Communication with Members

The Secretary said that to hold an AGM, an agenda and nominations paper must be circulated to all members at least 21 days in advance of the meeting, and a candidates list is circulated 7 days in advance. He could compose a letter to all members explaining the situation, with the date and time of the meeting, agenda, and a nominations sheet.

It was stated that the letter should be straightforward and clear about the situation that the Branch is in.

The Secretary said that the Branch now **has 47 members**, including 2 new members and one member rejoining, during 2024. We have email addresses for 25 members, the other 22 must be contacted by paper copy by post or hand delivery.

The Secretary had made some calculations for distributing paper copies. Total cost of one communication is £13.39 to cover paper, ink and postage assuming 12 by post and 10 by hand delivery.

The Treasurer offered to obtain some second-class stamps. The Secretary has ink, paper and envelopes. The Secretary will draft a letter to email to send. The paper version will include a request for email addresses so future communications can be emailed.

The Chiton PAO said that a GDPR notice should be included to state the email addresses will only be used to communicate about Branch meetings and events.

6.1.4 Branch Facebook Page and Website

The Chair said that she could regularly post on the “Harwell RBL Branch Parades” facebook page to maintain interest in the Branch during quieter times. The Treasurer said that he will arrange access for her.

The Secretary asked about the website. The Chair said that this should also be kept up to date.

PROPOSAL: Arrangements to be made for a Branch meeting to be held at the Harwellian Club in week commencing 10th March 2025.

Proposed: Chair Seconded: Treasurer Agreed Unanimously

The Secretary will add a covering note to the MS1 form explaining the situation and planned Branch meeting to County.

6.2 January Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed to hold another meeting in January, provisionally on Wednesday 22nd January in the evening at the Harwellian Club, to be confirmed.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 New Branch President

The Chair suggested that Reginald White is approached about becoming President.
Agreed by All Present.

7.2 D Day 2025

The Secretary said that Peter Davies has offered to be Parade Marshal for the Commemoration, as an ATC Parade Marshal, in the same way as the Army Cadet Force instructor had been Parade Marshal for the Remembrance Sunday parade.

The accounts submitted in June included the £300 for the commemorative flying display tribute. There was a brief preliminary discussion of arrangements for 2025: the Commemoration should be smaller than for the 5th year anniversaries (70th, 75th 80th etc).

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Provisional date 22nd January 2025.

The Secretary thanked all present for their attendance.

There being no further business the Secretary closed the meeting at 15:47 hours.

Minutes approved at the Branch meeting held on _____

Chair _____