



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Harwell Branch

BRI805

**Monthly Branch Committee Meeting
Held on 11th September 2025
In the Committee Room at the Village Hall High Street Harwell
At 18.00 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.

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 AUGUST 2025 COMMITTEE MEETING

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

Item 15.2 Travel expenses para 2 first line

“Also, delegates for Annual Conference can claim a percentage of travel expenses from the Branch according to the distance.”

Changed to:

“Also, for Annual Conference, part refunds for travel are paid by National HQ, this amount is dependent on distance travelled. All costs would be borne by Branch.”

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

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE AUGUST 2025 MINUTES

None.

6. REMEMBRANCE AND ARMISTICE 2025

T Pearson reported:

6.1 Parading Groups and Requests for Help

All invitations have been sent. Responses are coming back in.

6.2 Parade Marshal

T Pearson will confirm with J Capone that he is willing to be Parade Marshal.

6.3 Bucket Collection

T Pearson asked P Sedwards if he could do one of the bucket collections on the day. He agreed.

6.4 Risk Assessment and Documentation.

P Cox asked about the Risk Assessments for the Commemorations. T Pearson said that the Parish Council had responsibility for these.

He will send the 2024 Joining instructions to T Pearson for modification and distribution.

6.5 Timetable

The timetable has been sent to T Pearson for checking and will be distributed by P Cox tomorrow.

7. SECRETARY'S REPORT

P Cox reported:

7.1 D Day 2025

Chilton Scouts and Didcot ATC. have emailed thanking us for organising the Commemoration.

The report has sent to members by email.

7.2 First Aid for 2026

P Cox obtained the required details from P Davies and St John Ambulance South Eastern and submitted a request for cover and said that the contact details may change. They replied that changes can be made when they email back accepting the booking.

7.3 Website

P Cox asked if we have paid David for web address registration - £27 for two years, which he has already paid on our behalf. S Haycox said that we have not.

P Cox will pass payment details to S Haycox.

P Cox asked if he should write a letter of thanks to D Marsh for his work since 2011.
Agreed.

7.4 VJ Day Friday 15th August.

P Cox has written a report on the Commemoration at the War Memorial and the fundraising event at The Crown at Chilton event with a link to photos taken by S. Haycox. He is awaiting the total collected from H. Benton then he will email the report to the members.

7.5 Presidents Jewel

The ribbon on the jewel has become worn, and another slide is needed to mark Reginald East's term of office. P Cox said that prices on Poppy Shop are £11.99 for a ribbon £6.99 for a slide bar (plus delivery), he asked if he should buy these.

Agreed.

7.6 Documents from Previous Secretary

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

7.7 August Minutes and September Agenda

The August minutes, September Agenda and Correspondence report were written and circulated by email and printed copy.

7.8 Meeting Room

At T Pearson's suggestion, P Cox has booked the Committee Room for 10 more meetings on: 9th October, 13th November, 11th December, 8th January, 12th February, 12th March, 9th April, 14th May, 11th June, and 9th July.

We currently have 12 bookings including last months and today, so even if we cancel a couple, we should still get the discount for 8 or more.

The Village Hall administrator has sent an invoice for August to December for £63.00 – no discount, but they can do an invoice for all bookings. P Cox has asked about this.

These bookings were made quickly to avoid anyone else booking the room. So, P Cox did not have time to set up the new account.

7.9 Branch Report for 2025 annual Harwell Parish Council meeting

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

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

We need to send a notice and agenda 21 days before the AGM. If it is held on 13th November, the notice needs to be sent by 23rd October.

7.11 Welfare

No enquiries received since the last meeting.

7.12 Membership

The Branch has 44 members as of the 31st August weekly report on the MAP.

Reminders are going out to members due to renew on 1st October. Up until a few years ago, all members used to renew annually on 1st Oct. Currently this affects 36 members.

The welcome letter is being written.

7.13 Branch Standard

The Standard has not been paraded since the last meeting.

7.14 Correspondence

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

Correspondence from Legion County Office and National Headquarters:

Membership Newsletter August 2025

Articles include:

- VJ 80 Commemorations.
- Special “VJ 80” episode of the Antiques Roadshow TV show.
- Poppy Walks in Liverpool, London, Plymouth, and Southampton. To show your support for the Armed Forces community. Plant your own wooden poppy tribute in memory of a loved one, and recognise the sacrifices made by so many.
- Poppy Appeal Organisers needed.
- Volunteer to help with the London Poppy Day on 30th October.
- Legion Strategy to 2035.
- Reminder: Membership Fee increase to £22 from 4th September.
- East Surrey Regiment Reunion.
- New Dunstable RBL Branch opens.

Central News August 2025

Articles include:

- The 2025/26 RBL Trustee and Membership Council elections.
- Key points for Remembrance are now available on the MAP.
- RBL’s position on different coloured poppies.
- MS1 form and Membership Handbook update due in September.
- Our Strategy to 2035 - Join our virtual events in October to hear more.
- Reminder of important changes to Lloyds accounts.
- Reminder - Membership fee increase by £2 to £22 from 4th September.
- A training course on submitting motions to annual conference.
- Standing Orders of [Annual] Conference to be updated.
- Event photography notice - Wording for use in your local branch or county events is on the MAP portal.
- A list of locations where professional fundraising stands are visiting is on the MAP.
- Deadline for annual returns is fast approaching.
- Feedback required on County and Branch Toolkit.
- RBL Community email accounts should not be shared or passed on when you step down. Please contact your MEO if you no longer want your email. Members stepping into post should also contact their MEO for a new email account to be allocated to them.
- Back from the Brink – Downpatrick Branch
- 'Shareable Central News' with content suitable for all members should you wish to share it (note this is optional).

Funeral of a Bracknell Resident 15th September.

- An Army veteran with no known next-of-kin – request for veterans or anyone to attend.
- Details from Bracknell Branch.

Accounts Update for Berkshire and the Vale 29/8/25.

- Branch accounts from 11 Branches including Harwell have been submitted and accepted.
- Advice on requirements for submitting accounts.

Standard Bearer request for funeral.

12th September in Wokingham.

Message from RBL's National Chair – RBL names new National Chaplain

The Venerable Dr Giles Legood has been appointed to the role of RBL's National Chaplain.

Passing of HRH The Duchess of Kent

All RBL Standards are to be draped with a Funeral Drape/Ribbon up until the Funeral.

HRH's funeral will take place at Westminster Cathedral on Tuesday the 16th of September.

Correspondence from Other Organisations

September 2025 Chilton Chronicle

Includes article by H Benton on VJ80 celebration and collection for the Poppy Appeal at The Crown at Chilton.

8. TREASURER'S REPORT

S Haycox reported:

8.1 Branch Funds

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

HARWELL BRANCH

Branch Funds Initiative (BFI). Account	£ 370
Current Account:	<u>£ 693</u>
<u>Total:</u>	<u>£ 1063</u>

8.2 Charity Account

The Lloyds account has been changed to a charity account so we will not get bank charges.

8.3 Signatories on Current Account

We need to change the signatories following changes in the committee:

P Sedwards agreed to be a signatory. S. Haycox thanked him for this.

S Haycox will submit the required documentation. He will also ask for P Davies and S Pateman to be removed following their resignations from the Committee.

The other signatories are: R White, S Haycox and P Cox. Two signatories are required for authorising payments.

8.4 Purchase of a New Laptop for the Treasurer

S Haycox said that the laptop that he wishes to purchase is out of stock.

8.5 Upcoming Expenses

There are two large expenses to be paid soon, and we may need to transfer money to the current account from the Legacy fund to cover them:

- A suit, beret, and other badges etc for the new Standard Bearers.
- Travel and accommodation costs for a Branch delegate at Annual Conference.

No Objections.

9. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISERS (PAO) REPORT

H Benton reported:

9.1 VJ 80 Day 2025 Pub Collection

H Benton has written an article for the Chilton Chronicle about the fundraising.

The manager of the Crown at Chilton donated £100 in respect of the VJ 80 event. Unfortunately, this was confirmed just too late for inclusion in the Chilton Chronicle article.

P Cox will write a receipt and letter of thanks to the Crown.

H Benton has paid in the £100 donation and cheque for £57 payment from the Branch for the two VJ80 wreaths to the National Poppy Appeal Collections account.

9.2 Contactless Card Terminals

H Benton watched a webinar today on this subject:

The Poppy Appeal are promoting and encouraging people to donate by contactless. Currently 80% of donations are by cash and 20% by contactless and they want to reverse this.

They are asking PAOs to encourage collectors to have the Toucan app on their personal mobile phones, which turns a mobile phone into the equivalent of the contactless card machines.

She will try to encourage the Chilton house to house collectors to do this, but some are in their 80s and do not have mobile phones.

P Sedwards asked if there is a charge?

H Benton said that people donating by contactless tend to donate more and this will cover the extra cost. And it is a percentage charge, not per transaction.

T Pearson said that the app screen has options of £5, £10, £15, and Other. So, people will see these and tap one of the options. H Benton said that the majority of people chose £10.

H Benton said that this year there is a trial area with no contactless collecting as a control area for comparison.

9.3 Volunteer

S Brown got in touch with a possible volunteer, but they were from Didcot so they have been passed to the Didcot PAO to help there. If there are no opportunities in Didcot there are opportunities in Harwell and Chilton.

9.4 November collection at The Crown at Chilton and George and Dragon

The collecting boxes at the Crown and George and Dragon do not have much money in yet, so H Benton will provide merchandise trays at the start of the main appeal, and pick them and the collecting boxes up at the end of the appeal.

P Cox reported:

9.5 D Day 2024 report

P Cox has not yet checked the last outstanding payment.

9.6 D Day 2025

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

9.7 D Day Wreaths

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

9.8 2025 November Collection

The collection starts with the National Launch on 23rd October and ends on Armistice Day Tuesday 11th November, though typically we stop on Remembrance Sunday.

Merchandise

P Cox and H Benton have decided on quantities of collecting boxes, trays, paper poppies and other merchandise and submitted the order.

The quantities of some items are limited to a maximum based on the money raised last year. P Cox will order more from S Brown.

Contactless Terminals

These are hired in by the RBL for the collection. We used to get two, but due to the low amount we collected last year we are only allocated one this year. There is also the Toucan app mentioned earlier and QR codes. The terminal arrived on Monday.

School Packs

Poppy Appeal HQ allocate one per school so we get two for Chilton and Harwell school.

Wooden Crosses

P Cox has ordered enough to put one on each War Grave in Harwell Cemetery – 67 in all. As well as those to go in the trays. He asked if the Branch agreed and could make a donation in respect of the crosses. **Agreed.**

Harwell Static Boxes

Last year there were 19 static boxes in the Campus businesses including RAL, Magnox, MRC and Ricardo, and 5 in Harwell village. We also have two collecting buckets at Remembrance Sunday and there were two boxes at the RAL fireworks.

P Cox will ask Moderna if they would like to collect.

Harwell House to House Collections

There were two collectors in 2024, and one more who could not help after all. He will ask them all again. P Cox will advertise for more collectors in the Harwell News and facebook.

There had been a suggestion at a previous meeting that Army Cadet Force (ACF) cadets could help with the house to house collecting. However, the Legion has since stated that anyone under 18 years old, at any Legion activity or meeting, must be accompanied by a responsible adult, such as a cadet leader or their parent or guardian.

P Sedwards said that the ACF cadets collected last year at the Orchard shopping centre in Didcot.

H Benton said that the collectors in Chilton and Harwell mainly collect house to house. The amounts collected in the shops are low, and there is no point having people stand there. So, she does not think that it will work to have cadets collect in our areas.

There was a similar suggestion a few years ago from one of the youth organisations and she and P Cox could not make this work then.

P Sedwards said that he will talk to the ACF Commanding Officer and the RAL Poppy Appeal contact to see if he and a relative could collect at the RAL fireworks this year.

9.9 Wreaths

P Cox has ordered enough wreaths to supply all organisations that requested one last year and a couple of spares. The order deadline is 8th October.

This includes two wreaths with RBL badges as in previous years. He asked if this was acceptable. **Agreed.**

Both the merchandise and wreath orders are due for delivery in October. Each item can be increased or decreased up to 5 days before delivery.

9.10 2024 Remembrance wreaths

P Cox will ask Harwell Parish Council to remove the wreaths as they have become faded. **No Objections.**

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Standard Bearer Course

P Sedwards reported that he will attend the course on 21st September at Shaw near Newbury, possibly with a relative.

10.2 D Day Contact

P Cox said that he had that heard a long-standing attendee from an organisation that attends D Day is very ill. He asked that we could send our best wishes.

Agreed.

11. CONFIRM DATE AND VENUE OF OCTOBER MEETING

T Pearson said that the next meeting will be on Thursday 9th October, at 18:15 in the Village Hall Committee Room.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 18:53 hours.

Minutes approved at the Branch meeting held on _____

Chair _____