



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Harwell Branch

BRI805

**Monthly Branch Committee Meeting
Held on 12th February 2026
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 (from item 11).

MEMBERS: None.

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: T. Hart, N. Mcnamee.

P Cox offered to contact N Macnamee.

4. MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 2026 COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes were circulated prior to the meeting. There were no corrections.

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

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE JANUARY 2025 MINUTES

5.1 County Conference

T Pearson said that she had been unable to attend due to illness.

P Cox asked the County Secretary to include Geoff Street and Royston Slatter in the In Memoriam section of the meeting and sent apologies for T Pearson.

5.2 National Conference

T Pearson has registered as delegate for the Branch and P Cox has agreed the registration electronically as required.

She has paid for the accommodation and has been reimbursed by the Branch. She will sort out the train travel closer to the date. There may be a discount available.

There is a grant available for travel costs for Branches with less than 300 members. The grant provides funds depending on how many miles you travel. T Pearson has applied.

These expenses have left the Branch short of funds so we will need to apply for funds from the Legacy Trust - see Treasurer's report item 10.2.

5.3 New Youth Policy

T Hart had requested that discussion of the youth policy was held over until the next meeting in his absence.

6. REMEMBRANCE AND ARMISTICE 2025 CLOSEOUT

P Cox reported that he has made a new version of the 2025 timetable with the timings of Remembrance Sunday and sent it to T Pearson and T Hart.

7. HARWELL FEAST

T Pearson suggested that there is not a lot of time before the Feast and suggested that we hold this over until next year. We could start earlier and have more time to organise it.
No objections.

See also AOB item 13.2.

8. D DAY 2026

8.1 Arrangements

T Pearson said that she and P Sedwards will make the arrangements this year. They will meet to talk through the timetable and actions.

P Sedwards said that work has started on the new gardens surrounding the Memorial Stone. The mature trees have been fenced off within the compound which is good news. There is little we can do now about the design itself.

P Cox will send the 2025 timetable to P Sedwards and T Pearson.

8.2 Flypast

P Sedwards asked if we wanted to have a flypast at this year's Commemoration. There was a brief discussion.

8.3 Wreaths

P Cox said that an increasing number of organisations order wreaths directly from the Legion. Last year he supplied 14 supplied of 43. He can supply the wreaths again this year.

He usually sets the order deadline at 4 weeks prior so 8th May for this year.

8.4 Time of Service

P Cox suggested that following last years earlier start, we state the start time as something like “The service is due to start at 5:30pm but may start earlier due to weather conditions. We advise being in place by 5pm”

9. SECRETARY’S REPORT

9.1 Website

P Cox will send a letter of thanks to D Marsh now that the payment for the website has gone through.

P Cox said that D Marsh had asked the Branch to agree a motion to take down the old website.

T Pearson made the following proposal:

PROPSAL: That D Marsh should take down the website harwellrbl.co.uk.

PROPOSED: T Pearson Agreed by All Present. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.2 Presidents Jewel and Ceremonial Equipment

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

9.3 Documents from the Previous Secretary

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

9.4 February Agenda and Correspondence report, and January Minutes

These were and circulated by email and printed copy. P Cox has obtained another black cartridge as a spare. There was a lower level of printing this month.

9.5 Meeting Room Payment

P Cox has received an invoice from the Village Hall administrators for bookings from September to December meetings and sent it to S Haycox

9.6 Welfare

No enquiries received since the January meeting.

There is a Branch Community Support (BCS) newsletter on the MAP. The newsletter includes a description of BCS staff, emails and BCS roles. He will investigate if it can be circulated.

9.7 Membership

The Branch has 45 members as of the latest report on Sunday 7th February.

Renewals

November: 2 due, one has renewed and the other will lapse at the end of the month.

No renewals were due in **December or January.**

February One due, yet to renew.

9.8 Correspondence

P Cox reported that correspondence received since the January 2026 meeting includes the following items:

Correspondence from Legion County Office and National Headquarters:

Membership Newsletter January 2026

Articles include:

- Message from new RBL Chair Linda Atkins.
- Reports on fundraising, events and campaigns.
- Training for members.
- Upcoming events and activities.

Central News February 2026

Articles include:

- Townhall meeting online 6th February.
- Nominations for National Awards close soon.
- National Conference information.
- RBL national elections soon.
- Cheque processing information.
- Rules for sharing personal information – only with specific consent.
- The Chairs briefing of the December Membership Council meeting is available on the MAP.
- RBL Bands information.
- County and district reviews.
- Ceremonial Handbook – the latest version is 2020 v 1.7
- New RBL Gamers Group
- Update from the Membership Training Team.

Legion Response to President Trump's comments

Berkshire and the Vale County Newsletter

- Thanks for submitting MS1s, request for clarity on meeting dates.
- Register for Annual Conference.
- Town Hall meeting online on 6th February, Open to all members.
- Database of RBL bands is available.
- National Membership and E Newsletter is available – you can amend your preferences online to receive these.
- The Royal Charter and Membership Handbook are available online.
- Diary Dates.

Monthly Saturday Veterans Breakfasts

At Thatcham RBL Club and Newbury Rugby Club. Contact the Clubs for details and to register.

Correspondence from Other Organisations

February 2026 Chilton Chronicle

No RBL Items

Harwell News February 2026

Includes report on Harwell Poppy Appeal.

9.9 Distribution of Correspondence

Committee Members

P Cox said that he is continuing to forward emails to Committee members and compile a summary list of correspondence as above. He could just distribute a list of correspondence received with one or two highlights from each one. For example, the items in the membership newsletter are also in the Legion magazine.

T Pearson suggested that P Cox could circulate a monthly list and state that correspondence items can be sent on if requested.

All Members

A member has made a request to hear more from the Branch. Discussion ensued:

- We could circulate the agenda and minutes to all members.
- P Cox said that some emails state “send to membership” e.g. the monthly newsletter, Central News members edition and the Berkshire County newsletter. He suggested that he starts forwarding these emails as appropriate.
Agreed.
- P Cox said that he used to put a printed copy of the minutes in a folder in the Harwellian Club when we met there. So, they always have been public. He is not sure what other branches do.
- T Pearson said that we can redact sections of the minutes.

Non-Email members

P Cox said that there are about 22 members who have not provided an email address. They will receive some general news in Legion magazine.

It was suggested that we could write to ask people for their email addresses. It was also stated that we should not put people off that don't want to use email.

P Cox suggested that we could produce a quarterly or half-yearly newsletter.

T Pearson agreed with a quarterly newsletter.

P Cox said that a former Committee Member has requested that he is put back on the Committee circulation. This was discussed and the Committee Members could not see a reason to do this.

10. TREASURER'S REPORT

S Haycox reported:

10.1 Branch Funds

S Haycox said that he is still has not received the recent Branch Funds Initiative (BFI) statements, so the Branch Funds Initiative balance is from September. It will not have gone down though. The Lloyds current account balance is as of this month.

HARWELL BRANCH

Branch Funds Initiative (BFI) Account	£ 372
Current Account:	<u>£ 104</u>
<u>Total:</u>	<u>£ 476</u>

10.2 Funds Transfer

S Haycox said that we are running low on funds in the current account. He proposed that we should transfer funds from both the Legacy Trust and BFI to the current account.

How long will the transfers take?

S Haycox said that transfer from the BFI is quicker than from the Legacy Trust. We can top the BFI up from the Legacy trust.

What are the two funds?

S Haycox said that the BFI is a Legion savings account, currently paying 2% interest.

A Legacy was left to the Branch some years ago. As it was over £5000 the Legacy had to be passed to headquarters who established a Legacy Trust to hold the funds. When the Branch wants to use some of the funds we apply to the County then headquarters explaining what we want to use it for and how this fulfils Legion objectives.

The meeting discussed recent and upcoming expenditure:

- The room hire has been paid up to August.
- The accommodation for National Conference has been paid.
- Travel for Conference will need to be paid, this should be less than £100.
- T Pearson said that there is also a meal and do at Conference on Saturday at approximately £30. Other expenses will be roughly £150 to £200.
- P Cox said that the engraving of the slide bar and sling badge is still to be done.
- P Sedwards asked why the Legacy Trust transfer took so long. Noone present had an appropriate answer.
- P Cox said that similar expenses have been through the audit last August and the others are permitted uses of funds. Also, a previous Membership Support Officer said that the Branch should have the funds available for the expenses of running the Branch so we could carry out Legion activities. So these expenses should go on the application.

S Haycox proposed:

- Request a transfer of £200 from the BFI to leave a balance of £172.
- Request a transfer of £1000 from the Legacy Trust to cover recent expenses, and those in the medium term due to the long processing time.
- The application should include funds for a D Day flypast, all Conference expenses including accommodation and travel, and other running expenses including e.g. £90 for the Remembrance wreaths and crosses.

No Objections. Agreed.

Is the Village Hall Committee Room particularly well used?

P Cox and T Pearson said that it is. T Pearson said that we have a block booking and are a local organisation so we get a discount on the hire rate.

11. STANDARD BEARER REPORT

P Sedwards said that he had nothing to report.

12. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISERS (PAO) REPORT

12.1 Lloyds Bank Didcot Branch Closure

H Benton reported that she had paid in the cheques received at the last meeting.

The Didcot Branch of the Lloyds Bank is due to close in June this year. There will be a banking hub in Didcot in due course. The hub will have a person on duty from one bank each day and any cheques and money can be paid in.

Can money be paid in to the Post Office?

H Benton said that it could, but she preferred to pay in using the paying in book and getting the slip stamped, then copying to P Cox.

P Cox reported:

12.2 2025 November Appeal.

There are still a few cards and posters to distribute to the Harwellian and Campus Organisations.

Poppy Appeal headquarters asked if he had sent the card terminals back, which he had done. Following enquiries they were found at the Poppy Appeal warehouse.

P Cox had checked the amounts in the locations where there was one less box:

RAL Fireworks

A large decrease in the money in the one box 2025, but a lot more money was donated by QR Code overall so this may explain the drop.

Ricardo

The first box had about £2 more in 2025 than the equivalent in 2024, but we missed out on the funds from the other box due to the misunderstanding mentioned in January. P Cox will ask in November.

12.3 Wreaths

£264.25 confirmed so far for 13 wreaths. Three more payments were by invoice or BACS and yet to be confirmed. S Brown (Poppy Appeal Manager West Berkshire and the Vale) said that these payments were not allocated to Harwell District and Poppy Appeal headquarters will look for them amongst the unallocated payments.

12.4 Return of Damaged Wreaths

P Cox is yet to send back the damaged wreaths. The stock return form states that the wreaths should be strapped together in batches to reduce postage. A handheld strapping machine costs roughly £45 so P Cox will ask if parcel tape can be used instead.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 Expenses

S Haycox asked if anyone present had any expenses to claim.

P Cox asked if he could claim for some of the ink cartridges used recently.

Agreed.

13.2 Harwell Feast Stand

P Cox asked if we would have a stand at the Feast though we are not having a float this year. We still have some free items to give out called "Gizzits" in stock including leaflets, pens, keyrings etc but can order more.

T Pearson said we should have a stand, and P Cox should order more stock.

14. CONFIRM DATE AND VENUE OF MARCH MEETING

T Pearson said that the next meeting will be on Thursday 12th March, at 18:15 in the Village Hall Committee Room.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 19:03 hours.

Minutes approved at the Branch meeting held on _____

Chair _____