



Central News – December 2024

Sharing operational information, engagement opportunities and news with RBL Counties/Districts, Branches and Sections around the world

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Important dates	
31 December 2024	Deadline to submit MS1s
14 January 2024	Annual Conference registration opens

Wishing you a very Happy Christmas

Dear County and Branch Officers,

As 2024 draws to a close, I want to personally thank you for all your hard work in keeping our membership at the forefront of support for our armed forces community, friends and families.

While I recently took over as Interim Executive Director of Membership, I have long been aware of the fantastic work that you do, and of the many challenges that you face in this work. My team are excited to be working together to support you in this work and we look forward to updating you over 2025 in how that work is developing.

Through the membership team, we regularly hear about all the amazing work you do. Although we are not always able to say thank you, we want you to know that this work is seen and appreciated. We hope that you enjoy the Central News Stories that is accompanying this newsletter, with just a few examples of how our members marked Remembrance. We find this work inspirational, and hope that you will share it with your members to inspire them too.

Wishing you a very merry and peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year.

Nina Villa

Interim Executive Director of Membership

Annual Conference 2025 registration

As we race towards the new year, we're reminded that our Annual Conference in Harrogate is now just a mere six months away from us: 16th - 18th May 2025. Registration will open **Tuesday 14th January** for delegates and visitors, with the registration link available on the [Annual Conference webpage](#).

As was the case last year, delegates and visitors can attend Annual Conference virtually or in-person. However, please do note, those attending online will not be able to propose or second a motion neither can they view the evening entertainment.

For further information on the venue, please refer to the [October Special Circular](#) or the FAQs on

the [Annual Conference webpage](#). Further details about Annual Conference will be released as they become available, with full details in the March Circular.

Nominations for National Conference Committee

In the [October Circular](#) we announced a vacancy for an elected member of the National Conference Committee. An election will be held at Annual Conference 2025 for a new member to serve for a term of three years.

Each County/District and Overseas Branch may nominate one current Member or Life Member to join the Committee; they may not hold a position on either the Board of Trustees or the Membership Council. Nomination information will be shared with County Chairs later this month, with the nomination deadline of 5pm Friday 14th February 2025.

Nominate for RBL Elections 2024/25

Nominations are still open for RBL's next National Chair, National Vice Chair, three new trustees for the Board of Trustees, and 12 representatives for the Membership Council. If you believe you have the skills, knowledge and capacity to represent RBL in any of these roles, please register your interest in being nominated with your branch by **17th January 2025**. Full details of the elections process have been shared with all Voting Branches; please contact your branch for a copy of this information, or find it [on our website](#).

If you are a Branch Chair and are unsure of the process or have not been contacted by your branch Elections Point of Contact, please contact your Membership Engagement Officer or the RBL Governance Team at elections@britishlegion.org.uk.

Is your branch interested in internet banking?

As we covered in October's Central News, we're beginning a phased roll out of Lloyds internet banking to branches in early 2025. Internet banking is not mandatory and we're keen to gauge the expected uptake ahead of the rollout. If your branch is interested, please kindly complete [this short survey](#), which only indicates interest.

A separate formal internet banking registration process will be required to proceed in future as the rollout commences on a region-by-region basis in 2025.

If your branch is already using internet banking with Lloyds or another bank, please confirm this to your MEO by email. We're aware a small number of branches are already using Lloyds through our prior pilot programme, or special permission. We will review the set-up of these online banking

accounts to ensure they are in line with our new internet banking guidance.

Should you have any questions at this stage, please contact membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk. Thank you.

Alert for those banking with Lloyds

Last month we reached out to Treasurers and Chairs via rbl.community after becoming aware that Lloyds bank changed its charity and community bank account offerings to the general public by withdrawing their old Treasurer account.

A number of our RBL Branches and Counties have Lloyds Treasurer accounts. As such, you may receive a letter that your Treasurer account is being switched to a Community Account - which incurs bank fees monthly. **This is an error on Lloyds' part.**

We have been in contact with Lloyds and they advised that RBL branches with existing Lloyds Treasurer accounts should have been removed from this account migration process; however, some accounts may not have been correctly identified and so contacted in error.

If your Branch/County receives this letter from Lloyds, please email our central Branch Accounts Team on BranchAccounts@britishlegion.org.uk immediately with the following details:

- Branch Name
- Branch Number
- Account Name
- Lloyds Sort Code
- Lloyds Account Number

We will pass these details on to our Lloyds contact to request they are removed from the migration process and retain their Treasurer account status that has no fees attached.

Be cautious of scammers

In previous years, we were made aware of scammers targeting RBL branches to obtain crisis grants during the Christmas and New Year period. Whilst we are not currently aware of any similar activity, we would like to remind branch officers to remain vigilant against potential scams.

In prior years, scammers were insistent at being given money directly rather than being referred to RBL's welfare teams. Should your branch receive any suspicious requests for support from individuals, please refer them to the contact centre. Thank you.

Annual Conference discounts

This year we're delighted to offer those attending Annual Conference in-person exclusive offers and discounts on travel, accommodation and dining out in Harrogate via our host, Harrogate Convention Centre. These are available on the dedicated website [Harrogate Convention Centre - Visitors Discount Offers](#).

Those wishing to utilise the accommodation offer can find information on this site along with other discounts and offers.

For those wishing to book discounted LNER train tickets, please use the discount code HCC25 when following the instructions provided by selecting 'Visitors' option on the main menu and selecting 'Getting Here'. Please kindly note that food and drink, health and beauty and retail offers can only be utilised in Harrogate when presenting a visitor discount card, which is available from the venue.

Widening Information Access and Engagement

We're pleased that improvements to rbl.community email / Membership Administration Portal (MAP) are underway. There are some great benefits of rbl.community for county and branch officers, including:

- Viewing updated member lists
- 24/7 access to important and useful handbooks, guides, forms and more
- Receiving direct communications such as Central News via your rbl.community email
- Sharing best practice and chatting with officers across the world on the Viva Engage network, and more.
- Helping support RBL to achieve gold standard compliance in GDPR, data protection and IT security which, in turn, helps to protect all members and the RBL as a charity.
- Having dedicated digital storage space for your formations important information

Eligible county and branch committee members who do not yet have an rbl.community email address can register their interest now. If you or someone you know is interested, please register interest with your Membership Engagement Officer.

Your Poppy Appeal Highlights

What an amazing community! We loved seeing how everyone has come together to support the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal this year. From Poppy Appeal volunteers and fundraisers in local communities to our dedicated branches and counties, those who crocheted thousands of

poppies or created school Remembrance displays - **thank you so much for your passion and hard work!**

Whatever your contribution, it shows the Armed Forces we care and helps RBL continue its vital work supporting veterans, serving personnel and their families. We've collated just a few snippets of highlights into a video [available to watch or share on Facebook](#).

["What membership means to me"](#)

We find out what motivates some of our members to demonstrate the purpose and values of membership. This month, we speak to Anthony Frith, pictured below (centre, back row), Staffordshire County Chairman and County Standard Bearer.

For Anthony, Remembrance 2024 is a time he says he will never forget. Not only did he take part in the Festival of Remembrance as County Standard Bearer, but his son, Oliver, who has disabilities, also took part as Staffordshire's County Youth Standard Bearer.

"Getting to see my son, stood proud for a long period of time even with his disabilities, is what stands out for me. I was bursting with absolute pride," says Anthony.

"Afterwards, he said he hurt all over, was exhausted and hungry. I then asked him if he'd do it again – his answer was 'absolutely'."

Anthony says that to share Remembrance in this way is a memory that will stand out forever, and he was grateful to everyone who made it happen for them.

He highlights the importance of Remembrance, which is one of the six purposes of membership. "The responsibility for us to remember, massively out-weighs the temporary pain felt over two days," he says.

This Remembrance Sunday, Anthony also took part as a parade marshal at the cenotaph. "This was an experience that was out of this world," he says. "To be one of 31 parade marshals to assist 10,000 veterans get around Whitehall on time, so that they can remember all those lost before us, in the calmest and most respectful way, was a real privilege."

Being just 25 metres away from HM King Charles as he lay his wreath, he says, "was the icing on the cake".



An army veteran who served in the 1st Battalion in the Staffordshire Regiment, Anthony has been an RBL member for just four years during which time he has been a Branch Vice Chair, a standard bearer, parade marshal, county recruitment officer and now County Chairman.

“But the most rewarding role I have had is being a member,” he says. “I would like to think that I have helped others just by being approachable and doing what I can to help them. Whether that is being an ear that listens, or someone that points people to the right area for their needs.”

He says he joined RBL because he had always seen it as the top military charity with a great membership base that he could get involved in, to meet like-minded people, and hopefully make an inspiring difference to someone else's life.

“My membership means that I am part of an amazingly unique club,” he says, “made up serving, veterans and civilians that all have the common interest of helping people who need it – and that I will always have someone to talk to or be the person that someone else wants to talk to.”

Thank you for reading! The December edition of Central News is due to be published
Tuesday 7th January.