



MINUTES OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY CONFERENCE HELD ON 01 FEB 2025 AT 1030hrs. CARTERTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

Present:

Guests:

Marjorie Glasgow BEM – Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire representing HM
Bishop Gavin Collins – Bishop of Dorchester
Lynda Atkins – National Vice-Chair Royal British Legion
Rebecca Warren – Director of Communications Royal British Legion
Michele Mead – Mayor of Carterton

Committee:

Sir John Allison	County Patron	Y
Anne Midwinter	County President	Y
Peter Eldridge	County Chair	Y
Steve Kingsford	County Chair Elect	Y
Fiona Lovesey	County Vice Chair	Y
Tjark Andrews	County Committee Member/County Standard Bearer	Y
Andrew Bowes	County Treasurer/Committee Member	Y
Derek Bradshaw	County Training Officer	Y
Pete Clarke	County Parade Marshall	Y
Brian Leach	County Recruitment Officer	Y
Brian Barrett	County Club Liaison Officer	Y
Yona Barrett	County Community Support Coordinator	Y
Rob Lovesey	County Secretary	Y
Hugh Ashton Moore	Membership Council Representative	Y
Chris Jones	Membership Engagement Manager (Central)	Y
Lebo Nyoni	Membership Engagement Officer	N
Yanto Evans	Community Fundraiser	N

Standard Bearers:

John Green	Henley on Thames
Clive Cantwell	Bampton
Jacqui Graves	Stanton Harcourt
David Mannering	Nettlebed

Branch Delegates and Branch Visitors:

Marie Woolsey	Carterton	C Kerry	Charlbury
Rachel Elliott	Stanton Harcourt	Roger Mackriell	Thame
Richard Pinches	Henley on Thames	David Midwinter	Thame
Mark Mannion	Carterton	R N Potter	Charlbury
Alan Dunridge	Carterton	T Butler	Carterton
Liz Bailey	Carterton	K Burt	Carterton
Tracy Garwood	Carterton	Natalie King	Carterton
Jean Eldridge	Benson and District	R S Jones	Shiplake and District
David Wesson	Carterton	J W Bodman	Shiplake and District
Jo Ennis	Carterton	Rob Forsyth	Deddington
James Ruddock-Broyd	Carterton		



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Item	Discussion/Decision	Action
1.	Meeting Opened The Chair opened the meeting at 1030hrs with the Parade march on of the Standards. The Exhortation was spoken by the President. This was followed by the Last Post and Reveille.	
2.	Opening Prayer and Address Bishop Gavin Collins, the Bishop of Dorchester on Thames conducted the prayer and gave an address to the Conference. Bishop Gavin reminded the Conference of the importance of service and why it is important that we remember three key elements. The first is to give thanks to the veterans and members of the Armed Forces for the security often endured at a price. Those that have paid the price and placing themselves in harms way to ensure our freedom. To share together in our peace the sacrifice given through lasting grief and pain. The sharing of the grief of remembrance and its impacts that effect directly and indirectly across the nation. The third is to learn from the past to make sure that war can never happen again; this is particularly vital as are so bad on learning. The Bishop quoted Steve Turners poem "History Lesson": <div style="margin-left: 40px;">History repeats itself. Has to. No-one listens.</div> Bishop Gavin asked all to commit to an active remembrance, commit to living in love with all around us and in the community.	
3.	Lord Lieutenants Representative Address – Marjorie Glasgow BEM Marjorie Glasgow BEM representing His Majesty the King thanked the Chair and the County Committee for their kind invitation to attend the County Conference. The Lord Lieutenant thanked the Royal British Legion for the invitation and stated that through her work mentioned that Oxfordshire and the Royal British Legion is at the heart of establishment Great Britain. The Lord Lieutenant read in full the statement from his Majesty King Charles III thanking the Royal British Legion for the Loyal Greeting (see Attachment where this is reproduced in full).	Attachment to these minutes
4.	Civic Welcome – Michele Mead Carterton's Town Mayor Michele Mead delivered the Civic Welcome to the attended.	Attachment to these minutes
5.	President's Welcome The County President Ann Midwinter welcomed the Lord Lieutenant, Bishop Gavin, the National Vice Chair, Guest Speakers, the Committee and Branch Delegates to this the 100 th Annual County Conference for Oxfordshire. She stated that it gave her great pleasure as the President to address the Conference on this the 100 th Centenary of the RBL County of Oxfordshire; she reminded those gathered of the aims of the RBVL since 1921 and that they are need as much today providing assistance to all ranks of the armed forces and its veterans. She paid tribute to the work that Pete Eldridge had achieved during his 8-years tenure. The President thanked all the County Poppy Appeal Collectors, stating they are the backbone of the RBL whose work often goes unrecognised. A warm welcome to the County Committee was extended to the Chair Elect Steve Kingsford and the two new members Brian and Yona Barrett. The Conference was minded of hard work and dedication that the County Committee which has made the County the success it is. Thanking the RBL Membership of	



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	Oxfordshire in their continued support and service they provide in their respective communities. Finally, thanks were given to the Standard Bearers, often seen as the public facing part of the RBL, for their dedication and hard work.	
6.	Appointment of Scrutineers There being no opposed elections there was no requirement to appoint scrutineers.	
7.	Minutes of Previous RBL County Conference 2024 – circulated prior to meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 04 Feb 24 were reviewed by the members of the Committee; passed as a true copy and signed by the Chair and Minuting Secretary. Proposed: Jean Eldridge Seconded: Fiona Lovesey The vote was carried unanimously	
8.	County Chair Report The County Chairs Report is replicated in full as an attachment to this report. The Chair mentioned that it is with great pride that on handing over the Chair's Office that the County Committee is in a strong position with all but one of the positions filled. He announced through the hard work of the County Officers the County has improved its position on the National Risk Register moving from Red to Green, a point reaffirmed by the Membership Council Representative, with 97% of Branch accounts submitted and 70% MS1s. The Chair thanked the Vice Chair and the Sub Committee in making this Conference a huge success. Oxfordshire County is now seen as a significant influence in forming policy and best practice, leading all other Counties and our membership should be proud as he is of what has been achieved. Finally, he thanked everyone for their continued support.	Attachment to these minutes
9.	Oxfordshire County Plan The Chair stated that the County Plan was still in draft format for 2024 and still undergoing production. It was announced that once completed the Chair will arrange for the Plan to be sent to all Branches and CSBs	Chair/MEO
10.	County Treasurers Report – circulated prior to meeting. The Treasurer summarised his written report; the closing balance as at Jun 24. The accounts summarised the activity of the County and the County Supported Branches. The County elements were <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund - £6.3k • Welfare Fund £10.7k • CSBs Funds £88k • Income generated through the County Handbook was £375 • General BFI interest £171 Welfare BFI interest £226 • Expenditure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2024 County Conference £300 ○ 2023 Poppy Appeal Launch £500 ○ Ceremonial Equipment and a replacement County Standard £2.2k (one off costs). ○ There will be continued expenditure to enable the deliverance of Standard Bearer Training. The Welfare fund contributed £7.8k towards cases in Oxfordshire which helps to off-set the Central Welfare cases.	Attachment to these minutes



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The opportunity was taken to remind all gathered of the availability of on-line banking with Lloyds . He closed his report with a reminder to Branches on the management of Legacies’.

There have been a number of Legacies made to Branches in the last year, some of which were significant. The management of Legacies guidance is in a leaflet available from the MEO If in doubt contact the County Treasurer for guidance.

The Accounts had been agreed by the County committee; passed as a true copy and forwarded to Haig House within the required timescale

Proposed: Andrew Bowes

Seconded: Derek Bradshaw

The vote was carried unanimously.

11.

Address by Guest Speaker- National Vice Chair Royal British Legion - Lynda Atkins

The County Chair welcomed the National Vice Chair thanked everyone for their support of the Royal British Legion and all the work and efforts that they contribute to welfare. Lynda stated that it was immensely gratifying that the King continued the Patronage of the RBL continuing the work of the late Queen. She spoke of the amazing way the RBL affects and contributes to every part of the community, but we cannot rest on laurels. The appointment of the new Director General Mark Atkinson has headed an internal and external review of the RBL and how we deal with our Regulatory bodies. Many may be surprised that a need for the changes is not being driven by the RBL but Regulators like the Charities Commission, the Gambling Commission (Poppy Lottery) and the Care Commission (RBL Care homes), ensuring that we comply. The RBL is looking to ensure that there are great working relationships under the “Newport Agreement” - The Board of Trustees approved the Newport Agreement which had been written by representatives of the Board of Trustees (BoT), Membership Council (MC) and Executive Board (EB). The agreement seeks to solidify how the core groups will continue to work together to improve relationships and our ways of working.

Remembrance remains the raison d’etre of the work that under pins the RBL, with veterans all but gone from the two world wars, focus is now on other wars and conflicts the British Armed Forces have been involved. The National Vice Chair spoke of the difference our Armed Forces have made to those involved in police the worlds conflicts.

In 2023 £49m was raised by the Poppy Appeal and all indications suggests that 2024s total should surpass this figure, testament yet again to the work carried out by the membership and volunteers to the RBL. The Contact Centre dealt with over 128,000 referrals and veterans reaching out for help. In 2024 the RBL dealt 867 urgent needs welfare cases, through crises support. This equates to a sobering nearly 3 people per day requiring our help.

The RBLs strong links with the Invictus Games continues with the RBL and the Ministry of Defence supporting 64 wounded, injured and sick serving personnel and veterans, plus their friends and family, to compete at the seventh Invictus Games in Canada in 2025 which will feature winter sports for the first time. In was also announced that the 8th Invictus Games will be held in Birmingham.

The National Vice Chair thanked Pete Eldridge for all his work and leadership which has left the County in a much better place than when she was the Oxfordshire County Chair and is testimony to all that has been achieved. Thanking those gather reaffirming that the work they carried out in their Branches makes a significant difference, recognising the tremendous amount of work and effort especially with the Poppy Appeal.



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12.	Election of Officers of the County Committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election of Chairman for the next 3 years - the stepping down of the County Chair Peter Eldridge, the Chair Elect Steve Kingsford was elected unopposed. The Conference welcome Steve to the role. Election of Vice-Chair for the next 2 years – the Vice Chair Fiona Lovesey was elected to the post unopposed 	
13.	Election of Members of County Committee for the next 3 years There were no candidates from Branches to the County Committee, however since the closure date for nominations the County Chair has been able to establish two additional appointees to the County Committee. With the agreement of the Chair Elect the County Chair appointed the following new members to the following roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Treasurer – Andrew Bowes was elected to the County Committee unopposed and has accepted the position of County Treasurer for a 1-year term of Office as per the MHB. County Recruitment Officer – Brian Leach was elected to the County Committee unopposed and has accepted the position of County Recruitment Officer for a 3-year term of Office as per the MHB. RBL Oxfordshire Club Liaison Officer – Brian Barrett (Chair of Carterton Branch) was elected unopposed and accepted the position of RBL Oxfordshire Club Liaison Officer (OCLO) with immediate effect and will provide a much-needed link between RBL Clubs in the County and the County Committee. County Community Support Officer – Yona Barrett (Secretary of Carterton Branch) was elected unopposed and has accepted the position of County Community Support Officer and will form a link between the County and Branch Community Support Officers. County Training Officer – Derek Bradshaw was elected unopposed and has accepted the position of County Training Officer, working with Branches on delivering the raft of training packages that County and Branch Officers are required to undertake. 	
14.	Election of Members of Sub Committee for County Conference 2025-2026 There were no nominations from Branches, the County requested any volunteers interested in working with the Sub Committee to contact the County Secretary.	
15.	Presentation of County Standard The County President Ann Midwinter presented the County Standard to Tjark Andrews following the taking of the County Standard Bearers oath.	
16.	Presentation of County Presentations and Awards The following County Awards were presented by the National Vice Chair Lynda Atkins and County President: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colonel Le Duc Norris Cup for Branch Efficiency – Henley-on-Thames Branch Membership Trophy – Carterton Branch Novice Standard Bearer Trophy – Mr Clive Cantwell Carterton Branch County Standard Bearer Trophy - Mr Tjark Andrews 	
17.	Presentation of County Poppy Awards There were no Poppy Appeal Awards this year.	
18.	Date and Venue for 101th Oxfordshire Conference 2026: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saturday 31 Jan 26 – to be held at the Carterton Community Centre 	
19.	Debate Motions and Charter Motions, motions passed by conference will be sent to the Annual Conference Committee for consideration	



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	There were no motions presented by Branches to Conference	
20.	Obtain Permission to Destroy Ballet Papers There were no motions presented and not elections there were no ballet papers to destroy	
21.	Vote of Thanks The Vice Chair extended the heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the success of today's event. First and foremost, a sincere thanks go to Lord Lieutenant, the Bishop of Dorchester, and the Mayor of Carterton for their esteemed presence and support. The Conference is also deeply grateful to the National Vice Chair of the Royal British Legion and all delegates and attendees who have made this conference a success with their participation and engagement. Lastly, a huge thank you to all the branch members of the Royal British Legion in Oxfordshire, their dedication and hard work are truly appreciated.	
22.	Handover to incoming Officers The out-going Chair Pete Eldridge handover the Jewel of Office to the Chair Elect Steve Eldridge. The new Chair thanked Pete for his work and looked forward to working with the County and Branch Membership.	
20.	Closure of Conference The Standards were returned, and the National Anthem was played, and the Kohima Address was delivered by the County President. The Standards were Marched Out and with that the Conference closed at 1115hrs, with the National Anthem. The County Chair and Outgoing Chair conducted a roadshow to those wishing to attend.	

S Kingsford
County Chair
Date:

R Lovesey
County Secretary
Date:

Attachment:

1. The Royal Greeting
2. The Civic Welcome
3. The County Chairs Report 2024
4. Annual Financial Report



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BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Vice Admiral (Rtd.) Paul Bennett C.B. O.B.E.,
National President,
The Royal British Legion

Please convey my warmest thanks to the Members of The Royal British Legion for their loyal greetings, sent on the occasion of their Annual General Meetings which are being held throughout January and February 2025.

As your Patron, I much appreciate your message, and I am always interested to be reminded of the ever-important work you do for those who are serving and have served in our Armed Forces, and their dependants.

In return, I send my warmest good wishes to you all for a successful series of meetings.

CHARLES R



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Civic Welcome Address by Michelle Mead Mayor of Carterton

Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with immense pride and great pleasure that I as Magor of Carterton extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to you all to the 100th Oxfordshire Royal British Legion Annual County Conference.

Carterton with its rich and storied history stands today as one of the largest towns in Oxfordshire, a testament to the growth and resilience of the community. Founded in the early 20th Century, Carterton began as a colony of small holders on the agricultural land of the northern Black Bourton Parish.

Carterton's journey from humble beginning to a thriving town is closely linked to the establishment of Royal Air Force Brize Norton in 1937. The development of the RAF base not only transformed Carterton's character, but also brought about a profound change in the community, making Brize Norton the largest operating base of the RAF.

As we gather here for this significant milestone of the 100th Oxfordshire County Royal British Legions Annual Conference, I am reminded of the dedication, perseverance and community spirit that have brought the Royal Brish Legion Branches in Oxfordshire this far. It is the same spirit that will propel the Royal British Legion into the future.

Thank you and Welcome.



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County Chairs Report 2025

As I hope, you are all aware, this will be my last Oxfordshire County Conference as County Chair and as a member of the Oxfordshire Committee. Looking back, it is hard to believe that when I handover to Steve Kingsford at the close of this 100th Oxfordshire County Conference I will have held the role for just 6 weeks short of 5 years. I am sure that a change of leadership will bring new opportunities to the County Committee, with fresh ideas and a new chairman. During my tenure much has changed at all levels of the RBL. I leave at a point where the onus on Volunteer Support both for County and Branches is increasing. I am unable to predict where we will all be in another 5 years, but feel, for those that continue as volunteers it will be interesting times. From a County Committee viewpoint, we have filled additional roles and have over the last year or so recruited new committee members who have taken on volunteer roles, notably County Training Officer (CTO) and County Recruiting Office (CRO). There are still places to be filled on the committee and new volunteer roles to fill such as, County Youth Officer (CYO), County Poppy Appeal Co-Ordinator and County Community Support Coordinator/Committee (CCSC). If there are any Branch Members/Officers interested in joining the Committee and taking up one of these roles, please contact the County Secretary.

During the last year, our County Officers have had a blitz on improving the Counties administration. Led by County Secretary Rob Lovesey the County is acknowledged as a leader in the production of County Newsletters, meeting administration and most recently in the production and administration of County and draft Branch Plans. Another innovation for the County is the reinstatement of a County Vice Chairman, Fiona Lovesey, led County Conference Sub Committee, members of the Sub Committee include the County's Ceremonial Officers, County Parade Marshal, Peter Clarke and County Standard Bearer, Tjark Andrews, County Conference Administration Members Brian and Yona Barrett.

Due to unavoidable and administrative issues with the planned 2024 Oxfordshire County Poppy Appeal Launch in which our Volunteer County Secretary, Rob Lovesey, committed a huge amount of personal time, it had to be cancelled at a late stage. Despite this I acknowledge and thank the huge efforts made by Rob to get the event off the ground.

Thanks to the efforts of Our MEO Lebo Nyoni, County Treasurer, Andrew Bowes, County Secretary Rob Lovesey, the submission of 2023-2024 Branch Accounts was massively excellent result with 34 Branch Accounts Submitted. Oxfordshire County returns were at 97%, a stunning result.

As I write this, we are in the final stages for Branch submissions of MS1 reports for Branches, County Supported Branches (CSB) and Standard Bearers. I will have the full results for these at County Conference. The County Committee is fully aware of issues branches are having with recruitment of new, younger members, officer succession and some of the general Branch Administration. This regularly this shows up each year with the submission, or not of MS1's. Your County Committee is available to assist and help with all these issues. Please don't battle it out with issues on your own, there are often available solutions if you report problems and issues up to the Committee. One I will mention for Branches struggling with low membership and officer succession is the ability to convert the branch to a CSB which allows a Branch to continue with 2 Points of Contacts (POC) and greatly reduced administration.



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Oxfordshire Poppy Appeal

I pleased to confirm that after a short time away from his role our County Poppy Appeal Manager Yanto Evans has returned to work. I would like to thank Poonam Vaja who has stepped in to keep the Counties Poppy Appeal on track during Yanto's time away from his role. At this point in time full results for the County Appeal are still being collated, so I will leave final results to be presented at Conference.

County and Branch Training:

There will be a short briefing after County Conference closes on the requirements for County and Branch Training. This will be given by County Training Officer (CTO) Derek Branshaw. Please make time for the Briefing sessions as I have concentrated the briefings on imminent mandatory requirements for County and Branch Officers

County and Branch Plans

Over the course of 2024 much work has been done On the Oxfordshire County Plan, this work, as briefly mentioned in my report, has been led by Rob Lovesey and will be fully implemented in full for the County during 2025. To enable Branches, who will also be required to implement a plan to have a running start, Rob is currently producing a draft Branch Plan template which will contain all of the mandatory requirements and quickly guide Branch Officers through the process of turning the general template into a finished working Plan. For some better awareness prior to Oxfordshire County Conference I have included some short notes, below, on plans:

- County Plan. County and Branch Plans are now a mandatory requirement to focus all levels of RBL volunteers and the way they operate in a uniform and planned way. Branches will be receiving copies of a template for the Branch Plans early in 2025.
- County Chair and County Chair Elect with assistance from County Officers will be presenting a full briefing of the County Plan at the County Conference after it closes.
- Branch Officers: The County Plan will be specifically templated so that Branches can use it as a base for their own plans, this will enable them to edit it to meet their own aims and requirements using the correct standard headings.

Finale

I mentioned at the start of this report that this is my final Conference as Oxfordshire County Chair as, when Conference closes, Steve will be taking over the Office. I was co-opted into the Office of County Chair in March 2020 and 3 weeks later the UK was blighted by 2 years of Covid Restrictions, as an organisation the RBL along with most of the major charities has suffered severe implications particularly in the volunteer membership due to the pandemic. After Covid my role started a long process of reclaiming lost ground. Only my peers can judge how successful that process has been. Over my near 5 years in the Chair there has been one constant and that has been the unfailing support I have received from across the charity. To avoid turning this short report into a major manuscript I will try to keep the list as short as possible.

Thanks to:

RBL Corporate including all the Executive Directors and staff I have met and worked with during meetings and seminars.

Membership Council especially Hugh Aston Moore our local representative.



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County Committee. Over time we have filled additional roles and recruited new committee members who have taken on volunteer roles, notably County Training Officer (CTO) and County Recruiting Office (CRO).

Oxfordshire County Poppy Appeal Districts. Full details in Poppy Appeal Mangers Report

The Oxfordshire County Branches especially those I have had a chance to work with closely, I offer not only my thanks for your dedication in keeping our Oxfordshire organisation alive, and sometimes in kicking but my thanks and admiration for you all do and achieve.

Those I have worked closely with on a day-to-day basis:

National Vice Chair Lynda Atkins and County Vice Chair Fiona Lovesey, (Previous County Chairs).

Our President Ann Midwinter.

Chris Jones MEM

Lebo Nyoni MEO.

Nicole Mayall, Community Fundraising Manager.

Yanto Evans PAM

Patricia Chadwick, Casework Services Manager.

County Treasurer, Andrew Bowes.

Rob Lovesey Volunteer County Secretary.

Brian Leach County Recruiting Officer

Derek Bradshaw County Training Officer.

Oxfordshire County Ceremonial Team Pete Clarke, County Parade Marshal, and Tjark Andrews County Standard Bearer.

And of course, all of you here today.

Thank you!



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Annual Financial Report

1 Accounts in the papers available in the Hall

2 Confusions arise due to the County Supported Branch transactions being reported alongside those of the county

3 Opening and closing balances (page 2)

Closing	30/06/2024
General	6334.28
Welfare Fund	10798.62
Earmarked Funds	88657.35
Total:	105790.25

4 County Income and expenditure

	Income	Expenditure
Handbook Income	375.00	
General BFI interest	171.03	
Welfare BFI interest	226.35	
County Conference 2024		305.98
D Day Wreath -Harwell Event		27.50
Oxford Rural Community Council		30.00
Poppy Appeal Launch Event -Refreshments		510.00
Purchase of new County Standard and ancilleries		1387.20
Dedication New Standard		269.70
Standard Bearer Training (inc Refreshments)		312.18
Parade Marshal Expences		238.30
Contribution for Oct - Dec 2022 welfare cases		2610.15
Contribution for Apr -June 2023 welfare cases		2456.00
Contribution for Jan -Mar 2023 welfare cases		2756.74
		2207.38
		7822.89