



Central News – August 2025

Operational information for County / District and Branch / Section officers only

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Important dates	
4 September 2025	Membership fee increases to £22
24 September 2025	County Chairs' Seminar briefing pack release
30 September 2025	Branch accounts deadline
31 December 2025	MS1 form deadline

Online RBL fundraising notice

If you're thinking of setting up a GoFundMe or other online fundraising platform page to fundraise for RBL, thank you! We really appreciate your support. **Please be aware that if you choose The Royal British Legion as the benefiting charity, all the funds raised will automatically go to RBL central funds.** It is possible to raise money for a specific branch through these platforms, but only if it's made really clear on the page from the very beginning and, even then, it can be a tricky and time-consuming process as the money must be reimbursed manually from central funds.

This is because the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice means we must use donations exactly as described when people give. If it's not absolutely clear that the money is intended specifically for a branch, other supporters may donate thinking they're supporting RBL centrally, which could prevent us from being able to transfer the funds to a branch. Because of this, we'd strongly recommend using a different method if you're looking to support a local branch directly.

Celebrity and royalty Remembrance involvement

We are delighted to hear about the variety of events being planned for Remembrance by branches across the UK and overseas, and we wish you all the best with your event. When dealing with high profile individuals, it's important we all work together as one Legion with a united front, avoid any possible duplication and ensure the correct contacts are used.

If you have plans that involve celebrities, please kindly inform Teresa Greener, RBL Celebrity and Cultivation Event Manager, at TGreener@britishlegion.org.uk. If your plans involve **social media influencers**, please contact Hannah Summersfield, Head of Social Media and Content, at HSummersfield@britishlegion.org.uk. Lastly, any **requests for royal visits** should be handled centrally by contacting Membership Services at membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk.

Standard Bearer attire

Following a recent concern raised regarding Standard Bearer's attire on parade, please find below a message from Robert Millar, Chair of the Ceremonial Working Group, regarding the importance of adhering strictly to the dress regulations outlined in the [Ceremonial Handbook](#).

“The role of the Standard Bearer carries a position of high visibility and pride. It is imperative that uniform standards are upheld consistently across all Branches, Counties, and Districts. This ensures respect for the traditions we represent and prevents avoidable scrutiny that could undermine the dignity of our ceremonies.

“It remains the responsibility of the Formation Chair to ensure the appointed Standard Bearer is correctly dressed in accordance with Legion ceremonial requirements. Pride in regimental attire is commendable, but when bearing a Legion Standard, the appropriate dress outlined by the Ceremonial Handbook must take precedence.

“Should there be any uncertainty regarding what constitutes correct attire, I encourage teams to consult the [Ceremonial Handbook](#) or reach out for clarification.

“Let us continue to support one another in maintaining the high standards befitting our Legion and those we commemorate.”

Robert Millar GCGI MSc MAPM

Chair

Ceremonial Working Group

Membership fee increase

We would like to take this opportunity to kindly remind branch and county officers that the £2 fee increase for 2025 comes into effect on **Thursday 4 September 2025**. New members and those renewing from that date will pay £22. The change will take place automatically at renewal.

Please ensure that your formation’s websites are amended in time to reflect the new fee. If you require assistance with this, please contact your regional inbox / MEO. For any branch that collects fees on behalf of members (consolidated payments), please ensure you refer to the [consolidated payment guidance](#) on MAP and collect the correct new membership fee amount.

The fee increase follows the Motion passed at Annual Conference 2024. If you or local members would like to know more about these changes, please visit rbl.org.uk/membershipfees.

If you have any questions or concerns about the fee increase, please reach out to us at membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk or call us on: UK: 0800 307 7773 (free); Republic of Ireland: 1800 911 936 (free); Overseas: +44 (0)207 191 1091 (full rate)

Branch Disbursements Report

We are pleased to announce that a new Branch Disbursements report has been added to MAP in response to queries from branches. **This new report can be found in the same area as your membership lists and shows members in each branch who paid branch administration fees during the previous quarter.** For example, the report generated on 7 July includes payments made between 1 April and 30 June and should match the disbursement payments branches will be receiving shortly from central funds.

Reports will be produced on the first Monday of every third month and uploaded later that same day. The next report is due 6 October. As with other membership reports, each file remains in the Branch Disbursements folder for one week before moving to the *Archived Reports folder* the following Sunday afternoon.

Please note: Due to the time required for us to test this new report, by the time the 1 April – 30 June payments were ready to be issued, the report had already moved to the *Archived Reports folder*. Branch officials therefore need to access this report there. If you have any questions, please contact membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk.

September Membership Handbook

As you may be aware, the Membership Compliance and Policy team has been working on the latest revision of the Membership Handbook, which is **due for release in late September**. Whereas the March revision focused on structural changes to make information easier to find, the September release will focus on content changes.

We'd like to thank everyone that provided feedback on the handbook. Following this forthcoming September edition, the Membership Handbook will transition to an annual review cycle, with the next release scheduled for August 2026.

Looking ahead to October

As we now approach the tail-end of summer, we look ahead to October. Please be advised that on Wednesday 1 October 2025, two key communications to branches are planned:

- Election nomination packs for 2025/26 (email or post, depending on preferences)
- Annual Conference 2026 October Special Circular (email)

Additionally, any bulk members (those renewing their membership on 1 October) will receive an email regarding their membership renewal on this date.

Cenotaph Parade 2025 – veteran registration

In 2025, we will continue to offer any remaining unused Cenotaph Parade tickets to eligible veterans who are *not* members or affiliated to a service or unit associations, so that they are afforded the opportunity to march in the Cenotaph Parade. This will be done on a first come first served basis and will be restricted to UK and Commonwealth veterans from the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and the Merchant Navy.

Registration is open to non-members [on our website](#) – please do encourage anyone who meets these criteria to register. The deadline is Monday 29 September. Should you have any questions, please contact cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk.

Catch up on Annual Conference

Missed this year's Annual Conference? Or want to want to re-live the weekend's highlights? You can now head over to the [Annual Conference webpage](#) to watch both the [highlights reel](#) and full [recording](#) of the main sessions from the weekend. Photo highlights and our 2025 award winners can also be seen on the page.

If you've never attended Annual Conference before, why not check out the highlights? It offers a great overview of what to expect from the event! Keep an eye out for information about Annual Conference 2026 in October this year.

RBL Central Band concert

RBL's Central Band will be holding a concert on Sunday 12 October at Cadogan Hall in London. The all-volunteer band, which is currently celebrating its 80th year, is conducted by RBL's Director of Music, Capt. David Cole, who leads the music for all RBL's commemorative events.

Tickets start from £18 and the concert promises to be filled with inspiring music, featuring classical favourites as well as beloved pieces from both stage and screen. Find out more and buy tickets [on the venue's website](#).

Remembrance Parade guidance

In partnership with the Local Government Association (LGA) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), RBL have contributed to a joint letter offering guidance on the expectations around the organisation of Remembrance parades. This letter is shared by the LGA and NALC with their member councils in England and Wales to help ensure that events are delivered safely, successfully, and with consistency. Find the letter [on the LGA website](#).

County and Branch Toolkit feedback

Earlier this year we launched our new [County and Branch Toolkit on MAP](#). This new collection of resources is designed to be useful, easy to use and make the running of RBL counties and branches easier. We are keen to get your feedback on the Toolkit. Please [share your thoughts via this short feedback form](#).

You do not need to have read or used *all* the resources in the pack – if you have read or used *any* of the resources in the Toolkit, we want to know whether you found them useful and user-friendly, and what improvements we might consider, including anything you would like to see added to the Toolkit.

South Asian Heritage Month

The Royal British Legion proudly supports South Asian Heritage Month (18 July – 17 August) with special content on its website. With this year seeing the 80th anniversary of VJ Day and the end of the Second World War, stories on the website reflect the crucial contribution of the men and women of South Asia. The 14th Army, for instance, was the main allied fighting force in Burma, and 85% of its ranks were made up of those from South Asia. Discover more on the [South Asian Heritage Month website](#).

Back from the Brink – Solihull Branch

A Community Rallies Around Remembrance – the importance of succession planning

Following the unexpected passing of its Chair and PAO, Solihull Branch was left in a difficult position. “Tracey had been the central figure in organising the Poppy Appeal,” says Elaine Butler, Warwickshire and Birmingham County President. “She knew every collection point and maintained the list of volunteers. With no clear plan in place, there were serious discussions about cancelling the appeal for the year.” But, says Elaine, cancellation wasn’t the right answer.

It was strong relationships with the local authority’s community teams that enabled the branch to reach out to the borough’s 6k+ strong Hong Kong (HK) community, with an overwhelming response. “Many were eager to integrate more fully into the community and to understand the significance of Remembrance and the role of the Royal British Legion,” she says.



Photo credit: Elaine Butler

Each day, more than 30 volunteers came forward, primarily to support collections. “Their dedication and enthusiasm were met with admiration from the public, who were both fascinated and moved by their support for the RBL.”

As many of these new volunteers wanted to take part in other key events but were unfamiliar with the protocols and traditions, the branch invited Major John Lam of the Royal Fusiliers – a Cantonese speaker and former member of the British Army in Hong Kong – to deliver a talk on ceremonial customs and the meaning behind them. His session was a great success, helping to build confidence and deepen understanding among the HK volunteers.

Not only was the Poppy Appeal was a success, but new volunteers were welcomed into the fold and the branch has forged stronger ties with the local community. What began as a crisis has become a story of resilience, inclusion, and shared purpose.



Photo credit: Elaine Butler

Elaine’s tip for other branches is: “Make part of the Branch plan going out and meeting organisations in your patch. You will be surprised how many are keen to support the RBL.”

One Year of centenarian membership

Just over a year ago we rolled out our first centenarian memberships – honorary membership to those over 100 years old. This was the result of a successful motion at Annual Conference 2022. Since then, our branches have been hard at work recognising their centenarian members and commemorating the Second World War generation. One such recognition recently took place on a veteran’s 101st birthday in Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, Wales.

Born on 2nd July 1924, Dennis is one of the last surviving veterans of the Second World War. At just 18 years old, he joined the Royal Navy, serving from 1942 to 1948. His service took him to East Africa, where conflict continued long after peace was declared in Europe. Among his most vivid wartime memories was the moment his crew were forced to abandon ship, which later sank in the same area where the Titanic was lost, an unforgettable and sobering experience.



Photo credit: Llanelli branch

Dennis was presented with the Centenarian Membership Certificate along with a heartfelt gift from Llanelli branch on his 101st birthday.

Thank you for reading! The next edition of Central News is due to be published Tuesday 2 September.