

Minutes from: Newent and District Branch of The Royal British Legion

Meeting Held on 23 February 2023 at Newent Memorial Hall.

Attendees	Post
Richard Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Vice Chairman, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership Secretary
Mary Curtis	Secretary
Simon Mason	Padre
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Rick Axon	Bar and Entertainments Member
Sue Urch	

1. Act of Remembrance.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1900 hours and asked us to think about those who could not be with us due to ill health, especially JM who is feeling better and is slowly on the mend. He read the name of those from the Parish of Newent who lost their lives during WW1 and WW2 during the month March and concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

2. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Colin Britt, Susanne Britt, Adrian Dover, Tom Heseltine, David Pollock, Graham Barton, Pat Price, John Price, Jon Miles, Viv Miles, Colin Calcutt, Elaine Balding.

3. Chairman's Report.

My report this month is primarily follow findings from the last meeting with:

Welcome to Newent Mail Drop.

In item 5.c. from the last meeting the Padre mentioned about utilising a 'Welcome to Newent' Mail Drop that St Mary's was organised for all the new housing estate's being built around Newent. I have ordered 300 RBL Leaflets through the Membership Engagement Officer (MEO) who you met at the last meeting and have also created a Branch leaflet to accompany them, are around for your perusal.

Pancake Day in Cobblers.

In item 5.d. from the last meeting the Deputy Padre mentioned about Cobblers intentions to organise a Pancake Day charity event in aid of the Poppy Appeal, this went ahead on 21 February and I can say with some confidence that the evening was very well attended and well run, my thanks to to Simon Cripps who not only had the idea but made pancakes all night, thanks also to the Cobblers management for allowing the event and to the Deputy Padre for arranging Poppy Appeal boxes on the night. Our Deputy Padre will let us know the sum raised in her report. Well done if you managed to get along.

John Edward Whitehorn Trophy.

Item 6.b. of last month's meeting the branch decided on Joint winners of the John Edward Whitehorn Trophy, I sent off congratulatory letters to both winners via their sponsors and arranged to have the trophy engraved at a cost off £15, just the presentation to arrange now. After some discussion it was

decided to arrange the presentation for the March meeting if arrangements can be made with both Sarah Davy and the 2 winners.

King Charles III – Coronation.

As requested in item. 6.d. of last month's meeting, I sent a request to our Armed Forces Representative at Newent Town Council (NTC) to ask what arrangements had been made to Celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III on 8 May 2023, I received the following reply:

"I have put forward a proposal for consideration regarding the coronation, to be discussed at our next meeting.

I am asking for the bunting and flags to be erected, plus that the planters are planted out and look good. This will at least make the town look good.

There are elections at around the time of the coronation, few days before so there will quite possibly be a set of different councillors, this makes things difficult. I will see if other suggestions come forward at the meeting, but am unsure of what can be done this time"

As you might expect I have offered any advice or help we can give, but in the meantime if anyone has any suggestions for consideration, I would be willing to hear them.

Newent Fire Service Talk.

Also, at last month's meeting item 6.f. was a talk that Rachel Smith from Newent Fire Service had agreed to give. I contacted Rachel and she is available to give the talk on 25th May 2023 here in the Memorial Hall, if anyone has any topic's they would like her to cover please let me know and I will pass them on. After further discussion it was decided to ensure this activity was well publicised prior to the event.

Branch Membership 2023.

Branch membership has dropped for the 3rd month in a row, Keith will give you this month's numbers during his report, but if anyone has ideas on how to recruit new members, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss it.

Finally

Don't forget that as normal if anyone needs help in any way at all please do not hesitate to get in contact, and if we can help, we will.

4. Minutes of meeting and Matters Arising.

The minutes of the Branch meeting on 26th January 2023 were examined and adopted as true and accurate record.

Proposed by SM, Seconded by RA agreed unanimously.

5. Reports by Officers.

5.a. Vice Chair/ BCSO/ Youth Liaison.

For those local veterans, friends and Branch colleagues suffering ill health, caring for other family members and experiencing difficulties, please remember that we are here to assist you; you only need to contact one of your Committee Members.

Membership, Branch Community Support Representative and Youth Liaison Officer.

Members are reminded that those considering becoming BCS Representatives, on-line courses remain available and assistance remains available from your Branch Chairman and BCS representative. TRBL having finalising their DBS process have now issued you BCS representative with his DBS Certificate: The Branch now being totally compliant in all BCS matters.

Welfare and Membership.

Welfare.

The Branch continues to aid and support its members and veterans, in the first instant, by signposting to the National RBL Helpline and interaction with local community and national organisations.

Members are reminded that The National RBL Helpline telephone number is: 0808 802 8080

And The Veteran's Gateway:

https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/127/~/-/the-royal-british-legion

Please be assured that we will always continue to utilise our local knowledge and contacts to support our members and veterans.

Branch Membership.

In accordance with TRBL records, Branch Memberships currently stands at 37 members, a reduction of a further member.

Branch Statistics.

The Branch has provided support to several Members and veterans this period.

In the event that members identify a comrade in need, they are encouraged to contact a Committee Member or BCS Representative at the earliest convenience. All communications are confidential.

Branch Statistics for this period are therefore as follows:

Total Number of Welfare visits: 3

How many beneficiaries visited: 3

How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters): 4

Total Welfare Expenditure: NIL (see Note 1)

Telephone Buddies:

Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive: 10

Telephone – How many beneficiaries called: 3

Telephone – How many telephone buddies: 4

Notes:

1. We await the outcome of the RBLHQ review of our "Crisis Grant". TRBL MEO "Memberships Engagement Officer" is fully aware of this issue, as approved by TRBL Board.

2. A limited number of email and telephone communications were made to TRBL HQ during this period on behalf of veterans and their families.

Community, Youth and Veteran Liaison Activities.

The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy

Members are aware the 2 nominations for The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy were received. Despite several telephone, emails and follow-up letter, we await a reply from JEW's family representative(s) in order that a date may be finalised for the/their Presentation(s).

Corp. Fred Sandbach.

Corp. Fred Sandbach's thanksgiving/memorial service is being planned by our Branch Padre: further details will be available shortly.

Major General Paul Stevenson OBE has died.

He was an Aden Veteran and the Gloucestershire County TRBL Branch President and 2013.

While a private family cremation be being arranged in conjunction with the Royal Marines Association, a Thanksgiving Service will take place at St Mary's Church in Wotton under Edge on Friday 21st April 2023 at 15.00 hours, and all are welcome to attend including Standards: The Royal Marines Association is again involved with this Service. Further information is available from Kate Cropper the Tyndale Benefice, telephone 01453 842175 and email office@tyndalebenifice.co.uk

Note: TRBL Regional and HQ office have been notified.

The Buchanan Trust.

I recently met with the former chairman of The Trust, Andrew Bower. The charity's estate at Bosbury, on the other side of Ledbury, has quite a few flats & cottages that are all there to help those that have served. The Veterans Support Manager – Samantha Brittain's contact info is:

Sb@buchanan-trust.org.uk Samantha is ex-army, knows the ropes and is very helpful.

<https://www.buchanan-trust.org.uk>

Should members know of any suitable veterans that would benefit of The Trust's support, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will act as the link-person.

Other Matters.

Activities continue on works to upgrade Newent's War Memorial and incorporate those names originally omitted.

Members are reminded at HMG and Service grants remain available for those suffering hardship.

Liaison continues with Newent's youth and community organisations, the aim of which is to promote TRBL and its specific activities in and around Newent.

TRBL HQ, County Liaison and Branch Communications (OS365)

For further matters relating to other HQ/County/Branch communications and other local activities, please see your chairman's and other Representative Reports.

5.b. Treasurers Report.

There has been no movement on the account in the previous 30 days. The current account stands at £1026.84

5.c. Padre.

Memorial/thanksgiving for Corp. Fred Sandbach is planned for 13th March 2023 at 2pm. Church bells to be rang for Corp. Sandbach's age. KU to contact RBL for a bugler, Branch Standard would be in attendance and any other standards would be welcome.

5.d. Deputy Padre.

As in Chairman's report the Pancake Day event went very well and was attended. They raised £120 and the owner of the Cobblers (Graham) matched it making £240 in total raised for the Poppy Appeal. The collection box will be kept at Cobblers in order to raise more donations.

5.e. Entertainments & Bar Member.

Innsworth Military Wives Choir is provisionally booked for 25th June. Ticket prices are expected to be around £5 per ticket, Advertising will be key for this event to work.

Many thanks go to RA and GB for all their endeavors so far.

6. Any Other Business.

None.

7. Date of Next Meeting.

The meeting closed at 20:05 with the next meeting to take place 23rd March 2023 at 7pm in Newent Memeorial Hall.

Agenda for Meeting of Newent and District Royal British Legions Branch on 23 March 2023

1. Welcome and Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Chairman's Report
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.
5. John Edward Whitehorn Trophy Presentation.
6. Reports by Officers.
7. Any Other Business.
 - a. Military Wives Concert.
8. Date of Next Meeting.