



Central News – March 2026

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

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Important dates		
23 March 2026	Annual Conference in-person attendee registration deadline	
6 April 2026	Annual Conference virtual attendee registration deadline	
20 April 2026 (6pm – 7.30pm)	Membership Townhall [click here to join on the day]	

Voting in this year's RBL elections

Civica Election Services has now distributed a candidate booklet and ballot papers to branches. This is a great opportunity for members to have a say on RBL's governance by electing some key leadership roles.

Your branch will hold a general meeting where members can come together to consider candidates for Trustees and Membership Council representatives (where applicable).

Voting is open from 2 March – 9 April for four Trustee roles and the West Midlands Membership Council elections. The voting window for Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland Membership Council election is open from 16 March – 23 April. [See the candidate statements and CVs.](#)

Remembering the Iraq War – national and local commemorations

May 2026 will mark the 15th anniversary of the end of Iraq war and the RBL is proud to honour the extraordinary service of those who took part in Operation Telic. We are hosting a daytime commemorative event at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire, at 12pm on Friday 22 May 2026.

We warmly welcome those who served with the British Armed Forces, their families and the bereaved to [register their interest in attending](#). We will remember the lives lost and those affected and will pay tribute to the professionalism and dedication of the men and women who served, from the initial invasion to the crucial rebuilding of Iraqi institutions and infrastructure.

35th Anniversary of the Gulf War

This year also marks the 35th anniversary of the end of the Gulf War. We remember this transformative conflict and the men and women who served.

Operation Desert Storm was launched following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and its subsequent refusal to withdraw following UN sanctions. As such, a massive US-led coalition force of almost one million service personnel was assembled from 34 countries. The UK deployed 53,000 men and women of its Armed Forces.

The UK's contribution, through Operation GRANBY, was vital in the air, sea and land operations that achieved a swift and resounding military resolution. Yet this came at a high price: during the conflict 392 coalition service personnel died, and among their number were 47 members of the British Armed Forces.

We remember the crucial service of the personnel who contributed to the Gulf War and the lives of the members of the British Armed Forces that were lost. Discover more at [Remembering the Gulf War](#).

May 2026 election guidance for members

Ahead of the council elections taking place in England and the elections to the Welsh and Scottish Parliaments on 7 May, members are kindly reminded that RBL is bound by charity and electoral law and must therefore remain politically impartial.

If you are aware of any political visits or events involving RBL property or members, please contact publicaffairs@britishlegion.org.uk so we can provide support if needed and monitor RBL's balanced engagement accurately.

If you are involved in campaigning for a political party or candidate, please ensure this work is kept separate from RBL activity. E.g.:

- Conducting party-political activities on a different social media platform than those you use for your RBL work.
- Not including RBL's name in any autobiographical information on election materials or websites.
- Never using the poppy on any party-political material

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any queries, please contact publicaffairs@britishlegion.org.uk.

Click and collect at Annual Conference

Will you be attending Annual Conference in-person in Brighton? This year all members can benefit from free click and collect with Poppy Shop orders!

Get the most out of your member-exclusive 15% Poppy Shop discount and avoid disappointment by placing a click and collect order no later than midnight 30 April. [Find out more about Poppy Shop click and collect orders here](#). You can register to attend Annual Conference in-person or online [via our website](#).

Get more from the Membership Forum

The Membership Forum, a much-loved part of the Annual Conference agenda in which members can directly ask questions to a panel of senior leaders, will return at Annual Conference 2026.

This year, we're delighted that online attendees will now have the option to dial in during the forum and directly ask the panel their questions, rather than through the chat.* Additionally, attendees can also pre-submit their forum questions [using this form](#). If your branch is planning to attend, why not discuss the questions you'd like to ask at your next meeting and pre-submit them?

Register to attend in-person or online [via our website](#). The deadline to register is midday 23 March for in-person attendees, and midday 6 April for virtual attendees. Look out for the provisional agenda and other information in the March Circular, 12 March.

**We're committed to a smooth roll out of this improved experience at Annual Conference 2026 and appreciate the patience and understanding of all attendees as we pilot it for the first time this year.*

Catch up on our Membership Townhall

Thank you to everyone who joined our first Membership Townhall of 2026. In this open session we heard an overview of RBL's key services and support, an update on Armed Forces engagement, and more. If you missed it, you can [watch the recording here](#) and [read a summary](#) of key questions and discussed themes.

Save the date for our next Membership Townhall – Monday 20 April, 6pm – 7.30pm, [join on the day using this link](#).

Help to shape new connection opportunities for our members online

Last year we launched our first special interest group for members, the [Gamer's Group](#). This year, we'll be launching more online special interest groups to enable our members to connect through their common interests, wherever they are in the world.

We're keen to find out the most popular interests among our members to inform the development of future special interest groups and bring people together. Please spare a few minutes to [complete this form](#), thank you.

Thank you for reading! The next edition of Central News is due to be published Tuesday 7 April