



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Central News – June 2026

Operational information for County / District and Branch / Section officers

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Important dates	
8 June 2026	Fireside Chat Episode 2
24 June 2026	Festival of Remembrance ticket ballot closes
30 June 2026	Member-exclusive research insights webinar

Our new Membership Facebook Group goes live!

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our membership-exclusive Facebook group! The group has been created so that members can share their good news stories, share thoughts and ideas, and hear updates from RBL.

To join, you need to have a Facebook account. You'll be asked to verify your RBL membership and, once approved by admins, you're in! There are house rules, which you will see on joining but we hope that this will be a new and fun way for our members to connect with each other. Kindly note, questions about your membership should be send to membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk.

[Find and join the group here](#) or search on Facebook for *Members of the Royal British Legion*. You may share the link with other members. From July, we will begin sending out email invitations to members, in stages by region, to ensure that as many as possible have the opportunity to join. See you in the group!

Join us for episode two of our Fireside Chats

Don't forget to join us online for our next Fireside Chat, **12pm-1.30pm on 8 June**

Episode 2: When the move to civilian life isn't part of the plan.

In this episode, RBL's Jon Summerson will sit down with Paul Findlay MBE, Chief Executive Officer of the Wembley Stadium Foundation. A former soldier and leg amputee, Paul's life and leadership have been shaped by his time in the army and an unexpected transition into civilian life. In an honest and powerful conversation, Paul shares his real journey, from joining the army to being forced to leave following injuries sustained on operations in Afghanistan. Together, Jon and Paul will explore the tough moments of service life, the realities of identity and loss when a military career ends before you're ready, and what it truly means to rebuild purpose when 'the plan' changes. Paul will reflect candidly on resilience, leadership, and the lessons learned from navigating adversity, insights that resonate far beyond the military community.



The morning of the day Paul was hit in an IED strike

This is a frank and thought-provoking discussion about service, transition, and what comes next. Expect moments that challenge assumptions and question long-held beliefs within the veteran community, alongside honest reflections on change and identity.

[Click here to join the Fireside Chat on 8 June, 12pm–1.30pm.](#) You can also catch up with ***Episode 1: Gritty leadership lessons that stick – from a soldier's perspective*** by [clicking the link here](#).

July Membership Townhall

Save the date for our next Membership Townhall, 12.30pm–2pm on Thursday, 23 July. In this Townhall, members and several senior membership leaders will come together to celebrate and recognise the hard work and impact of our members, plus look forward to the Remembrance period. As always, we'll have plenty of time for your questions. All attendees are welcome to ask these live or in advance [using this form](#).

Join on the day via [this link](#). Watch the recording of April's Townhall [here](#) or read a summary [here](#).

Join our webinar to hear new research insights

There is still time to **register for our membership-exclusive webinar that takes place at 6pm-7pm, 30 June**. We'll share the findings of our research and how it will guide our future priorities, support, policy asks and campaigns for the Armed Forces community. Topics covered will include:

- **Demographics & Needs:** Looking at the latest national data to build the clearest picture ever available, of who makes up the AFC and what support needs are most common.
- **How the AFC is Changing:** Exploring how the size and shape of the AFC may change in the years ahead, and what this could mean for future support.
- **Voices & Experiences:** Gathering views from serving personnel, veterans and families to understand their daily experiences, challenges and priorities.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Studying issues that affect everyday life for veterans, including:
 - Intimate Partner Violence and Abuse (IPVA).
 - Gambling.
 - Help-seeking for physical health, mental health and alcohol problems.

To join on the day, please [register in advance using this link](#).

Teaching Remembrance

If you're looking for Remembrance resources to deliver in schools this year or want to recommend resources to teachers in your area, look no further! Using Armed Forces stories and inspiring imagery, our new downloadable Remembrance Resources connect young people aged 5-14 with who, how and why we remember.

This year we've added modern service stories and a wider choice of activities to encourage a deeper understanding of the service that keeps us safe. You can find and download the resources for free on our [Teaching Remembrance webpage](#).

Reminder - Festival of Remembrance ballot

The ballot for this year's Festival of Remembrance is now open! Members must enter the ballot through the form on our website for a chance to secure tickets. The ballot closes at **11.59pm on Wednesday, 24 June**. [To enter the ballot and for further information, please visit our website.](#)

Key dates:

- Wednesday 24 June – ballot closes for both performances.
- Wednesday 8 July – evening ballot is drawn and entrants informed of the outcome.
- Thursday 9 July – afternoon ballot is drawn and entrants informed of the outcome.



Staff from across the RBL came together in Brighton to host our Annual Conference, 2026

Highlights from Annual Conference 2026

We want to thank all our members who joined us in Brighton and helped to make Annual Conference 2026 a roaring success!

This year, Conference saw more new firsts. Not only were we delighted to be joined online by residents of our care homes, who are also part of our Armed Forces community. We were also delighted to enable online delegates to join in with the motions debate.

This has fulfilled two ambitions of the Membership team – to help our care homes residents to feel part of the wider RBL community and make it possible for delegates to fully take part in Conference, wherever they are in the world. And in a bonus first, we also welcomed a Galanos House resident to Brighton for their very first Annual Conference experience!

For those who missed it, a recording of the business of conference, including guest speakers, the Motions debate, National Awards ceremony, Membership Forum and more, will be available soon. Please look out for an announcement in our usual communications channels.



Care home residents were able to watch our Annual Conference together

Highlights outside of the main auditorium took a musical turn when members could enjoy a fabulous performance of classic tunes from the Surbiton Royal British Legion Youth Marching Band.



Surbiton Royal British Legion Youth Marching Band entertained members and visitors

Visitors could find out about cheffing in the Navy, have a go on some fitness equipment, or try flying an RAF jet on a flight simulator – as did the National Chair!

A new addition to the exhibition this year was the Care Homes stand, raising nearly £700 towards their activities budget. The raffle stand also proved hugely popular. Usually, the raffle raises funds for the County or District, but this year raised £1,866 for

Team UK at the Invictus Games. A signed framed picture of a Spitfire became the must-win prize, with some even offering to buy it outright! Thanks to generous donations from the Arundel Branch in Sussex, including prints, an Airfix Type 45 destroyer model, and a family pass to Arundel Castle, the raffle attracted fantastic support, with many members commenting how meaningful it was to know exactly where the funds would be going.



In the exhibition area, our National Chair, Lynda Atkins, prepares for take-off!

The Fundraising team's presence was also warmly welcomed and provided delegates with an opportunity to learn more about ongoing fundraising initiatives and ways to support future activities, including the Poppy Appeal.

Although Newton & Newton were unable to attend with a stand this year, they remained very much in the thoughts of delegates throughout the event. Newton & Newton are already looking forward to returning in 2027 and would like to thank everyone for their continued support.

But without our members, none of this could take place! So, thank you for coming and we look forward to hosting you in Telford next year, 7-9 May – whether in person or online!

Remembering Op Telic

Following RBL's event at the NMA to remember the Iraq War, many attendees shared their feedback. Watch [our short reel](#) in which we share some of those messages.

Collaboration and Remembrance in Surrey

RBL is proud to partner with the UK Men's Shed Association (UKMSA), an organisation that creates welcoming community spaces where people connect through practical activities, shared skills, and conversation. You may have spotted them in the exhibition at this year's Annual Conference!

As part of our partnership, branches are encouraged to work together with their local shed to foster camaraderie, purpose and wellbeing – values shared by RBL and UKMSA. In Surrey, Chertsey Men's Shed, founded by the Chair of the local RBL, recently received accreditation under the UKMSA Armed Forces Community Accreditation scheme (UKMSA AFCA), which recognises sheds who welcome, support and engage the Armed Forces Community.



Over the past 12 months, Chertsey shedders, who include several veterans, have played an active role in supporting local Armed Forces Community events. This has included activities such as logistical support for a VE80 beacon lighting, volunteering as marshals for road closures and selling poppies.

Maj (Retd) Rob Marshall MBE FGIntPT, founder of the shed, said he was delighted to see Chertsey Men's Shed recognised through the UKMSA AFCA scheme and proud that members continue to support the Armed Forces Community and the local RBL.

Men's Sheds can play an important role in supporting remembrance and local partnerships, and in creating welcoming spaces for members of the Armed Forces Community to find friendship, purpose and connection. To learn more about Men's Sheds [use the Find a Shed tool](#) and head over to meet them for a chat!

Useful information

[RBL Annual Report](#)

[Suggestions / ideas submission form](#)

[Link to join the RBL Gamers' Group](#)

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