

Editor's Notes

I don't know about you, but I am looking forward to an end to this particular hot spell of weather we are having at the moment!

No doubt you have been having lots of activities and we would love you to submit any photos or reports so we can share them with fellow members across the County.



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County Chair's Message

"Elsewhere in the Newsletter the County Secretary refers to AGM advice.

Can we please ensure that if possible, all members attend the Branch AGM.

*The Branch and its members are the bedrock on which the Royal British Legion is built;
we need a body of people to provide the officers and the
committee that oversees the work of those officers;
we need to all realise that we can't leave it to others to stand up
and be counted - they are relying on you!*

In all seriousness we need volunteers.

Please consider if you can sparing a few hours a month or week to ensure your branch carries on the work of supporting veterans and beneficiaries, and providing the bedrock of comradery in the military community in Northamptonshire.

The number needing the help of the Legion grows by the day - unfortunately our active members are going down. Please help reverse that - training is available for all roles, the majority of it online."

Editor's Contact: Northamptonshire.Secretary@rbl.community

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR ALL THE LATEST INFORMATION

[HTTPS://COUNTIES.BRITISHLEGION.ORG.UK/COUNTIES/NORTHAMPTONSHIRE/](https://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/northamptonshire/)

COUNTY COMMITTEE

President - Colonel John Royle MBE TD (contact via County Chair)

Chair - Ian Byrnes (Northamptonshire.Chairman@rbl.community)

Vice Chair - Peter Higgs (Northamptonshire.ViceChair@rbl.community)

Secretary - Steve Thatcher (Northamptonshire.Secretary@rbl.community)

Treasurer (interim) - Steve Thatcher (Northamptonshire.Treasurer@rbl.community)

Parade Marshal - Nick Fall (Northamptonshire.ParadeMarshal@rbl.community)

Training Officer - Vacant

Recruitment Officer - Ian Byrnes (Northamptonshire.Chairman@rbl.community)

Community Support Co-ordinator - Vacant

Youth Officer - Peter Armstrong (Northamptonshire.CYO@rbl.community)

Club Liaison Officer - Robbie Paice (GreensNorton.Chair@rbl.community)

Committee Members - Pat Cutting and Eddie Edmunds

County Correspondence

Whenever possible, all correspondence should be sent **by email** to the individual above. Any post should be addressed to: The County Secretary, 9 Eastlands Road, Finedon NN9 5DZ. Telephone queries should be made to the Secretary on 07954 160777.

Please note that the County Office is now closed. If you wish to arrange a face to face meeting, please contact the County Secretary who will make the necessary arrangements. This also applies if you wish to borrow any County equipment (gazebos, tables etc).

Legion Staff

Membership Engagement Manager (MEM) - Chris Jones (Central.MEM@rbl.community)

Membership Engagement Officer (MEO) - Lebo Nyoni

(Northamptonshire.MEO@rbl.community)

Membership Engagement Administrator (MEA) - Ruby Duce (Central.MEA@rbl.community)

Poppy Appeal Manager - Giles Coleman (GColeman@britishlegion.org.uk)

County Committee Meeting 2nd July 2026 - Key Points

- Peter Higgs, Chair of RBL Mears Ashby Branch was co-opted as County Vice Chair.
- All Committee members were reminded to visit their link branches and make full use of the Beacon Branches checklist.
- £290.31 was agreed as a contribution towards Central Welfare costs for the County for July to September 2025.
- The County Year End accounts for 2025-2026 were agreed.
- Future training sessions will include parade marshal training as required.
- It was noted that all future ceremonial events are to be reported in advance to the County Parade Marshal to ensure that risk assessments have been completed.
- The current Poppy Appeal stood at £575,709.05, including contactless of £160,756.00.

- A report from the MC Rep updated the meeting on changes to compliance (simplified account arrangements), progress by the BCS and Youth Working Groups, the emphasis on mandatory training, publication of the new Ceremonial Handbook and encouragement for branches to submit membership grant applications.
- **The date of the 2027 County Conference has been changed to Saturday 6th February 2027.**
- Changes to the submission of year end accounts have just been notified - the MEO has written to all branches to explain how it affects them.
- The mileage rate for travel has been increased to 55p per mile wef 6th April 2026. Branch Treasurers are to check all travel claims and reimburse the 10p difference as appropriate.

The next County Committee meeting will take place on Thursday 1st October 2026. If you have any topics you would like to be included, please contact the County Secretary.

There are now **four vacancies** on the County Committee, including one position which needs to be filled as follows:

- County Community Support Coordinator

If you feel you might like to contribute to the running of the County, please get in touch with the County Secretary asap to discuss further.

Furthermore, we need to appoint a replacement County Treasurer (currently being filled by the County Secretary). Please get in touch if you are interested.

Training and support will be provided for all posts where necessary.

DIARY NOTES

- 30th September - Deadline for all Year End Account Returns to be submitted to MEO.
- 1st October - County Committee meeting (via MS Teams).
- October/November - Branch AGMs held (updated guidance issued to all branches).

RBL POLICIES AND GUIDANCE UPDATES

Poppy Cabs

You may be aware of some press and sector coverage (Daily Express, COBSEO et al) and negative social media traffic in relation to the rebranding of Poppy Cabs. The Executive Director of Membership, Nina Villa, has provided us the background to this issue to give you sight of the statement the RBL has issued in response which will help you respond if you get any queries.

Background Information

RBL's discussions with Poppy Cabs were intended to protect and properly manage RBL's trademarks, which are closely linked to our charitable and fundraising work, while enabling Poppy Cabs to continue providing its important service to veterans. As custodian of the Poppy brand, the RBL has a responsibility to ensure it is used appropriately and with permission.

RBL offered a royalty-free licence which would have allowed that use to continue with RBL's permission. No fee or payment was requested or proposed, either then or in the future.

RBL's intention was to reach an agreement that would allow Poppy Cabs to continue using the name and logo. At all times, the focus was on dialogue and resolution rather than formal legal action. Poppy Cabs ultimately decided not to take up the licence and instead chose to change its name. RBL respects that decision and will continue to support Cabs-for-Veterans, its volunteer drivers and marshals, and the valuable service they provide.

RBL Media Statement

"Poppy Cabs has provided remarkable support to veterans over the past 16 years, making a real difference to many people attending Remembrance events, particularly those who may otherwise have struggled to do so. The RBL has been in discussions with Poppy Cabs regarding a free-of-charge licensing agreement for the use of the Poppy in its name and logo. Poppy Cabs ultimately decided not to take up the licence and instead changed its name to Cabs-for-Veterans.

"We will continue to work with Cabs-for-Veterans, its volunteer drivers and marshals, to provide this valuable service, and they have our support and gratitude."

It is highly recommended that Branch officers review all issues of Central News, as these often include policy and administrative changes, which might need to be discussed at Branch committees or general meetings.

An updated AGM Guidance document has just been issued to all branches (copy on the County website).

CEREMONIAL UPDATE

Ceremonial Training Day

There is a Ceremonial Training Day planned for Saturday 19th September 2026, from 10.30am to 3.00pm at the Army Reserve Centre Clare St, Northampton NN1 3JQ.

This is open to all Standards Bearers (including Youths) and anyone who wants to be a Parade Marshal.

To allow for catering including a light lunch, could branches please notify attendance to Nick Fall, The County Parade Marshal via Northamptonshire.ParadeMarshal@rbl.community.

County Standard Bearers Competition 2026

This year's competition is planned for Sunday 11th October 2026 from 2.00pm at the Army Reserve Centre Clare St, Northampton NN1 3JQ.

All Branch Standard Bearers are invited to compete and this year there will be a separate competition for Youth Standard Bearers.

Full details of the competitions will be issued shortly.

Standard Bearer Training Dates

Army Reserve Centre, Clare Street, Northampton NN1 3JQ:
Thursdays 18th June, 23rd July, 17th September, 22nd October and 5th November

The Hall, off, Thorpe St, Raunds, Wellingborough NN9 6LT:
Mondays 6th July, 7th September, 5th October and 2nd November

Times are 1900 till 2030 - refreshments will be available

Any queries to:

Northamptonshire.ParadeMarshal@rbl.community

BRANCH NEWS

RBL Rushden Branch - please visit the Rushden Branch website to view their latest Newsletter which features lots of great information and articles. The link is: <https://branches.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/rushden/newsletters/>

RBL Desborough & District

Eric Paige, Desborough and District's oldest member has sadly passed away at the age of 103.

Eric Page left his job at a corset factory in his hometown of Desborough, Northamptonshire, to serve in the Royal Engineers from 1943 until 1948. He worked as an engineer on machine guns and anti-aircraft guns, was 19 years old when he joined up.

After the war Eric, who was born in March 1923, returned to work in Desborough in various roles maintaining machinery and went on to have three children and five grandchildren. He lived in a care home in Northampton for his last few years and when asked about the secret of his longevity said: "There's no secret, life is what you make it if you put up with what you're given."

RIP Thou true and faithful servant



if you have any news or events including pictures which you would like to share with other branches, please send them to the County Secretary