



Central News – August 2024

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Important dates

13 – 14 September 2024	Autumn County Chairs' Seminar
30 September 2024	Deadline to submit Branch Accounts
9 November 2024	Festival of Remembrance
10 November 2024	Remembrance Sunday
11 November 2024	Armistice Day

New Membership Application Form

Further to our recent communications on fees, we would like to inform Branches that the 2024/25 Application Form is available to download or order now. As usual, the application form can be ordered in hardcopy through your MEO or [downloaded from MAP](#). Where feasible, we encourage branches to download and print the form from MAP - reducing distribution costs and speeding up the availability of the new form. Additionally, we continue to accept applications via the online application form, available at rbl.org.uk/join. **From Wednesday 4th of September, we cannot accept any old application forms.**

As the fee increase comes into effect on the same date (Wednesday 4th September), new members and those renewing will pay £20. The change will take place automatically at renewal. For any Branch that collects fees on behalf of their members (consolidated payments), please ensure you prepare to collect the correct new membership fee amount.

Branch, County, District and Section Chairs, and Clubs were sent communications about the fee increase on 20 - 21 June, and all members for whom we have an email address received an email notification on 24 - 26 June. Hard copy letters have been sent to members whom we were unable to contact digitally or via our usual communication channels. If you are aware of members within your branch who have not received any form of communication from us on the increase in fees, please let Membership Services know, via: membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk.

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 Annual Returns 2024

The deadline to submit branch accounts is 30th September 2024. The Branch Accounts Pack is [available on MAP](#) for those who have not received it. If you need help with the process or have any questions, please contact your MEO.

Membership Handbook timeline

The revised Membership Handbook will be made available week commencing Monday 26th September 2024. Feedback has been collected from across membership formations and is being worked through to ensure the future handbook format and content is as purposeful and user-friendly as possible.

It is with this in mind that the Membership Finance and Compliance Working Group have taken the decision to update the most critical sections of the Handbook for the September release, with the work to incrementally improve the document continuing through into future updates. Should you have any urgent questions about the handbook, please contact membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk.

New Branch Community Coordinator role

In July we updated Branch Community Support (BCS) representatives and stakeholders on the ongoing work of the Membership Development team. Following our BCS Representative Survey last year and work since, we are introducing a new Branch Community Coordinator role.

We recognise that the current work of BCS Reps is invaluable; however, to make the distinction between beneficiary-facing support (home and hospital visits, telephone buddying) and the wider support within the role, the BCS Representative role will cease later this year. This change has been informed by feedback from the BCS Rep survey.

We are pleased to introduce the Branch Community Coordinator role. The role profile was shared with BCS Reps and stakeholders in July and [can be found here on MAP](#). The role will launch in October 2024 and is similar to that of the BCS Rep, however *without* a requirement to report BCS activity on behalf of other supporters.

Branch Community Coordinator Applications

In agreement with their Branch, those who would like to take on the role of Branch Community Coordinator should fill in [the application form](#). Existing BCS Representatives have already been invited to apply and transition into this role.

Please note: Each Branch can appoint a maximum of four Branch Community Coordinators. If we receive more than four applications for a branch, we will work with the branch to select the most appropriate candidates.

[Applications are open using this form](#) and should be submitted in agreement with your branch.

After receiving your application, we will conduct the appropriate due diligence and confirm your position via email within 10 days. The Branch Community Coordinator position will start in October 2024, with a training guide and webinar available at the end of September.

Should you have any questions please contact membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk.

Membership questions and answers

Last month saw the launch of our simplified enquiry process. Please ensure all general membership questions and enquiries, including those around membership events, Annual Conference, IT/MAP/Umbraco support and membership details are sent to Membership Services membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk. Disused former mailboxes have been decommissioned.

You can still contact your Membership Engagement Officer as usual for enquiries around branch and county management, local membership matters and compliance queries. Additionally, our [online FAQs](#) are regularly updated to help with some of the most common member questions.

Please do encourage your members to visit [the FAQs](#) if they have a question or issue with their membership. We'll be regularly reviewing and updating these to ensure they are as useful as possible. Thank you for your support as we work to improve our members' experience.

March past the Cenotaph 2024

You can now sign up to take part in the March Past the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday 2024. If you're a veteran who is not a member of or affiliated to a service or unit association, you can register to join the March Past the Cenotaph through RBL.

Spaces will be allocated 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. You can find further information and the link to register [on our website](#).

Poppy Appeal 2024: Help us out across the nation 24th October - 11th November

We are aiming to build on the incredible campaign in 2023 and raise even more to support our beneficiaries. We still have several districts for which we need Poppy Appeal Organisers, and we also need more collectors nationwide. We would love for your help, and we'd encourage you to get involved, and bring family and friends. You don't have to be connected to RBL to volunteer for Poppy Appeal activities.

You can register [online using this form](#), by email at poppyappealvolunteering@britishlegion.org.uk, or by phone on 0345 8451945. Thank you.

Updated Branch Community Support (BCS) resources available

We have recently taken delivery of hard copies of our updated BCS Poster and BCS Flyer, which can be found on the BCS Portal. If you would like to order copies, please complete the following information:

Name:

Role:

Branch:

Delivery address:

Resource(s) requested: BCS Poster / BCS Flyer

Quantity of resource(s) requested: *If ordering both resources, please detail quantity of each*

Please submit the above information to membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk for the team to process and despatch.

Membership Engagement Survey 2024

In February we held the second iteration of the Membership Engagement Survey. The survey was sent to 131,046 members - all those that we held an email address for, and we received 8,596 responses, a 7% response rate.

Most membership metrics have remained consistently positive and strong since our 2022 survey, and there continues to be a trend that members tend to feel more negatively towards their membership experience over time. It remains clear that branches and clubs are critical in determining membership value.

Consistently with 2022, the top 3 reasons given for not renewing were:


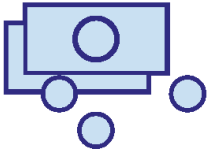
1. Membership did not live up to expectations
2. Lack of communications
3. Not feeling welcome by their branch.

A new section added to the 2024 survey specifically focused on attitudes towards the future direction of membership. As anticipated, the prospect of a digital proposition was significantly preferred by younger members, whilst those aged 71-90 disagreed the most.



The 2024 survey results reflect the membership improvements we have made over the last 2 years. We do, however, know that there are areas that need further investment and we are using these results to help us to prioritise our work and focus on areas that will have the greatest impact.


Infographics below on pages 6 - 7 display key findings, including a deeper dive into the results from the questions around the future of membership.

Membership Engagement Survey 2024

 
72% say that RBL membership is good value for money.

 **81%** of current members are satisfied with their membership.

 
91% are likely to renew their membership.

 **86%** of members say that it is easy to renew their membership.

 
57% of members can communicate with RBL easily.



 
83% of members agreed that RBL membership exists so our Armed Forces family has friends and allies standing by them in every community.



 
37% agreed that a dedicated members-only online area would be of interest to them.

 
50% visit their club once a week or more.

 
56% feel that RBL values them as a member.

 **85%** state that their connection to their RBL membership is important to them, with **48%** describing it as extremely important.

 
52% feel their branch provides camaraderie.

 
Legion Magazine and attending local **Remembrance events** are the most used membership benefits.

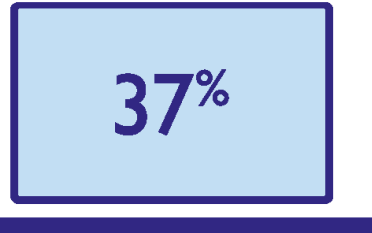
 **Top 3 reasons for not renewing:** membership did not live up to expectations, lack of communication, no longer feel welcomed by the branch.

 
72% of members agree that they receive the right amount of news and updates from the RBL.

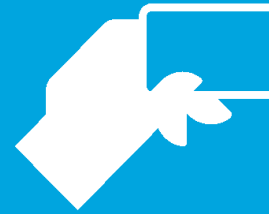


Membership Engagement Survey 2024

Digital Experience



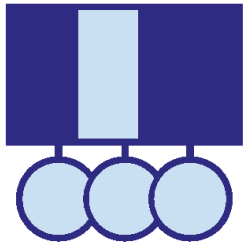
of members agreed that a dedicated members-only online area would be of interest to them.



Members aged 71-90 **48%** disagreed with the option of an electronic membership card instead of a physical one, and **44%** disagreed to receiving the magazine digitally.



18% of members would like RBL to offer more formats of communications.



Among the serving community, **52%** would be interested in joining a Special Interest Group, and **42%** agreed with the optional branch proposition.



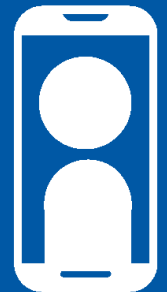
25% of lapsed members indicated that they would be likely to rejoin if they were offered a digital element to their membership.



Those in Branch/County Officer roles, **37%** agreed that online forums would help members form communities and network.



Only 21% of members felt that RBL currently offers enough virtual/online activities for them to take part in.



Centenarian Member Feedback

As announced in July's Central News, we have now sent the first cohort their centenarian memberships and certificates. Following this, we received two letters from our new centenarian members, whose feedback was so lovely we just had to share it!

Pauline, Worcestershire

"My sincere thanks for including me in your Centenarian Membership. I am now 103, blessed with good health and living in the peace. Your poster is on display as a constant reminder of days gone by and the good work we undertook when I was a Committee Member of our local branch."

Marjorie, Somerset

"I would like to say a big thank you for my Centenarian Membership. I joined in 1964 as a Standard Bearer, I was also a Branch President and Chair until I was 87. I started selling Poppies when I was 12 years old, and still collect for Poppy Appeal, knitting Poppies, helping where I can. I am very pleased and happy to have served my life in this establishment."

Centenarian Membership presented several operational and administrative challenges in need of solutions, involving a number of different staff across the Membership Directorate, so it is even more rewarding to deliver and hear how much it means to some of our longest serving members.

Will you ask your members to contact their MP and help us to continue influencing the Government's agenda?

With our General Election campaign now over, we want to thank all our members who contacted their local parliamentary candidates to tell them about our manifesto and ask for their support. We reached nearly 2300 parliamentary candidates across 466 constituencies!

The Royal British Legion and Poppyscotland are committed to ensuring the needs of the Armed Forces community are at the forefront of the minds of all new and returning MPs.

The election of MPs to a new Parliament and appointment of a new Government provides an important opportunity for us to ensure that our Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged because of their Service and receive the support they deserve.

Will you ask your members to write to their MP requesting that they commit to [Supporting those who Serve Us?](#)

[Click here](#) to write to your MP to ask them to affirm their support of our [manifesto asks](#). Your support

will make a real difference!

Thank you for reading! The September edition of Central News will be published Tuesday 3rd September.