



Central News – September 2023

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Important dates	
30 September 2023	Deadline to submit Branch Accounts
17 October 2023	Membership Townhall
11 November 2023	Festival of Remembrance & Remembrance Day
12 November 2023	Remembrance Sunday
10 – 12 May 2024	Annual Conference 2024

More veterans offered the chance to march past the Cenotaph

In an historic move, the RBL has opened up the Remembrance Sunday March Past the Cenotaph to British Armed Forces veterans who are not affiliated to a military association. Previous restrictions meant veterans who were not part of a regimental, unit or service association were unable to take part in the event.

A limited number of places are now available. The application process opened on 1st September and will close 29th September. Interested persons will need to provide proof of service in their application, and spaces will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. [Find out more and apply.](#)

England and Wales road closures

As Remembrance rapidly approaches, we would like to remind you that, in accordance with the information contained within the Membership Management Handbook (MMH), traffic control is not a county or branch responsibility to organise, but a local council-led operation.

The Royal British Legion is not insured to carry out this role. Whilst you can support councils in their planning of local Remembrance services and parade routes, we remind you that branches are unable to assume responsibility for their design or delivery; this includes organisation of Temporary Traffic Management Orders (TTMOs), contracting traffic management services, or the provision of such services by volunteers. The complexity of health and safety and road traffic legislation is challenging to navigate - especially with the scale of many Remembrance parade routes - and must be managed by local government.

2023 Poppy Appeal volunteers

As we prepare to launch the Poppy Appeal in October, the Poppy Appeal team would like to thank all members who volunteer as Poppy Appeal Organisers (PAOs) and collectors during Remembrancetide. Together, we raised £47m last year to support our Armed Forces Community -

an incredible achievement. With your continued support, this year we hope to raise even more.

The Poppy Appeal currently has 271 districts across England, Wales and Northern Ireland that do not have a PAO to co-ordinate an appeal in the local community. If you or someone you know would like to find out more about volunteering for the Poppy Appeal in any role, please [visit the RBL website](#) or call 0345 845 1945.

Gifts in Wills and Branch Champions

The Gift in Will team are looking for Members in Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside and Northern Ireland to champion our Gifts in Wills offer and signpost members within their branch and communities to RBL's free-no obligation will-writing service. You do not need to have used the service to take part and can still take part even if you've got an existing will.

For more information [register your interest](#) and sign up to an exclusive [online information session](#) about Gifts in Wills, or contact your Membership Engagement Officer (MEO).

Direct Debit Payments for membership renewals

We have received feedback that there is some confusion over how Direct Debits payments for annual membership fees appear on members' bank statements. We can confirm that payments will show under the account name 'Charles Novacraft', not RBL. These are all legitimate payments, as Charles Novacraft is a trusted payment partner. We did advise all Direct Debit payers in their renewal letter for the upcoming bulk renewals, and a follow up email has now also been sent to reduce any further misunderstanding. We would also ask that as branch and county officials you share this information with your members.

Safeguarding responsibilities

Members are our eyes and ears in communities so, just as a reminder, if you come across a safeguarding issue that needs reporting, please remember: if there is risk of immediate harm the police must be the first port of call.

If your concern is in relation to someone involved with the RBL, such as a beneficiary, member, volunteer or member of staff, we would ask you to let RBL know by calling either your MEO or the contact centre on 0808 802 8080 and leaving a message with them. The contact centre will ensure our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) receives your report and will enable them to contact you. It's better to report your concern even if it turns out not to be serious, than to not report it.

Michael Challinor appointed Chair of Membership Awards Committee

Following the passing of David Street earlier this year, and this sad event being fittingly commemorated, Michael Challinor has been elevated from Vice Chair of the Membership Awards Committee to act as Chair. We are pleased to announce that Michael has accepted and will undoubtedly continue the outstanding work of David Street begun in ensuring that members, branches and counties are aptly recognised for their voluntary efforts and contributions to the RBL and its mission.

Details on how to nominate for the 2024 Annual Membership Awards will be shared in the October Special Circular next month.

Pausing of National Training programme

After agreement at the Membership Council meeting in June, all training usually delivered by the national membership training team will be paused between 1 September and 31 December 2023. This is to allow for a full review and refresh of all training courses and materials, as well as development of a training plan for 2024. This pause does not affect any of the online learning currently being accessed or any of the training delivered by County Training Officers. If you have any questions, please contact L&D@britishlegion.org.uk.

Annual Conference 2024

The Royal British Legion's 2024 Annual Conference will be held 10-12 May at the ICC Wales in Newport. Please note that this is one week earlier than usual.

The 2024 conference will once again be hybrid, allowing delegates and visitors to attend in-person or online for the entire event. At conference, you will be able to:

- Propose and vote on Motions affecting the way RBL is run and how we can best direct the help we offer.
- Participate in the Membership Forum
- Hear updates from senior leaders across the RBL teams and Directorates
- Watch presentations from invited keynote speakers on subjects that affect us and the lives of our beneficiaries.

More information about conference will be provided in due course, including in the October Special Circular next month. We look forward to seeing you in Newport.

Membership Townhall

The next Membership Townhall will take place on 17 October. Please save this date in your diaries, we will share the time and agenda for the session in October's edition of Central News. A recording of the last Townhall in July is available [here](#).

Credit their Service Campaign Update

In July, RBL launched our latest campaign, [Credit their Service](#). Armed Forces compensation (such as a War Pension) is often treated as an income source when national and local benefit rates are calculated, whilst civil compensation is not. Many veterans and their families often receive less or no Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payments and Disabled Facilities Grants as a result.

We need your input to make the case as to why change in policy needs to happen. Veterans and their families deserve better. If you or your members have had experience of military compensation being treated as income, please fill out our short survey by [clicking here](#). Alternatively, you can email us directly at: publicaffairs@britishlegion.org.uk.

To see how this and our other campaigns progress, [click here](#).
