

Minutes from: The Royal British Legion Newent and District Branch

Zoom Meeting Held on 28 January 2021

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richard Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Deputy Chairman/Membership/Youth Liaison/Branch Community Support(BCS)
Rick Axon	Entertainments Member
David Sass	Treasurer
Colin Britt	Bar Member/Deputy BCS
Susanne Britt	Secretary
Mike Brown	Parade Marshal
Graham Barton	Deputy Parade Marshal
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Elaine Balding	Deputy Secretary
Adrian Dover	
Colin Calcutt	
Tom Heseltine	
Susan Urch	
<u>Item</u>	<u>Action</u>
<p><u>1. Act of Remembrance</u></p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting at 1900 Hrs and welcomed everyone. He asked that we spare a moment of thought for those who could not be with us tonight or who were feeling under the weather He then read the names of those who had lost their life in WWI and WWII from the parish of Newent for the month of January and February, and concluded with the Act of Remembrance</p>	
<p><u>2. Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>No apologies for absence had been received. Secretary's note: <i>Apologies have since been received from our Padre</i></p>	
<p><u>3. Chairman's Report</u></p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>Good evening everybody and welcome to the first branch meeting of 2021, I hope I find you all well and coping with the enforced confines of this virus and the current lockdown, hopefully some of you will have already been offered one of the vaccines. I am starting my report with a couple of items from National and a small gist from the County Conference:</p> <p><u>National Membership Fee Increase - NOW: 1st April 2021</u></p> <p>At the virtual (delayed) National Annual Conference held in September 2020 the following Motion was Approved:</p> <p>"This Conference proposes that the Legion's annual membership fee be increased by £1 from £17 to £18 with effect from 1st October 2020". Result For: 137 (61.7%) Against: 83 (37.4%) Abstention: 2 (0.9%)</p> <p>Response by the Board of Trustees - The Board of Trustees Agrees.</p> <p>This Motion was originally submitted to be heard at Conference in May 2020. Conference was delayed until September 2020 due to Covid-19. The date proposed for the increase in the membership fee cannot be met.</p>	

However, the Membership Department are working on a delivery plan so the new National Membership fee can be introduced as of the 1st January 2021.

Update (12th Jan 2021) From Membership Services Department

It was intended that the fee would go up to £18.00 from 1st January 2021, but unfortunately the system was unable to go live then with the change, so at the moment we have been told that it has now been put back to **1st April 2021**.

TRBL New Brand Identity

Some of you may well be aware that for the past couple of years TRBL has been working towards rebranding the organisation with a new National Brand Identity as part of its 100 years celebrations, the new branding will be released for the end of January (2021). As is the case with TRBL not a lot of consultation with membership has been undertaken and therefore for obvious reasons it has provoked a lot of negative comments, however TRBL has stated that we should continue to use any existing stocks of advertising ephemera etc. and only restock when old stocks have been exhausted.



The Royal British Legion Centenary

As many of you will know this year represents 100 years since the Royal British Legion was formed, HQ have released a PowerPoint Presentation to enable use to tell that story when we start face to face communications with our communities again, to give you a flavour the following is the title page wording of the PPT presentation and if you would like to see the entire presentation please just ask:

“The Royal British Legion Centenary falls on Saturday 15 May 2021 – but will be celebrated across the entire year.

The Centenary programme will bring together nations, individuals and communities to celebrate both the tremendous achievements of the Legion over the last 100 years and - more importantly – to demonstrate why we are just as relevant in 2021 and beyond.”

Annual Meeting of the County Conference – 23 January 2021

The annual County Conference took place virtually this year on 23 January 2021, both the Deputy Chair and myself attended, the meeting started at 11am although we had to logon by 10:45am and closed at 13:10pm and had 44 participants (according to the attendee counter).

As last year there was some discussion over how the annual county accounts were presented and as last year it's all LOMAS's fault, however something useful came out of those discussions, in that TRBL have only authorised one bank for on-line banking and that is Lloyds which has a “British Legion Portal for on-line banking” and also the facility to allow a “2 from 4 signatory process” this is apparently achieved by the use of text messaging. This would appear to be a good starting point in our attempt to modernise the Branch accounts.

The speaker on the day was a lady by the name of Debbie Sorkin who is a trustee and the lead on all matters Health & Social Care, her address was excellent very Clear, Concise and informative. She also mentioned about the Legion 100 campaign and the new book being published “Telling our Story – Legion 100” which might be of interest to all you history buff's.

There was of course some of the old arguments brought up such as: Respite Homes and Handyman Service, and new grumbles about the New Brand Identity as you might expect. The upshot of all those discussions was an acknowledgement

from the Board of trustee's that they did not get the communications right and will strive to make things more transparent for future endeavours.

The final free discussions centred on attracting a younger membership in the shape of all those 40 & 50 year-olds who could make a difference at branch level, one idea which was passed up to National was to make it clearer that The Royal British Legion is not just supporting a membership from WWI & WWII but all military conflicts including the Falklands, Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan to name just a few.

The Deputy Chair and I agreed that the conference this year was less chaotic than last year which to be honest was not difficult to achieve.

John Edward Whitehorn Trophy Presentation

At the November 2020 meeting Keith outlined the plans for presentation of the John Edward Whitehorn trophy to this year's winner Josh, the plans did change and after discussions with the School it was decided that the safest and best course of action would be to deliver the trophy and paperweight keepsake to the School and to let the School present the award during the last week of term prior to the Christmas break, I have included a couple of photographs in my report which will be uploaded to our website in due course. Later on in the second half of the meeting we shall be hearing from Andrew the son of John Edward Whitehorn, he will be speaking as the first item in the second period.



I also managed to get the trophy engraved just in time for the presentation and purchase 4 new paperweight keepsakes at a cost of £115.96.

Secretary Resignation

Unfortunately due to personal reasons our long standing Secretary has today given me her resignation, I for one will miss her and all the help she has given me and the branch over the past few years, I wish Susanne a quieter year with plenty of good times ahead. This does now mean that the Branch will need to recruit a new Secretary so please let me know if you would like to be more involved with the Branch and take on one of the most important roles for sustaining the branch.

Finally

Don't forget that if anyone needs help in any way at all please do not hesitate to get in contact, and if we can help, we will.

4. Previous Minutes and Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

It was Proposed by SB and seconded by GB that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the previous meeting. Matters arising had all been actioned.

5. Reports by Officers

Deputy Chairman/ Youth Liaison/Branch Community Support (BCS)

MONTHLY BRANCH REPORT FOR JANUARY 2021

I commence my report by expressing my sincere thanks to my Deputy, Colin Britt, and all Branch Members for their continued support during what has been an extremely unusual and difficult past year. I suspect that few of us thought that the New Year would bring with it even more lifestyle restrictions, but in true tradition we carry on.

Membership, Branch Community Support Representative and Youth Liaison Officer

Your Chairman and I attended the virtual County AGM last Saturday, a brief resume of which is included within the Chairman's Report.

The Branch remains strong, continuing to meet via Zoom, with many members retaining contact via telephone, email and meeting at distance.

Welfare and Membership

Welfare is again at the forefront of this month's Branch Report.

Welfare

As we have entered another period of lockdown, issues of financial hardship, mental fatigue, illness and isolation is increasing.

Apart from routine support to our members, your Welfare Team are currently dealing with 4 primary cases involving a varied range of Veterans and their families. We have continued to provide guidance and have arranged additional support from the National Veteran's Support Helpline, District, County and other specialised support agencies.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all members suffering illness or hardship at this time.

Members are reminded that should they be aware of any colleagues requiring assistance out-with that available from the Branch, they are requested to contact the National Support Team.

The National RBL Helpline is: 0808 802 8080

The Veteran's Gateway:

https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/127/~the-royal-british-legion

Branch Membership

Subject to renewals, the Branch Membership stands at 41 members.

Members are to note that TRBL Annual Subscription will increase this year: more information shortly.

Branch Statistics

Branch Statistics for this period are as follows:

Total Number of Distancing Welfare visits	5
How many beneficiaries "visited"	4
How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters)	4
Total Welfare Expenditure	NIL
Telephone Buddies – Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive	6
Telephone – How many beneficiaries called:	5
Telephone – How many telephone buddies:	8

To supplement the above, a number of telephone and email communications (totalling a further 28) were also made during this period.

Youth Liaison

All initiatives remain on hold in accordance with TRBL and HMG Guidelines.

Community Liaison

In accordance with HMG Guidelines and compliance with stated restrictions on public gatherings, The Branch continues to conduct its business via social media and telephone.

For the latest updates regarding community - based activities from TRBL HQ please refer to the Chairman's Report.

Other Branch Information

The J E Whitehorn Trophy

One nomination was received from Newent Community School, Josh Robertson. Members may recall that he was a worthy recipient of last years award. Josh is to be commended for his continued efforts within our community and more information, including his award ceremony is included within the Chairman's Report.

The Branch Treasurer

Some of you may be aware that our new Treasurer, David, having undergone surgery and a period of rehabilitation is back home in Newent, becoming more mobile and visible within our community by the week. We wish him well for his continued recovery.

BCS (Branch Community Support) Training

All RBL training sessions remain on hold for the foreseeable future. There are currently no plans to adopt an on-line approach to training in order to provide key support Branches.

Thank you.

Keith Urch and Colin Britt

Treasurer

The Treasurer thanked SU for standing in for him during his recovery from his operation. He reported that the bank balance was £1228.39 movement was £50 paid in by head office details of the reason for this payment would be sourced; and the normal 48 pence. There was one outstanding bill to be paid for the JEW Trophies. Once this had been paid the balance would be £1115.96.

Other Officers

There were no reports from any other officers.

Item 6 Any Other Business

6a Service of Dedication for the Peace Tree.

Due to the pandemic no arrangements had been made for the service of dedication, however once lockdown rules have been relaxed and a better understanding of the situation is known then a tribute will be arranged.

6b Presentation of the John Edward Whitehorn Trophy

<p>As previously stated, due to the Pandemic the JEW Trophy had been presented at Newent Community School. It had been hoped that Andrew Whitehorn could join the meeting after the break and give short presentation, however due to an IT technical hitch this had not been possible.</p> <p>Secretary's Note; The Chairman has been in touch with Andrew since the meeting to apologise for the IT Hitch and Andrew has agreed to join us at the next meeting and give his presentation then.</p> <p>Armed Forces Covenant KU informed the meeting that a new bill will be enforced on Tuesday 2 Feb 2021 which will enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant into Law. This will ensure that all Armed Forces personnel are treated fairly in all matters, including Health, Housing, and Education issues.</p> <p>Thanks SB and CB thanked the branch for all the support they had received during the recent months.</p>	
<p><u>7.Date of Next Meeting</u> The Meeting closed at 2030 hrs. The next Zoom Meeting will be held on at 1900hrs on 25 February. MB has kindly agreed to book this via his zoom account so we don't have to conduct the meeting in 2 parts.</p>	All

Agenda For Newent & District Branch The Royal British Legion Committee Meeting

25 February 2021 Via Zoom

1. Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Chairman's Opening Remarks.
4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes
 5. Reports by Officers.
 6. Any Other Business.
 7. Date of Next Meeting.