

It has just been announced by the Membership Council that this year's Annual Conference will follow the same format as last year as a virtual event taking place on 15 May 2021. I have registered our branch to attend and if anyone would like to attend as a visitor please ask and I will put your name forward.

Royal British Legion Virtual Event- Delivering Welfare During Covid19 – 16 February 2021

The Branch Community Support team, Branch Padre and myself all attended a Royal British Legion Virtual Event called ***Delivering Welfare During Covid19*** on 16 February 2021. I was hoping it would be a lecture on new and innovative ways and ideas the branch could use to help our delivery of welfare provision to our members, but it turned out to be more of a recap of the activities over the past year, each speaker mentioning how their individual areas had adapted to overcome the current restrictions, some useful facts did emerge:

- The more the complex the beneficiary issue, the more staff time it took to resolve.
- Since the start of COVID19 face to face work has reduced but online and telephone support has increased.
- Case working time has increased by an estimated 10-15% due to decrease in travel time.
- £1 million has been saved due to little or no expenses paid out.
- Communications responsiveness could be better.

Our Branch Community Support Officer did ask several questions which I'm not sure he got a comprehensive answer for, but I'm sure he will mention it in his report. I didn't get as much out of it as I had hoped but I know the Deputy BCS found it quite interesting.

The Royal British Legion Gloucestershire County Committee Meeting – 16 February 2021

On the evening of the same day as the welfare event, the Gloucestershire County quarterly Committee Meeting took place, the agenda was very similar to a branch meeting with Chairman's Report, Membership Support Officer Updates, Treasurer (no treasurer's report due to the transition from the old to the new treasurer) and Community Fundraisers report (although neither of the Community Fundraisers turned up or sent in a report which was disappointing). A couple of things of interest did come up which were:

- Anzac will not go ahead as a full parade but maybe as something smaller.
- Training "*with a bit of Luck*" there will be some on-line courses soon, with probably the first course being a 1-day Branch Management course (this is already set up for online learning) but they will prioritise course to branches that are not in compliance.

- The MSO was very excited about the New Gloucestershire County Newsletter, which will be starting on the 1 March 2021, she has asked for as many contributions from branches as possible including photographs.
- The County Gazebo is in a poor state so there was quite a bit of talk about getting a new one or repairing the old, the committee seemed more in favour of New, A solution will be researched.
- The Committee is currently running with “the Bare Minimum” which was discussed in some detail, they agreed to post adverts for new committee members in the new newsletter, Facebook and website.

The Royal British Legion Centenary

Don't forget that it is the Royal British Legions centenary this year as we were formed on the 15 May 1921, one of the big events running throughout 2021 is “Telling our Story” whereby branches are encouraged to send in story from past and present that have helped their local communities, so if anyone has any ideas or suggestions of things, we can send in just let us know.

South West Midlands Membership Council Elections 2020-2021

The branch received 2 CVs for this year's candidates for the South West Midlands Membership Council Elections 2020-2021, the 2 candidates are: Mr Digby Brodrick (Evesham Branch) and Mr Garry Mills. I sent the nominations and CV's out to the Branch Committee and asked them to choose their favourite. I received 6 replies and the Branch vote went to Garry Mills 4-2, I have dutifully cast our branch vote.

John Edward Whitehorn Trophy Presentation

As most of you know we had a technical hitch last month and therefore the presentation by Andrew Whitehorn did not go ahead, but Josh Robertson (winner of the Trophy) Sarah Davy and Andrew Whitehorn (John Edward Whitehorn's daughter and son) have made themselves available this evening so with no further ado, I'd like to call upon Andrew to give us his presentation: Andrew gave a very interesting short resume about his father's life, shared actual photographs of his father and recapped on the criteria for the JEW Trophy. He then congratulated Josh on winning the trophy for the 2nd year running. Josh's girlfriend Lucy then presented the trophy to Josh. All present congratulated Josh and wished him every success in the future.

Secretary Position

As you all know our Long term Secretary has tendered her resignation and therefore we now require a new secretary in order for the branch to survive, as yet I've not received any nominations but if anyone would like to take on this worthwhile role or has any idea's in recruiting a new one please let me know.

All

Finally

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

Regards and best wishes

Richard Balding
Chairman
Newent and District Branch (BR3063) TRBL
Newent.chairman@rbl.community

4. Matters Arising and Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Proposed by GB and seconded by MB that the minutes from the previous meeting be accepted as a true record. This was agreed unanimously by all

Reports by Officers

Deputy Chairman/Membership/Youth Liaison/ Branch Community Support.

This month's report sees us all continuing to function semi-remotely during another period of lockdown. Communications are mainly via telephone and email with a rare socially distanced meeting. While this is not ideal, the Branch Members are commended for their continued support of each-other and the wider Newent RBL family.

Following the recent Government announcement, we look forward to being able to hold Branch Meetings in Newent's Memorial Hall during the mid-later part of the year.

Membership, Branch Community Support Representative and Youth Liaison Officer

Your Chairman, BCS Team and Padre attended the first virtual National Conference to address The Challenges of Delivering Welfare with a focus on Branch Community Support. A brief resume, prepared by Colin, our valued Deputy Branch Community Support and Welfare Officer, is included as an attachment to this month's report.

Welfare and Membership

The Trustees and Governing Body of TRBL having recognised the significant importance of BCS and each Branches role within their respective communities has agreed that Welfare, as an activity in its own right, is fundamental to the future success of The Legion and those it serves.

Welfare

As we are in another period of lockdown, members are becoming more reassured that with the introduction of various vaccines, moral is slowly improving albeit issues relating to financial hardship, mental fatigue, illness and isolation remains as aspects on which we continue to focus.

While we continue to aid and provide support in particular to 4 of our veterans, our thoughts and prayers are with all members suffering illness or hardship at this time. In all 4 cases, we await detailed feedback from our County representatives (Case Officers) writ progress on each.

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 remains strong at 41 members.

Members are to note that TRBL Annual Subscription has increased by £1 from £17 to £18 this year: this increase will be reflected in all renewals due later in the year.

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	
Telephone – How many beneficiaries called:	6
Telephone – How many telephone buddies:	8

To supplement the above, a number of telephone and email communications (totalling a further 12) 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 current HMG Guidelines and compliance with stated restrictions on public gatherings, The Branch continues to conduct its business via social media and telephone.

BCS (Branch Community Support) Training

Members will be aware that at present all BCS training sessions remain on hold. However, following on from the recent RBL on-line Virtual Town Hall Event, our MSO Emma, reported that she and other officers were undertaking BCS training this week. She was aiming to obtain latest information on all aspects of Branch training and DBS matters, feeding back to all Branches within the coming month.

Supplementary Information – Invitation

An invitation was received from Colonel David Marshall, Deputy Commander, HQ 11 Signal & West Midlands Brigade. to an upcoming Army virtual engagement event on Tuesday, 16th March. The event includes a dynamic 20 min presentation and a Q&A session where guests can submit live questions to Col David Marshall.

The aim of this event is to promote a greater understanding of The Army and how it is supporting the Government's response to the current Coronavirus pandemic.

The formal invitation is available via The Branch Chairman, Branch Secretary or your BCS Team.

Thank you.

Keith Urch and Colin Britt

Branch Community Support and Welfare Officers
Newent and District Branch (BR 3063).

Treasurer

The treasurer reported that the Bank Balance had stood at £1112.88 there had been 2 movements during the month 45p paid in from the County Courts repayment from the Poppy Box theft and £115.96 paid out for the engraving on the JEW Trophy and purchase of JEW Paperweights.

Padre

The deputy padre gave the Padres report: The Peace Tree Dedication and a service would be arranged to mark the Pandemic losses in the

All

<p>community and will be arranged in due course. The Padre is also intending to mark the 100th anniversary of the RBL as part of the Remembrance Day Service.</p> <p>Secretary The Secretary has placed an advert for the secretary position on our Facebook page and volunteered to place an advert in the local Newspaper Shop.</p> <p>There were no other reports.</p>	<p>SB</p>
<p><u>6. Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Deputy Secretary</p> <p>The Deputy Secretary stated she was acting as the Marie Curie Coordinator for the Great Daffodil Appeal in the local area again and was very limited to where she could place collection boxes this year. She pointed out that she had got a good supply of daffodils and a collection box at her house if anyone wanted some. People could either place a contribution in her collection box or they could donate on line to the just giving page: https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil#donate She asked that members circulate this information locally.</p> <p>President and PP</p> <p>The President and PP both stated that they had really enjoyed this evenings Presentation.</p> <p>SB and CB</p> <p>SB and CB informed the committee that their granddaughter Elsa is in remission and cancer free. They thanked everyone for all the support they had received during this difficult time.</p> <p>TH</p> <p>TH informed the committee that Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. Was happy to accept any requests for help during this difficult period. If anybody knew of local residents in need of help in this difficult time, they could pass on the details to the branch committee or directly to TH.</p> <p>MB</p> <p>MB stated he had sent a link for next months zoom meeting to the Deputy Secretary. He also stated that he had received a new ceremonial handbook which had page numbering errors in it (HQ were aware) and that he may be away for Remembrance Day.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p><u>7. Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The Meeting closed at 8:10pm. The next Branch Zoom meeting will be held on 25 March 2021 at 7pm.</p>	<p>All</p>

**Agenda for Zoom Meeting of Newent and District Royal British
Legion Branch on 25 March 2021**

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.