

Minutes from: The Royal British Legion Newent and District Branch

Zoom Meeting held on 25 Mar 2021

| Attendees | Post |
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| Richard Balding | Chairman |
| Keith Urch | Deputy Chairman/Membership/Youth Liaison/Branch Community Support (BCS) |
| David Sass | Treasurer |
| Susanne Britt | Secretary |
| Colin Britt | Bar Member/ Deputy BCS |
| Rick Axon | Entertainments Member |
| Mike Brown | Parade Marshal |
| Graham Barton | Deputy Parade Marshal |
| Simon Mason | Padre |
| Pat Phillips | Deputy Padre |
| Elaine Balding | Deputy Secretary |
| Colin Calcutt | |
| Adrian Dover | |
| Tom Hesselstine | |
| Susan Urch | |
| Item | Action |
| <p><u>1. Act of Remembrance</u></p> <p>The Chairman Opened the Meeting at 1900 hrs and welcomed everyone. He asked if we could spare a moment of thought for those who could not be with us tonight and those that were feeling under the weather. He read the names of those from the Parish of Newent who had lost their lives during WWI and WWII during the month of April and concluded with the Act of Remembrance.</p> | |
| <p><u>2. Apologies</u></p> <p>Apologies had been received from the Branch President.</p> | |
| <p><u>3. Chairman's Report</u></p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>Good evening everybody and welcome to our March branch meeting, I hope I find you all well and looking forward to the easing of the current lockdown on Monday 29 March, I start by giving my thanks to our Parade Marshall for once again allowing us to 'piggy back' on to his 'Zoom' account and enabling us to conduct this virtual meeting in a single time period. My report this month is very short which I'm sure you will be pleased to hear:</p> <p><u>Membership Support Officer</u></p> <p>The Royal British Legion is going through a bit of a re-organisation which appears to be having an impact on Gloucestershire County in that we currently do not have a Membership Support Officer or MSO in short. Gloucestershire County will now be 'Supported' by two other MSO's from Herefordshire & Worcestershire and Somerset, these</p> | |

two MSO's will have a shared 'inbox' and will share the workload but not at the detriment of their own areas. I'm hoping this is a short-term solution and not a long-term way to save money at Gloucestershire's expense as I'm sure this will slow down an already tedious process.

Branch Welfare Team

I would like to give my personal thanks to the branch welfare team, who work constantly in the background signposting, liaising and communicating on behalf of and for any of our membership or local community that seek our help. This vote of thanks was seconded by the Branch Padre and agreed unanimously by all present. Over the past year or so they have had a minimum of 4 cases on the go and at long last they have been able to close 2 of the cases with positive successes and have taken the other 2 as far as they can. I would therefore like to propose a vote of thanks to the welfare team.

Secretary Position

I've still not received any nominations or suggestions on how we can fill the Secretary position, between the Secretary, Bar Member and myself we have been posting a small advertisement in some of the local facebook pages but if anyone would like to take on this worthwhile role or has any idea's in recruiting a new Secretary please let me know.

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.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record. Proposed by MB and Seconded by TH and agreed unanimously. Matters Arising were: Page 7 SB stated the advert for the Secretary Position had been placed in the local Newsagent at no cost to the Branch.

5. Reports by Officers

Deputy Chairman/Membership/Youth Liaison/Branch Community Support

This month's report sees us all looking forward to the relaxation of restrictions albeit meeting via Zoom appears to be the safest way forward in these difficult times.

Until formal meetings are permitted, communications will continue via telephone and email with a rare socially distanced meeting.

Membership, Branch Community Support Representative and Youth Liaison Officer

Your Representatives attended the first of a series of virtual Army focused presentations highlighting service-related activities and the roll of the Army and Combined Forces during peacetime and especially during the current epidemic. The aspect of continued care and support of veterans was considered vital as part of their ethos and all-encompassing duty of care upon which the Armed Forces Covenant is based. It was stated that without exception, all Counties, Local Authorities and a significant number of organisations and businesses had signed up to The Covenant.

Welfare and Membership

Members will be aware that Emma, our long-standing MSO has now left The RBL for pastures new: we wish her well for the future. TRBL is restructuring and no doubt we shall hear more of this in the coming months.

Welfare

As in the past, we shall continue to aid and provide support to all of our members and veterans. We are pleased to be able to report that we have achieved varying degrees of success to those four members and their families who have been at the forefront of our activities during the past months: these cases can now be considered closed, albeit we will remain to keep a watching brief. Members are continually 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

The Branch Membership remains strong at 41 members.

Branch Statistics

Branch Statistics for this period are as follows:

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| Total Number of Distancing Welfare visits | |
| 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 | 10 |
| Telephone – How many beneficiaries called: | 4 |
| 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.

Other Branch Information

BCS (Branch Community Support) Training

Members will be aware that County Officers had attended BCS training sessions: we await the outcome of these sessions and further support from National and County representatives to the Branch.

Treasurer

The Treasurer stated that there had been 2 movements in the funds since the last meeting. 45 pence had been paid in from the Poppy Box theft and £22 had been paid in for Branch Membership Fees. The bank balance stood at £1135.33.

Parade Marshal

The Parade Marshal stated that he had sent a zoom link to the Dep Sec for the next meeting.

Padre

The Branch Padre informed the committee that St Mary's will commence a gentle socially distanced opening with effect from 18 April 2021.

The church is looking into organising a Remembrance Service in addition to the Annual Remembrance Day Service to mark the loss of those in the Pandemic.

Plans for a service to dedicate the Peace Tree were on hold until May 2021 at the earliest.

Bar Member

The bar member informed the committee that due to the Pandemic his bar stock had gone out of date and had to be disposed of. After previous consultation with the Chairman, it had been agreed that the branch would cover the loss of this stock.

Entertainments Member

The Ents Member stated that he still had the Polo Shirts ready for collection which were ordered some months ago. He asked that personnel contact him directly to arrange collection. New stocks of Polo shirts could be ordered in batches of 8, anyone wishing to order one should contact him directly.

He also informed the branch that his youngest son Tom had now joined the branch.

Dep Sec

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| <p>There were no other officer reports.</p> | |
| <p><u>6. Any Other Business</u></p> <p><u>SU</u></p> <p>SU passed on her thanks to MB for use of the Zoom Meeting Link. She also stated how impressed she was at the new County Newsletter and suggested that we consider submitting articles for inclusion of it.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chairman would submit an article on the National Day of Reflection events at St Mary's church along with a photograph of the yellow ribbons on the church railings. He would also submit an article on the Peace Tree.</p> <p>At a later date an article and photograph would be submitted on the John Edward Whitehorn Trophy</p> <p><u>Branch Padre</u></p> <p>The Branch Padre informed the committee that Mr A Johnson – Head of Newent Community College was leaving and that the new head would be Mr R Phillips.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Dep Sec would send a card to Mr Johnson thanking him for all the support he had given the branch and that the chair would write to Mr Phillips regarding future support to the branch</p> <p><u>Treasurer</u></p> <p>The Treasurer informed the committee that there would be no Newent Onion Fayre this year.</p> <p><u>Entertainments Member</u></p> <p>The Ents Member suggested that a belated Christmas event should be held in the Red Lion. This was agreed and will be arranged once Government Restrictions allow (probably after 21 June 2021).</p> | <p>Chair</p> <p>Dep Sec Chair</p> <p>Ents Member</p> |
| <p><u>7. Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next Zoom Meeting will be held on 22 April 2021 at 1900 hrs. The Chairman closed the meeting at 1948 hrs.</p> | <p>All</p> |

Agenda for Zoom Meeting of Newent and District Royal British Legion

Branch on 22 April 2021

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