

**Minutes from: Newent and District Branch of The Royal British Legion**

**Virtual Zoom Meeting held on 22 April 2021**

<b><u>Attendees</u></b>	<b><u>Post</u></b>
Richard Balding	Chairman
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	
Susan Urch	
Adrian Dover	
Tom Hesselstine	
<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Action</u></b>
<p><b><u>1. Act of Remembrance</u></b></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 May and concluded with the Act of Remembrance.</p>	
<p><b><u>2. Apologies</u></b></p> <p>Apologies had been received from Keith Urch and Colin Calcutt.</p>	
<p><b><u>Introduction</u></b></p> <p>Good evening everybody and welcome to our April branch meeting, I hope I find you all well, this month started with me writing several letters and emails, the first one to the new head of Newent Community School; Mr Phillips to congratulate him on his new appointment as Principal and to let him know how much we are looking forward to working with him, I received a nice reply by return email which stated "<b><i>The introduction of a whole school Remembrance Service by Mr Johnson is certainly a tradition that we intend to continue. I will indeed let you know of any other opportunities for further strengthening the bonds between our organisations.</i></b>"</p> <p>I then sent an email to Gloucestershire County with 2 pieces of news items for the new county newsletter about our endeavours with the Day of Reflection and the Peace tree, which although were edited down, were both included in April's newsletter. I have since followed that up with another 2 pieces of news worthy items with a piece about the John Edward Whitehorn Trophy and the Civic Service at St Mary's Church to celebrate the life of His Royal Highness the Duke</p>	

of Edinburgh, for which the Branch Standard was paraded by our Deputy Parade Marshall. I hope you all got chance to watch an excellent service conducted by the Branch Padre and assisted by our Deputy Padre on either St Mary's own you tube channel or live on the day via Zoom.

I have also written to the Newent Town Mayoress, for an update of appointing someone from the Town Council as the Veterans Representative, for which I have had a reply and been assured someone will be appointed at their AGM in May.

Now on to other news:

### **Annual Conference Motions**

As you will all be aware from previous meeting the annual conference will take place on the 15 May 2021, so far both the Deputy Chairman and myself are intending to attend the virtual conference, if anyone else would like to attend please let me know. At the start of April, I sent out an email to the Branch Committee with the Conference Motions and asked them to vote for, against or abstain on the 5 motions ready for conference, I did receive 2 sets of replies which has given the branch a clear voting preference which I will vote on behalf of the branch at the conference.

### **Branch Community Support**

Over the past couple of months, the Branch Community Support (BCS) handbook and associated documentation has been updated and revamped by the National team in an attempt to make it more 'user friendly', there is also a very good BCS portal on TRBL system that our BCS Reps, Secretary and Chairman can access to receive all manner of advice and information. Because of the complete revamp of the documentation the National BCS Support team have been giving Virtual BCS awareness presentations to outline the changes and get BCS Reps up to speed with the new system. The Branch BCS team now have access to the new documentation and when able access to the portal which should equip them better to continue their excellent welfare work.

### **Secretary Position**

The Lack of a Branch Secretary has now become a critical issue, as most of you will already know our Deputy Secretary has also resigned this month due to health reasons, I did put out an urgent message to all our members explaining this and to also ask for a volunteer to take the minutes for this meeting, but no one was forthcoming so as you will be able to tell during the rest of this meeting most of my concentration will be on taking notes to compile the minutes for the official record, so please excuse me for not looking as much at the screen as I would normally do. So again this month I ask; if anyone would like to take on this worthwhile role or has any ideas in recruiting a new Secretary please let me know, the thing to

remember is if we do not have a full compliment of Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman by October's AGM the branch will have no option but to inform county of our predicament.

**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 CB and agreed unanimously. There were no Matters Arising that hadn't been addressed in the Chairman's Report.

**5. Reports by Officers**

**Read out by the Deputy Branch Community Support Officer**

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

**BRANCH REPORT FOR APRIL 2021**

This month's report sees us looking forward to the possibility of actually holding a meeting in The Memorial Hall, albeit that is probably still several months away.

**Membership, Branch Community Support Representative and Youth Liaison Officer**

Your Representatives attended one of the first of a series of RBL BCS Presentations. While it was continually stressed that Branches were key and at the forefront of BCS services, the reality is somewhat different. However, the RBL BCS Steering Group are continuing to develop these services and it is anticipated that all registered BCS branches will benefit in the months to come.

There is undoubtedly many issues to resolve before the revised system "goes live", the basis for which is the new BCS Handbook, readily available to those members with a particular interest.

Of specific interest to Branch Members conducting BCS related services will be the need to undergo on-line face to face training, on-line GDPR, Safeguarding and Lone Working courses. Upon completion of training, those involved will require an RBL Basic DBS Check and a specific I.D Card prior to conducting BCS activities.

**Welfare and Membership**

Following the recent departure of our MSO, we have discovered that RBL HQ are increasing the scope of its Strategic Review due to recent findings over the last 12 months, to include Local, Area and

County restructuring. More information will become available in the coming months.

**Welfare**

As in the past, we shall continue to aid and support our members and veterans, in the first instant, by signposting them to the National RBL Helpline.

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

[The Royal British Legion - Veterans' Gateway](#)

The Royal British Legion is a charity that provides life-long support to members and veterans of the British Armed Forces and their families. They are the national custodian of Remembrance, they organise the annual Poppy Appeal, and campaign to improve the lives of the Armed Forces community.

[support.veteransgateway.org.uk](http://support.veteransgateway.org.uk)

**Branch Membership**

Following a review and upgrading of The RBL Membership System, the Branch Membership currently stands at 38 members. We recognise that this number is at variance with our true membership listing but it is anticipated that all will be resolved as we move forward.

**Branch Statistics**

Branch Statistics for this period are as follows:

*Total Number of Distancing Welfare visits*

How many beneficiaries “visited”	2
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:	2
Telephone – How many telephone buddies:	6

To supplement the above, a number of telephone and email communications (totalling a further 10) were also made during this period.

**Youth Liaison**

All initiatives continue to remain on hold in accordance with RBL Guidelines.

**Community Liaison**

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

**Other Branch Information**

**BCS (Branch Community Support) Training**

County Officers, having attended basic BCS training sessions are now in the process of rolling out these sessions as part of the greater RBL Initiative. As per the above further support from National and County representatives to the Branch.

**Treasurer**

The Treasurer was unavailable tonight for his report, however SU thought that there was no movement in the bank balance this month, therefore it's likely to stand at last month's total £1135.33.

**Parade Marshal**

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

**Padre**

The Branch Padre wanted to thank the Chairman and wife for being at the service on Sunday 18 April 2021, which was given over partly to celebrate the life of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. If anyone who missed the service would like to view it then the link is still active on St Mary's You Tube channel.

Plans for a service to dedicate the Peace Tree were still on hold at the moment and the Church are currently working out what Remembrance Sunday might look like this year, but would keep the branch apprised on any developments.

The **Branch President** suggested that maybe the Peace Tree and the RBL Centenary event could be combined, the Padre and Branch Members present all thought that was a good idea, however, it was pointed out that the official Centenary date for the RBL would be 15 May 2021, so may not be possible in the short time frame.

**Poppy Appeal Organiser**

After report: The Newent and District Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) very kindly sent in a report for this month, however, unfortunately the Chairman forgot to read it out at the meeting, so my apologies to the PAO and the following is his report:

Chairman

<p><b><i>“The Poppy Appeal for 2020/2021 is £5,667.81, there are still some wreaths to come in. There are badges for the 100 years of TRBL I have 50, can you let me know anyone that would like one. I do not know when they will be here but as soon as they are I will let you know, they are priced at £4.00 each.”</i></b></p> <p>If members would like a special limited edition 100 years centenary Poppy Appeal pin please let the Chairman know and I will order a ‘job lot’ from our PAO or alternately if you know the PAO’s contact details please feel free to contact him directly.</p> <p>There were no other officer reports.</p>	
<p><b><u>6. Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>The <b>Branch President</b> mentioned that the annual St Georges Day Service had been cancelled for this year which was disappointing, however it is hoped next year’s event will take place.</p> <p>The <b>Chairman</b> stated that Garry Mills had been voted back as Gloucestershire’s representative to the Membership Council.</p>	
<p><b><u>7. Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The next Zoom Meeting will be held on 27 May 2021 at 1900 hrs. The Chairman closed the meeting at 1940 hrs.</p>	All

**Agenda for Zoom Meeting of Newent and District Royal British Legion  
Branch on 27 May 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.