

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

Meeting held on 26 August 2021

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richard Balding Keith Urch	Chairman BCS Representative, Deputy Chairman, Youth Liaison and Membership Secretary.
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Graham Barton	Deputy Parade Marshal
Colin Britt	Deputy BCS
Rick Axon	Entertainments/Bar Member
David Sass	Treasurer
Susan Urch	
Elaine Balding	
Colin Calcutt	
Pat Price	
John Price	
Susanne Britt	Secretary
Adrian Dover	
Sean Gaunt	
Helen Axon	Guest
Sue Colborne	Guest

<u>Item</u>	<u>Action</u>
<p><u>1. Act of Remembrance</u></p> <p>The Chairman Opened the Meeting at 19:00 hrs and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He stated that it was good to see so many and welcomed 2 guests for this evening, Helen and Sue. He asked if we could spare a moment of thought for those who could not be with us tonight and for 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 September and concluded with the Act of Remembrance.</p>	
<p><u>2. Apologies</u></p> <p>Apologies had been received from Tom Heseltine, Simon Mason, John Celino and Tom Axon.</p>	
<p><u>3. Chairman's Report</u></p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>Welcome everyone to this month's branch meeting, I hope it finds you all well. To start with news worthy items from National and County followed by local news:</p> <p><u>Branch On-Line Banking</u></p> <p>As you all know I like to keep you up to date with whatever discussions are trending on the RBL social media platform Yammer, this month it is back around to on-line banking. It would appear that</p>	

there are many branches already using on-line banking with primarily Barclays and Lloyds, however after an initial flurry of branches asking which system works best the RBL Branch Accounts Team put a small dampner on things by chipping in with:

“We confirm that as per the 2.a.(3) Financial management section of the Membership Management Handbook, online banking is not permitted for any branch. Those who have managed to set this up already without our knowledge should please revoke it immediately.”

This of course garnered a whole lot of discussions back and forth as to why on-line banking cannot be used, with the Branch Accounts Team receiving a lot criticism and finally replying with the following:

“We have given the most accurate information we have based on our current banking arrangements. We are aware that online banking is a priority issue for branches and have committed to looking at this within a time frame of the next 6 months, after which we will be able to provide further updates.”

So until this matter has been satisfactorily resolved our branch will have to stick with our current antiquated system.

University Requests

Earlier this month National sent out 2 requests they had received from the University of Bristol and the University of Warwick. The Bristol request was for:

“Current/retired military personnel and families to share memories and photos of military home life. They want to show its diversity and importance to military life; a perspective that is so far mostly absent from the public conversation and from the historical record. They are interested in military homes in all shapes and sizes and associated with military service from any era and connected to any branch or rank. They are looking for people who would be willing to help by:

- ***Donating images of their lounges/living rooms***
- ***Offering to be interviewed about their experience of a military home***
- ***Welcome our award-winning photographer into their home to produce beautiful photographs”***

And the Warwick request was for:

“Women who served in the Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force to take part. The research is focused on your experiences during your transition to civilian life and your work life experiences since leaving the UK Armed Forces. The researcher is interested in finding out how you make decisions regarding your work life, what your experiences of transition from military to civilian life were, your experiences of work in civilian life and how you measure success in the civilian world.”

If anyone would like to assist either Universities in their research, I have the contact details and can send it on to you.

Afghanistan Situation

We've also received this message from National Headquarters about the situation in Afghanistan:

“Undoubtedly you will have been following in the news the troubling events unfolding in Afghanistan. We know how distressing and difficult many in our community will find these developments, both veterans and those still Serving, their families, and of course the families who lost loved ones as a result of the conflict.

It is vital we let our community know we are here for them during this time and stand ready to support them. We have seen an increase in calls to the contact centre, and our expert welfare teams are already helping those who have reached out, working collaboratively with referral partners and national and local government to provide the very best support.

*Whether our community are facing emotional distress or mental health issues, need practical support or a listening ear, we are here for them, and we ask you to direct anyone in need of support to the contact centre on **0808 802 8080**. That includes Afghans who worked alongside the British Armed Forces and hold a HM Armed Forces campaign medal, our full range of support is available to them. We have done significant work in the last week, looking at the potential needs that will arise for all those eligible for our help and planning the best way to offer that support. The most effective way you can contribute to helping our community at this point is by directing all welfare enquiries to the contact centre where staff are waiting, briefed, and qualified.*

We will continue to monitor the situation closely, working with our partners as necessary, and we are encouraging our community to regularly check in with one another and call us if they are struggling. This important message will be repeated on our channels, and we ask you to share it also.

There is significant media interest in speaking with members of the Armed Forces community and military charities. We are aware journalist enquiries may be coming into the organisation through various channels and we remind you to refer these to the RBL's press office, to provide accurate information on the support available.

There are those within our own staff and membership who served in Afghanistan and will be affected by the ongoing events. Please reach out for support if you need it, and we encourage everyone to show understanding and compassion at what is a difficult time for many.

Our contact centre colleagues are ready and waiting, therefore once again, please advise anyone needing support to get in touch with them directly.”

Love Newent Fayre Event 4 September 2021

Most of you will know already about the Newent Town Council initiative to hold a 'Love Newent Fayre' event on 4 September 2021, the branch along with all the other local organisations, groups and shops received an invitation to participate, after consulting with the Branch President, the Poppy Appeal Organiser and the members of the Branch committee we have decided to participate in the event by having a combined branch information and Poppy Appeal stall. The event is on from 10am until 3pm so for this to be a success we need volunteers to stand behind the table and answer questions, hand out leaflets, receive donations and generally talk with passersby. We will have 5 hours 'manning' the stall so the more volunteers we get the better, I've already had 1 volunteer so my thanks to Rick for starting the ball rolling, other volunteers are also required.

Recruitment Event – 24 July 2021

I didn't intend to speak about this but our President was unable to make it this evening, he has sent the following message:

"The recruitment day was successful from my point of view, we had positive interest from passers-by and they were surprised that we were there and it wasn't Poppy Appeal Day! A lesson learned? Perhaps more days such as the this? One every 3 months? What do the members think? The poppy bucket produced in excess of £65."

I Enjoyed the couple of hours that Colin (Thanks Colin) and I spent outside the Coop, it was good to speak to everyone who showed an interest, however I was a little disappointed that we had so few volunteers turn up, even though at the last meeting several more people put their hands up. I have sent in the photographs into County for inclusion to the monthly News Letter, so look out for it later in the month.



Thank You

Two big thank you's to our Entertainment's member Rick for Organising both the branch meal at the end of July and yesterday's Cream Tea at the Good News Centre, for those that went I think you will agree they were both excellent.

Secretary Position

<p>I've still not received any volunteers to take on this position, and next month I am on Holiday so will not be able to attend the meeting, our Deputy Chairman has volunteered to run the meeting as long as we have a volunteer to take the minutes, a professional job is not required just a gist of the extra discussions from the night as all the officers will have sent their reports in advance. I will give as much help as I can prior to going on holiday and the notes can be sent to me to put into their final form and distributed to our members.</p> <p>Decision: My thanks go to Helen who volunteered to take the minutes for next month.</p> <p><u>Finally</u></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Helen Axon</p>
<p><u>4. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record. Proposed by CB and Seconded by JP and agreed unanimously. There were no Matters Arising not covered during the Chairman's report.</p>	
<p><u>5. Reports by Officers</u></p> <p><u>Deputy Chairman/Membership/Youth Liaison/Branch Community Support</u></p> <p>This month's report is again rather brief as fortunately there is little to report.</p> <p>Membership, Branch Community Support Representative and Youth Liaison Officer</p> <p>While your Representatives continue to attend virtual meetings, life is slowly returning to normal and we have met with representatives of Newent Initiative Trust and The Youth Activity Group (YAG) in order to re-establish links with the community.</p> <p>The RBL BCS Steering Group continues to develop services and it is now proposed to transfer Membership Support Officers (MSOs) to the Membership Directorate and reinstate a permanent MSO for Gloucestershire - more to come in the coming weeks.</p> <p>This meeting is Susanne and Colin's swan-song prior to leaving our Branch for pastures new: we are assured that they will remain members.</p> <p>Welfare and Membership</p> <p>RBL HQ continues with its Strategic Review and we anticipate receiving further information in due course.</p> <p>Welfare</p> <p>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</p>	

RBL Helpline but please be assured that our expertise and support is also based locally and county wide.

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



[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

Branch Membership

The Branch Membership now stands at 40 members but this evening we have the opportunity to welcome two new members, increasing our strength to 42.

Branch Statistics

The Branch has not been presented with any new cases this period.

In the event that members identify a comrade in need, they are encouraged to contact their BCS Representatives at the earliest convenience.

Branch Statistics for this period are therefore as follows:

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

No other telephone or email communications were made during this period.

Youth Liaison

All liaison activities are restricted in accordance with RBL Guidelines.

Community Liaison

In accordance with current RBL Guidelines our BCS Team continues to conduct the majority of its general business via email and telephone.

Other Branch Information

BCS (Branch Community Support) Training

More information is continually becoming available via County Officers as certain programmes are now being rolled-out on line.

Remembrance Sunday in London

Members are reminded that those wishing to be considered are in the first instance to contact RBL HQ who will ask you to provide responses to a range of the usual security questions.

Treasurer

Balance was assumed to be £1135.33 as reported at last meeting with an estimated receipt of 0.45p from HMRC.

The new balance is once again assumed - to be confirmed after site of Bank transaction report and will be £1059.65.

This takes into account the following expected movement:

- Cheque 100534 for Wreaths - at a cost of £37.00
- Cheque to be written at this meeting for £40.00 for garden vouchers presented as 'Thank you's' for Colin Britt - Bar person and Susanne Britt Secretary as they will be leaving the area shortly.
- HMRC payment of 0.45 - usual amount arriving every month

These transactions to be entered into Lomas and reconciled on receipt of statement from Bank.

Treasurer is not yet on the Bank list of signatories as he has not visited Gloucester since last meeting to collect Mandate form and is therefore not able to sign cheques at the moment. Chairman and previous treasurer will be asked to sign in the meantime; however the Previous treasurer reminded all present that she will be unable to sign further cheques after the AGM.

Entertainments Member

The entertainments member stated that 9 attended the 'belated' Christmas meal which took place on 28 July 2021 at the Kings Arms and that 5 attended the Cream Tea in the Good News Centre on 25 August plus another member who came for Coffee. Proposals for the coming months are:

- **16 Sep 2021:** Skittles practice at the Kings Arms including food approximately £3 per person. please contact RA directly if interested by 10 Sep 2021 via email: rick@axon.org.uk . PP volunteered to contact 'rent-a-crowd' and see if they were available.
- **Oct 2021:** Cheese and Wine for the AGM.
- **Dec 2021:** Christmas Meal, The Ents Member has menu's for both the Farmers Boy and Kings Arms, although the Kings Arms menu is very basic, after some discussion it was decided that the Red Lion (Bar&Kitchen) should be

All

All
Ents
Member

<p>approached to see if they intend to have a Christmas Menu this year. A Decision will be asked for; and made at the next meeting.</p> <p>There were no other officer reports.</p>	
<p>6. Any Other Business</p> <p>Chairman – Festival of Remembrance – The Chairman outlined the details of this year’s Festival of Remembrance and asked if anyone wanted further information to please ask.</p> <p>Chairman – Peace Tree Dedication – After discussions with the Branch Padre and Deputy Parade Marshal the Dedication for the Peace Tree will take place on Thursday 9 September 2021 starting at 7pm on the grass in front of the Peace Tree at Newent Lake. The Chairman is to formally invite NTC. KU would invite Barrie.</p> <p>Chairman – The Chairman had received a letter from the National Chairman which included a dedication and message from Her Majesty the Queen. After some discussion it was decided that the branch would not display this memento in the Memorial Hall.</p> <p>SU – SU expressed concern about the lack of impetus from TRBL Branch Finance Team with regards to On-Line Banking and suggested that a strongly worded letter be sent to the team expressing the Branches displeasure. After a lot of discussion, the Chairman suggested that he could not sanction an official letter from the branch however if individuals wanted to send in a letter that was their prerogative.</p> <p>GB – GB asked if any further guidance had been received from National with regards to Remembrance Parades for this year. The Chairman said there was nothing particular only that for any events, branches should follow current National Guidance. The Chairman volunteered to obtain further clarity from County.</p> <p>SB – SB asked who would take over the administration of the Branches Facebook pages when she moves house next month. DS volunteered to take on this responsibility as he is currently administering several others. DS & SB would now liaise. The Chairman thanked DS for volunteering.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>Chairman NTC</p> <p>KU</p> <p>Chairman</p> <p>DS SB</p>
<p>7. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next Meeting will be held on 23 September 2021 at 19:00 hrs in the Memorial Hall. The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 20:20 hrs.</p>	<p>All</p>

Agenda for Meeting of Newent and District Royal British Legion

Branch on 23 September 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.
 1. Christmas Meal Decision - RA
6. Any Other Business.
7. Date of Next Meeting.