

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

Meeting held on 23 September 2021

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Keith Urch	BCS Representative, Deputy Chairman, Youth Liaison and Membership Secretary.
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Rick Axon	Entertainments/Bar Member
David Sass	Treasurer
Susan Urch	
Colin Calcutt	
Adrian Dover	
Helen Axon	
Sue Colborne	
John Celino	President- left the meeting early

<u>Item</u>	<u>Action</u>
<u>1. Act of Remembrance</u> The Deputy Chairman Opened the Meeting at 19:00 hrs and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked if we could spare a moment of thought for those who could not be with us tonight. He read the names of those from the Parish of Newent who had lost their lives during WWI and WWII during the month of October and concluded with the Act of Remembrance.	
<u>2. Apologies</u> Apologies had been received from Reverend Simon Mason, Richard and Elaine Balding, Jim and Helen Powell and John and Pat Price and Ian Hopkins.	
<u>3. Chairman's Report</u> <u>Introduction</u> Welcome everyone to this month's branch meeting, I hope it finds you all well. Sorry Elaine and I can't be with you this month as we are taking a small break down in Sunny Minehead. To start with news worthy items from National and County followed by local news: <u>Poppy Appeal 2021 – Key Messages and Dates</u> The branch received the following information from the Head of Membership Operations: Key Messages <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poppy Appeal collectors are back in the community As Covid-19 restrictions ease, our collectors are back out in their communities to raise vital funds for the RBL's Poppy Appeal. Our collectors have been at the heart of the Poppy Appeal in local communities for over 100 years and as we mark the RBL centenary we are celebrating their contribution. Find your local collector to	

donate to, because every poppy counts, and your contribution will make a real difference to the lives of the Armed Forces community who have given so much for their country.

- **100 years of the Poppy and Remembrance**

Since it was first worn as an act of Remembrance just over 100 years ago, the poppy has become an enduring symbol of support for our Armed Forces, past and present, and every poppy counts. For 100 years Remembrance has been part of the fabric of society, reminding us of our shared history and today it continues to unite people across all backgrounds, communities, and generations. Throughout history the British Armed Forces have defended freedom and democracy, join us in our 100th year to remember their service and sacrifice

Key Dates

Thursday 28th October - National Launch

Thursday 28th October to Saturday 13th November:

- House to House/Static Collections
- Street Collections

Thursday 11th November - Armistice Day

Sunday 14th November - Remembrance Sunday.

Branch Annual General Meeting – 28 October 2021

You should all have received the Convening Notice for the Branch Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will take place on Thursday 28 October 2021 here in the Memorial Hall. As you know this is the chance for members to become more actively involved in the branch. The system is quite simple, anyone who would like to take on a role in the branch only needs to apply by sending in a simple email stating the role you would like to take on, the name of a proposer and seconder. This will then get recorded and approved on the night of the AGM. All applications should be in with the Chairman by 21 October 2021. I am keen to handover the reigns of Chairman to enable the branch to get a fresh outlook and a new perspective for the next few years in order to take the branch forward, obviously I would be more than willing to help any new incumbent settle in to the role.

Love Newent Event – 4 September 2021

At the 'Love Newent' event on Saturday 4 September 2021, our branch put up a stall to help advertise our presence in Newent, to keep us active in the community, to help boost the local poppy appeal and as a recruitment tool. We first had to find our stalls allocated position (no information received), then to erect our gazebo (which we eventually did with the help of the Men's Shed) and then set up the stall for business, all achieved before the 'kick-off' time of 10:30. The day started slowly with passing trade but did pick up during the day as more people ventured in to Newent. Unfortunately our local Poppy Appeal (PA) Organiser was unable to attend so no

PA merchandise was available, however the PAO did managed to get us a collecting 'bucket' which was well received and collected £32.25 in donations. The branch did receive several enquiries for membership which I think 2 were very promising, we'll see. Other items of note from the day were; discussions with both the Newent Girl Guides (about Communications) and Newent Scout Group. We also had a discussion about a possible donation with the daughter of an ex-member who received substantial help from the Branch Welfare Team over the past 2 years. My thanks go to Pat and John, Graham, Adrian and our President who all put in a shift on the day, to both Alan at the Bar&Kitchen and the Branch Padre from St Mary's who provided the tables for the stall, but the biggest thank you goes to Colin Calcutt who not only helped set up and dismantle but stayed with the stall from start to finish, even though I told him to take a break.

Peace Tree Dedication – 9 September 2021

On the 24 November 2020 several members of Newent & District Branch turned up at Newent Lake to plant a Commemorative Peace Tree in honour of those people who unfortunately did not make it through to the celebrations on 8 May (VE Day) and 15 Aug 1945 (VJ Day).



24 November 2020

Due to the pandemic and local restrictions the Branch were not able to conduct a suitable dedication until the 9 September 2021, whereby 14 Members of the Branch and Newent Town Mayor Christine Howley attended a dedication service led by our Padre, Simon Mason and Deputy Padre Pat Phillips.

The Peace Tree was cultivated by Barrie Wellington who sold the tree to the Branch at a fraction of its full price, for which we are extremely grateful. Thanks also go to Newent Town Council for sourcing a suitable site and equipping the tree with a protective guard, stake and a stone for the plaque to sit on.

The service was a simple affair with an introduction, brief history of the events around the tree, a short bible reading, verse 4 of 'For the Fallen' by Laurence Binyon, the reading of the Names of the fallen from the Parish of Newent, the Silence followed by the Kohima Epitaph and the Dedication.

Thanks also go to Keith Urch for the History, Graham Barton for parading the Standard, all those who came out to support and for standing in as Photographer Adrian Dover enabling the event to be recorded.





9 September 2021

I have sent a report to both the editor of the County Newsletter and to the local Forester reporter Mark Elston, so look out for them in the next editions.

Thank You

A big thank you to our Entertainment's member Rick for Organising the Skittles evening, which will have gone well (written prior to the event!) but I'm sure Rick will report on that later in the evening.

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 & District Branch (BR3063) TRBL
newent.chairman@rbl.community

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.
Proposed by RA and Seconded by SU and agreed unanimously.
There were no Matters Arising not covered during the Chairman's report.

5. Reports by Officers

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

BCS REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

This month's report is again brief as fortunately there is little to report.

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

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.

Welfare and Membership

RBL HQ continues with its Strategic Review and we continue to await further information in due course.

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 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

Branch Membership

The Branch Membership now stands at 42 members.

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
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How many beneficiaries “visited”	NIL
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How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters)

Total Welfare Expenditure	NIL
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Telephone Buddies:

Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive	NIL
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Telephone – How many beneficiaries called:	NIL
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Telephone – How many telephone buddies:	NIL
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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 some of its general business via email and telephone, albeit a number of face to face meetings are now taking place.

Other Branch Information

BCS (Branch Community Support) Training

More information is continually becoming available via County Officers as certain programmes are 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.

Poppy Appeal

A number of our members kindly supported our PAO, Colin Thomson in raising funds for the Poppy Appeal and the profile of The Branch.

Although interest was shown and funds raised, we are unsure as to whether the event will attract new members.

In all, it was considered to be a successful event and perhaps worth repeating at various times throughout the year.

President's Resignation

Mr John Celino tendered his resignation as President of The Branch.

Members present were assured that this would not impact upon The Branch Committee, its structure or continued function in supporting the needs of Branch members, associated family members and veterans.

Treasurer

Current balance is assumed to be £1059.20.

This allows for 0.45p received from HMRC - this to be reviewed on receipt of bank statement.

During the past week or so I have made internet searches and attempted telephone calls to Barclays bank to request a mandate form to be posted or emailed to me. No joy and at least 1.5 hours left hanging on the telephone line with nobody answering.

Today I made a trip to Gloucester branch of Barclays Bank to ask for a mandate form to amend the signatory list to include me and remove Susan Urch the previous treasurer.

It appears that there is no Mandate form available on line for our type of account. Moreover the only way to action despatch of a suitable form is for one of the current signatories to call the bank and after some identity cheques - give them my details and then a form will be sent to me to fill in. A pretty cumbersome system in my opinion.

The telephone number to call is: 0333 202 7477 - may I request that someone qualified action this please.

Entertainments Member

The entertainments member stated that 15 attended the skittles practice 16 September Proposals for the coming months are:

- **28 Oct 2021:** Cheese and Wine for the AGM.
- **November 2021:** Maybe book the back room of the Cobblers for a social event.
- **16 Dec 2021:** Christmas Meal, The Ents Member has booked the Red Lion (Bar&Kitchen) for 7pm. The menu will be published at the end of this month.
- **January 2022:** Rick is trying to arrange a skittles match with Ebbw Vale RBL branch.

Rick also asked for ideas about hiring a minibus for future trips. Various suggestions were made.

There were no other officer reports.

6. Any Other Business

Arrangements for Remembrance Day

The deputy chairman reported his conversation with Reverend Simon Mason. A number of options exist that will require consideration.

1. Limited number of people in St Mary's Church with a similar number situated outside in the churchyard - currently not favoured.
2. By Invitation only - service to take place both inside and outside the Church - not considered ideal as it limits community involvement.
3. The entire service to take place outside with designated positions for all community groups and other participants, readings around The War Memorial.

<p>A shortened Service, possibly starting at 1030 hrs. Further consideration will need to be given to the prevailing weather on the day.</p> <p>NOTE: The above will depend upon further guidance to be received from The Diocese, The RBL and NTC (as the organising body for this Civic Event) nearer November.</p> <p>Comments and/or suggestions are welcomed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dave pointed out that large sporting events are now taking place and there is no social distancing in pubs and restaurants. 	
<p><u>7. Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next Meeting will be held on 28 October (AGM) at 19:00 hrs in the Memorial Hall.</p>	<p>All</p>