

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

**Meeting held on 27 January 2022**

<b><u>Attendees</u></b>	<b><u>Post</u></b>
Richard Balding Keith Urch  Pat Phillips Rick Axon Helen Axon David Sass Susan Urch Colin Calcutt Sue Colborne Mary Curtis Elaine Balding John Price Pat Price Graham Barton Dave Pollock	Chairman BCS Representative, Deputy Chairman, Youth Liaison and Membership Secretary. Deputy Padre Entertainments/Bar Member Secretary Treasurer      Raffle Coordinator      Parade Marshal
<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Action</u></b>
<b><u>1. Act of Remembrance</u></b>  The Chairman Opened the Meeting at 19:00 hrs and welcomed an excellent turnout to the meeting. He asked if we could spare a moment of thought for those who could not be with us tonight, and those who are struggling with illness and health difficulties. He also asked all present to spare a thought for those members having family difficulties at the moment including Simon, Sue C and Graham.  He read the names of those from the Parish of Newent who had lost their lives during WWI and WWII during the months of January and February and concluded with the Act of Remembrance.	
<b><u>2. Apologies</u></b>  Apologies had been received from Jim and Helen Powell, Adrian Dover, Tom Heseltine, Jonathan and Viv Miles and Reverend Simon Mason.	
<b><u>3. Chairman's Report</u></b>  Welcome everyone to the first meeting of 2022, let's hope this year see's the end of the pandemic. I hope it finds you all well and in good spirit for the year ahead.  As you might expect, it has been a quiet couple of months over the festive period, but to start with a brief synopsis from the county conference:	

**Gloucestershire County Conference – 22 January 2022**

The Annual Gloucestershire County Conference took place on 22 January 2022, both myself and Keith attended this virtual event as guest's, unfortunately we were unable to attend as voting delegates due to the lateness of our account's submission.

Last year I reported that there was a lot of discussion and argument about the presentation of the county accounts, there was no difference again this year. In summary it was alleged that the accounts did not match up with what was reported at the last County Committee meeting, after much discussion it was agreed to look into the accounts again, however the accounts for last year did marginally come through voting to be signed off for the year and passed up to National.

There were a number of written officer's reports submitted, including; the County Training Officer, County Branch Community Support, County Fund Raising (CFR), Youth Officer, Publicity & Recruitment (P&R) and of course Treasurer. There was a couple of snippets of information to pass on, such as: the CFR reported that *"Currently we are about 60-65% up on last year, which is fantastic. We are still awaiting Supermarket income to come, but we are really hoping we will reach a good figure for Gloucestershire, given there were still challenges around Covid this year"*, the P&R Officer delivered the following Stats: *65,803 people reached on Facebook (1049% on the previous year), 108 new followers on Facebook, 16,845 people engaged with our posts (liked/commented/shared) (1434% increase), 867 impressions on Twitter, 1648 Facebook Followers / 1588 Page Likes, 24 Twitter followers, 65% of our audience are men, 35% of our audience are women, Our largest age demographic is 65+ which matches the national demographic. And that "our current (Membership) figures state we have 2,630 members across the county"*.

If anyone would like copies of the reports, please let me know and I will add them on to the distribution of these minutes.

There was a guest speaker who was Karen Gill Head of HR, her address covered all the good bits from last year, but unfortunately did not (in my opinion) cover anything from HR.

The county did have a request, they are desperately seeking new county committee members for this year, the minimum number they require to form a committee is 7 and they only just cover that number, they are allowed to have up to 15 members. So, if anyone would like to volunteer to be on the county committee, please let me know and I will put forward the paperwork.

**Civic Carol Service – 14 December 2021**

I was pleased to accept an invitation to represent the Branch at the Newent Town Council's (NTC) Civic Carol Service which took place on 14 December 2021, and was honoured to be asked to do a reading, as you might expect the Service was constrained in

<p>numbers due to the restrictions in place at the time, but the Service was well received by all those that attended, mulled wine and mince pies were then served in the Memorial Hall. My thanks to NTC and St Mary's for hosting the evening.</p>	<p>NTC St Mary's</p>
<p><b><u>Branch Christmas Meal – 16 December 2021</u></b></p>	
<p>For those of you who attended the Branch Christmas meal at the Kings Arms on 16 December 2021 I think will agree that it was a fun evening which saw several of our new members attend, there was a large selection of prizes in the raffle (Thanks Elaine) which was keenly fought over as well as a final farewell to our departing members Susanne &amp; Colin, who will be missed. Finally, a big thank you to Rick and the Kings Arms for ensuring this year Christmas meal took place, who at short notice had to re-arrange the venue, which is not easy during the festive period.</p>	<p>Ents KA</p>
<p><b><u>Branch Publicity</u></b></p>	
<p>After several month's of not having articles published by either National or County News Letters, in December/January articles were published in both and also in the new NTC newsletter, which was nice. If anyone has any idea's on items to send to National, County or NTC, I would be pleased to listen to your thoughts.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p><b><u>Branch Resignations and Changes</u></b></p>	
<p>Due to personal reason our newly elected Deputy Secretary has handed in her resignation to concentrate on her immediate family, we wish her well and hope things change for the better, and if in the future she would like to take on a committee responsibility I would gladly recommend her to the branch membership again.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>I have also received notification from our Treasurer that due to impending commitments, he will be standing down as Treasurer in the February/March timeframe, however after a brief discussion with our current Secretary she feels the Treasurer post would be a better fit for her talents and has offered her services to take on the Treasurers role. Due to RBL rules she would not be able to take on both roles (Conflict of interests) and therefore would have to give up the Secretary role. Having thought about this for some time I believe it would be in the best interests to have Helen take on the Treasurer role and seek to replace the Secretary role from our membership. The Treasurer role is an appointed role so does not need a vote (all Committee members present were in agreement to take Helen up on the offer of switching to the Treasurer's role), but the Secretary role would need a proposer and seconder for it to go for a vote by the membership.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p><b><u>Finally</u></b></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>	

#### **4. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

##### **Amendments to the minutes of the last meeting as follows:**

In Chairman's opening remarks, this should read Chairman and not Deputy Chairman opened the meeting.

##### **Matters Arising.**

There were no matters arising.

Minutes unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record.

#### **5. Reports by Officers**

##### **Branch Community Support (BCS) Report for January 2022**

##### **Deputy Chairman/Membership/Youth Liaison/Branch Community Support (BCS)**

Sadly, I report that our Padre's mother passed away in December: our sincere condolences are extended to Simon and his family.

Members are reminded that your Branch is here to support you and your family; you only need to contact one of the Committee.

Although having attended the virtual County AGM last Saturday alongside our Branch Chairman, this month's report is again somewhat brief.

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

While your Representative continues to attend RBL virtual meetings, life is slowly returning to normal. TRBL HQ staff are returning to their respective offices so it is anticipated that all levels of communications will be re-established to their previous levels in the coming weeks.

Unfortunately, I report that for some unknown reason the Branch did not receive access to TRBL BCS Steering Group virtual meeting on Saturday (27th November). A request has been made for copy of the Presentation.

As previously reported County have appointed a new MSO (Membership Support Officer), Seamus Brennan ([SBrennan@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:SBrennan@britishlegion.org.uk)), based in the Cardiff office.

##### **Welfare and Membership**

TRBL HQ continues with its Strategic Review and development of training programmes; no further information at this time.

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

### **Branch Membership**

The Branch Membership now stands at 46 members with TRBL Membership finally formally recording Mr J. Price as a Newent & District Branch following both his and his wife's many years of service to the Branch and support of the Poppy Appeal.

### **Branch Statistics**

The Branch has not been presented with any new cases this period, although members have kindly provided various levels of support to their colleagues and friends.

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 Welfare visits 8 How many beneficiaries "visited" 3 How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters) 6 Total Welfare Expenditure NIL Telephone Buddies:

Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive 4

Telephone – How many beneficiaries called 2

Telephone – How many telephone buddies: 4

A small number of other telephone and email communications were made during this period.

### **Youth Liaison**

All liaison activities are restricted and conducted in accordance with RBL Guidelines.

### **Community Liaison**

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

### **Other Branch Information**

#### **BCS (Branch Community Support) Training**

Delays are occurring due to TRBL review of documentation prior to role-out of the training to all Branches.

#### **Report on the County Conference 22nd January 2022**

Please see the report attached to the Branch Minutes.

### **Treasurer**

I am still awaiting response from Barclays Gloucester Branch regarding my Mandate application.

Therefore, my report is based on last Bank Statement up to 29 December.

This statement displayed all the known activity I was expecting in the account - cheques raised, deposits made and transfers from Royal British Legion Head office and the usual 0.45 pence from HMRC. All these items detailed in my last Report.

As there have been no cheques issued since, or deposits made I believe the balance in our Newent Branch account is **£1183.48**.

This amount confirmed by my online reconciliation on Lomas our online account I system.

In past reports I have made assumptions about possible movements since last bank statements but has led to some confusion- so I will not do that this time as if there has been any movement it is likely to be 0.45 p from HMRC and therefore not a significant difference in our bank position.

Naturally I will confirm and report when I get sight of a statement or current statement - which I should be able to access once I have received a bank card from Barclays Gloucester.

### **Entertainments Member**

The entertainments member thanked everyone for attending the Christmas meal.

February –Skittles at the King’s Arms 10<sup>th</sup> February at 7pm.  
Numbers are required to order refreshments i.e.chips £3pp

March- Skittles 10<sup>th</sup> March for a competition with the Ebbw vale Branch of TRBL.

April – A possible trip to the Black Country Museum,

June – National Arboretum. RA to organise minibus

There was some discussion about ordering shirts with the New RBL design logo. There will need to be an order of 8 minimum. Also, the mugs produced prior to lockdown can still be purchased at £5 per Mug.

If anyone would like a T-shirt or Mug please contact Rick at [rick@axon.org.uk](mailto:rick@axon.org.uk)

### **Padre’s Report.**

Nil.

### **Secretary’s Report.**

HA reported that we have a potential new member, Colin Bell who has recently moved to Dymock. He is already an RBL member plus an RBL rider. The Secretary gave his details to the Chairman and Membership Secretary so they could make contact.

<p><b><u>6. Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Platinum Jubilee.</u></b> GB asked if there were any plans to have a parade on the Sunday morning of the Jubilee weekend. He thought that the various youth groups would enjoy this. The Chairman said that this would need to be organised through the Town Council. He would liaise with the Council's Veteran's Representative and report back at the next meeting.</p> <p>CC informed the meeting that he would be leaving the branch as he is moving Derbyshire to be closer to his family. The Chairman wished him well and thanked him for all his support over the past few years and reminded him that if it suited, he could still continue to be a member of the Newent Branch as well as another without extra fee's</p> <p>SC thanked the meeting for their kind thoughts.</p> <p>DP thanked the group for the welcome he had received.</p> <p>KU said that the County Conference notes will be attached to the minutes when they are sent out.</p>	<p>Chairman</p>
<p><b><u>7. Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The next Meeting will be held on 24 February 2022 at 19:00 hrs in the Memorial Hall.</p> <p>The Chairman closed the meeting at 7:50pm</p>	<p>All</p>

**Agenda for the Meeting of  
Newent and District Royal British Legion Branch on  
24 February 2022**

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