



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Central News – May 2022

Inside this issue

Title	Page	Summary
Important dates	1	What's coming in the next couple of months
Small branch return	2	Simplified accounts form for branches with low turnover
Branch Funds Initiative	2	New BFI interest rate announced
Sub-branch status update	2	Sub-branch option no longer available
Annual Conference	3	See what's happening over the conference weekend
Legacy Team news	4	Legacy awareness and resources
County/branch websites	4	Upgrade and re-brand of branch/county pages
NHS Survey veterans survey	5	Survey launched to help inform the development and provision of mental and physical health services
Board of Trustees election results	5	In case you missed the Friday email, here are the results again

Important dates	
13-15 May 2022	RBL Annual Conference
2-5 June 2022	The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Central Weekend
14 June 2022	Falklands 40
25 June 2022	Armed Forces Day
2 July 2022	Membership Meet-Up - Colchester
16 July 2022	Membership Meet-Up - Newcastle

Please remember to use this [online form](#) to share your feedback about Central News. Some of you reported that not all links in the previous issue worked correctly. Please email kbrzeska@britishlegion.org.uk with details of any links you cannot access.

Small Branch Return

Last year, we introduced a simplified annual return for small branches. Branches are able to use the simplified return if they:

- Received less than £500 in income during the year (excluding any amounts received from Head Office); **and**
- Spent less than £500 in the year (excluding any amounts transferred to other parts of the RBL); **and**
- Have less than £5,000 in bank and investment accounts (excluding amounts held in the BFI and CCLA).

The simplified return does not need to be independently examined.

Over 900 branches used the simplified return in 2021, representing nearly half of branches completing returns. Having evaluated feedback from Branch Treasurers, MSOs and our external auditors, Deloitte, we are pleased to confirm that we will be using the simplified annual return again in 2022 and in future years.

Branch Funds Initiative (BFI)

Following the Bank of England's decision to increase the base rate from 0.5% to 0.75%, the Board of Trustees has agreed to increase the interest rate on BFI and BPT (Property) BFI accounts from 0.5% to 1.5% with effect from 1st July 2022, to correspond with the new branch financial year. The interest rate will be fixed for one year.

As well as offering a good rate of interest, the BFI provides security for branch and BPT funds as money is only invested with financial institutions approved by the RBL Finance Committee.

Branches are reminded that any branch cash balances above £5,000 **must** be placed in the BFI to comply with RBL policy 2.a.(3) in the Membership Management Handbook. Funds can be withdrawn when needed by completing a BFI withdrawal request form, which is available from your MSO.

Sub-branch status update

Following the Membership Council's decision to no longer give branches the option to become a sub-branch, all existing sub-branches were written to in March this year to outline their options moving forward. Sub-branches can choose to become full branches, County Supported Branches, close the sub-branch or amalgamate with their parent branch. Thank you to all the branch committees who responded and informed us of their decision. Where we have not heard from a sub-branch or their parent branch, we will be amalgamating them as explained in the letter. If you have any questions about this process, please contact your Membership Support Officer.

Annual Conference 2022

Whether you will be joining live at the Queen Elizabeth 11 Centre or online at your Branch or Club, or from the comfort of your own home – it is Conference time!

From Friday morning on the 13th May to Sunday afternoon on the 15th May, The Royal British Legion comes together to celebrate the achievements of 101 years of service and support and to debate and decide how we move forward into the next 100 years.



For the first time, the hard work of the last two years in learning what is involved in ‘virtual conferencing’, means that we are able to debate and vote both live and online at the same time. Delegates in the conference centre and at home will be dealing with motions on welfare breaks, ‘centenary’ members, proxy voting at AGMs, the introduction of branch bank debit cards, bringing back paper membership cards and the use of Area Trust Funds.

The Membership Forum will again give the opportunity to raise questions important to all our members and will direct them to key officers and staff.

Those attending in person will have the chance to see everything on offer over the three days; the best of the best who have made it to the two Standard Bearers’ Competitions on the opening day, the specialist fora for the Women’s Section and Overseas Branches, the exhibition hall with 17 stands where you can meet staff members, Membership Council, supplier companies, the Poppy Shop, the NMA, Poppy Scotland and the Women’s Section. In short, every aspect of the Legion in front of and behind the scenes.

On Saturday from 17:00 the ‘pop-up pub’ and evening entertainment will let you unwind at the end of the day and relax with old and new friends.

On Sunday you will have the opportunity to watch and take part in a very special morning parade, along Whitehall into Horse Guards Parade for a drumhead service, before the closing sessions of Conference with the presentation of cups and shields, the welcome for our new National Chairman and the sincere thanks to the retiring Chairman.

We hope you will be there for all of it whether in person or online from across the world, to make Conference 2022 a year to remember!

Legacy Team News – May 2022



Last month, the Legacy Team attended the first Membership Meet Up in 2 years in Saltash, Cornwall. It was a great opportunity for the team to meet members and help them with their gift in Wills queries.

The team shared their new [posters](#), [postcards](#), and [leaflets](#) which outline how members and supporters can access our free Will-writing service.

There will soon be a website that you'd be able to visit to request resources but until then you can contact the team by emailing legacies@britishlegion.org.uk to request legacy related informational material for your upcoming events.

If you want to find out more about the RBL's free wills writing service you can meet members of the Legacy Team at the following events:

- Membership Conference in London, 13th to 15th May 2022
- Membership Meet Up in Colchester, 2nd July 2022
- Membership Meet Up in Newcastle, 16th July 2022

Legacy Awareness: The team is also looking to gather some information about how aware staff, members and volunteers are about legacy giving. Take this 5 minute anonymous [quiz](#) the team created to test your knowledge of Legacy giving.

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the team via legacies@britishlegion.org.uk

County/Branch websites

We'd like to remind you that as part of our new brand identity we will be migrating county and branch pages to a newer version of the web platform used, that will allow us to update the pages so that they are aligned with the new branding. Please note that this project will include only branch/county pages that currently use the approved RBL template.

If you want to find out more about the stages of this project and what it means for your County/Branch pages please use this [link](#) to access the FAQ document on the Membership Administration Portal (alternatively please ask your MSO for a copy).

NHS Veterans Survey

NHS England has launched a survey to find out people's views and experiences of veterans mental and physical health services. The information gathered will be used to help inform the development and provision of these services in the future. To find out more and take part in the survey please click [here](#).

Board of Trustees election results



Following this year's election for National Officers and the Board of Trustees, we are pleased to let you know that we will have a new National Chair, National Vice Chair, two trustees re-elected and one newly elected, who will take up their posts following Annual Conference.

Jason Coward has been confirmed as the new National Chair, having previously served as an RBL trustee. He has extensive board-level experience and runs his own marketing agency in Bristol.

Jason takes over the role from Una Cleminson, who will step down in May after completing her full term of three years. The National Chair is an active position, leading a large board of 16 trustees and representing the Legion's interests across the UK and internationally.

Lynda Atkins has been elected as National Vice Chair. Lynda previously served as a trustee, until stepping down in February this year. She has served in both the Royal Air Force and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers TA. Lynda takes over the role from Joe Falzon, who will also step down in May after completing his full term of three years.

Three other trustees are also confirmed: **Anny Reid** and **Paul Harris** have been re-elected, and **John Boisson** has been elected as a first-term trustee, having previously served on the Membership Council.

Our Board of Trustees is responsible for the charity's overall governance, policy and work. The Board's decisions are made within the bounds of our Royal Charter and our vision, mission and charitable objectives. Importantly, Trustees are legally and financially responsible for the decisions they make and the actions of the charity.

We'd like to thank all our Branches that took part in the elections for their commitment to supporting our governance and leadership, and in turn our beneficiaries and the wider Armed Forces community.