

Editor's Notes

News Flash! - this edition includes some key info about revised travel claim rates and year end finance changes which affect your branch.



In this issue

- County Committee
- Diary Notes
- Policies and Guidance Updates
- Financial Year End
- Changes to Travel Rates
- Ceremonial Update
- Branch News
- Events

County Chair's Message

As we approach the season of fetes and carnivals please remember that the RBL Public Liability insurance certificate can be downloaded from MAP.

If you have appointed officers or a Standard Bearer mid year the form MS1 (Mid Year) or MS1B for Standard Bearers can also be found on MAP and needs to be returned to the MEO and County Secretary please, to ensure that Standard Bearers in particular are covered by the RBL Public Liability Insurance!

Wishing you all a Happy Fund Raising Summer, in the meantime I, like Branch Treasurers across the county and country, will continue the preparation for the end of accounting year 2025/2026 on June 30th



Editor's Contact: Northamptonshire.Secretary@rbl.community

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR ALL THE LATEST INFORMATION

[HTTPS://COUNTIES.BRITISHLEGION.ORG.UK/COUNTIES/NORTHAMPTONSHIRE/](https://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/northamptonshire/)

COUNTY COMMITTEE

President - Colonel John Royle MBE TD (contact via County Chair)

Chair - Ian Byrnes (Northamptonshire.Chairman@rbl.community)

Vice Chair - Vacant

Secretary - Steve Thatcher (Northamptonshire.Secretary@rbl.community)

Treasurer (interim) - Steve Thatcher (Northamptonshire.Treasurer@rbl.community)

Parade Marshal - Nick Fall (Northamptonshire.ParadeMarshal@rbl.community)

Training Officer - Vacant

Recruitment Officer - Ian Byrnes (Northamptonshire.Chairman@rbl.community)

Community Support Co-ordinator - Vacant

Youth Officer - Peter Armstrong (Northamptonshire.CYO@rbl.community)

Club Liaison Officer - Robbie Paice (GreensNorton.Chair@rbl.community)

Standard Bearer - Faith Cosgrove (Kettering.Secretary@rbl.community)

Committee Members - Pat Cutting, Eddie Edmunds. Peter Higgs and Allan Short

County Committee Branch Links

Ian Byrnes - Desborough, Kingscliffe CSB, Thrapston and Warmington CSB Branches

Allan Short - Guilsborough & Hollowell, Duston and Northampton Branches

Steve Thatcher - Burton Latimer, Corby, Nether Heyford CSB, Oundle, Raunds CSB, Wappenham CSB and Wellingborough Branches

Peter Armstrong - Deanshanger & Wicken, Weldon and Roade Branches

Robbie Paice - Brackley, Daventry, Greens Norton, Middleton Cheney and Towcester Branches

Faith Cosgrove - Kettering, Rothwell and Rushden Branches

Pat Cutting - Finedon & Irthlingborough Branch

Eddie Edmund - Brixworth Branch

Peter Higgs - Mears Ashby & Sywell Branch

County Correspondence

Whenever possible, all correspondence should be sent **by email** to the individual above.

Any post should be addressed to: The County Secretary, 9 Eastlands Road, Finedon NN9 5DZ. Telephone queries should be made to the Secretary on 07954 160777.

Please note that the County Office is now closed. If you wish to arrange a face to face meeting, please contact the County Secretary who will make the necessary arrangements.

Legion Staff

Membership Engagement Manager (MEM) - Chris Jones (Central.MEM@rbl.community)

Membership Engagement Officer (MEO) - Lebo Nyoni

(Northamptonshire.MEO@rbl.community)

Membership Engagement Administrator (MEA) - Ruby Duce (Central.MEA@rbl.community)

Poppy Appeal Manager - Giles Coleman (GColeman@britishlegion.org.uk)

County Committee Meeting 7th May 2026 - Key Points

- The Committee welcomed the new Membership Council Rep, Paul McKay.
- The County Treasurer will be carrying out Independent Examinations of 6 branch accounts, as recommended in the recent County account inspection.
- Almonisation for the period July to September 2025 was reported - a decision on funding allocation from County funds will be made at the next Committee meeting.
- Agreed that County will investigate and advise all branches of forthcoming Armed Forces Days on Saturday 27th June plus the Post-45 Commemoration on Sunday 28th June 2026.
- The latest figure for the Poppy Appeal was £575,124.85 (an increase of 3.26% on the previous year).
- The County Chair expressed his disappointment at the lack of attendance by Branch Chairs at the recent Spring Branch Chairs Seminar.
- The new policy on awarding Branches with a Centenary Banner was discussed. It was felt that was unfair on long standing branches who had merged with another branch which meant that the branch would now be entitled to a banner on the centenary of their merge date, not their original formation. The matter would be referred to the Membership Council Rep.
- The new policy on County Welfare Funds was discussed. It was agreed that further clarification would be sought.

The next County Committee meeting will take place on Thursday 2nd July 2026.

If you have any topics you would like to be included, please contact the County Secretary.

There is still one vacancy on the County Committee, and also two positions which need to be filled as follows:

- County Vice Chair
- County Community Support Coordinator

If these are areas which you feel you might like to contribute to the running of the County, please get in touch with the County Secretary asap to discuss further.

Furthermore, we need to appoint a replacement County Treasurer (currently being filled by the County Secretary). Please get in touch if you are interested.

Training and support will be provided for all posts where necessary.

DIARY NOTES

- Saturday 27th June - Armed Forces Days in Brackley, Kettering, Northampton and Rushden.
- Sunday 28th June - Post-45 Commemoration at Towcester Road Cemetery, Northampton
- 30th June - End of the Branch Financial Year - accounts to be closed, agreed by the Branch Committee and inspected where required before submission to MEO (see guide below).
- Thursday 2nd July - County Committee Meeting (MS Teams)

RBL POLICIES AND GUIDANCE UPDATES

All Branch Secretaries are asked to review the following policies and guidance located in the MAP Documents Library, some of which have been recently published or updated, and advise their Branch Committees as appropriate:

- Changes to Branch Return criteria for the year ending 30th June 2026 (in the Branch Finance folder).
- Clarification on VAT and Remembrance events (in the Branch Finance folder).
- A change to the mileage rate for travel claims - revised SOP 42 published in the Governance and Policy/Legion Policies and Forms folder).
- Annual Report 2025 (in the Annual Conference/2026 folder).
- Guidance - Branch Crisis Grants Process V2 (in the Governance and Policy folder).

It is also highly recommended that Branch officers review all issues of Central News, as these often include policy and administrative changes, which might need to be discussed at Branch committees.

FINANCIAL YEAR END (UPDATED)

The Membership Financial Year End will soon be upon us and some simple preparation by all Branch Treasurers will make the end of year process easier.

1. If it is expected that the branch will not have any transactions in June, trigger an end of June Bank statement by depositing a small amount into the account. Not having an end of month bank statement is always a reason for account query.
2. Contact your usual Independent Examiner now to confirm that they will be willing and available to carry out the Examination so you can submit the return before 30 September. **Note: We strongly recommend that all branches use a qualified RBL Independent Examiner as they understand how the RBL accounts system works whereas some auditors may not. Even if your local accountant does your books for free, they must read the guidance notes issued for Year End and follow the criteria.**
3. Speak to the Branch Chairman to ensure that there will be a suitable meeting in July or August where the Accounts can be accepted by the Branch Committee and signatures obtained for the Accounts and Authority to Disclose certificates.
4. Consider if the Branch could make use of the Small Branch accounts form if *“the income received did not exceed **£1,000 (new)** and the expenditure incurred did not exceed **£1,000 (new)** in total for the year; excluding receipts and payments from the Royal British Legion Head Office (i.e BFI Interest, WS Benevolent fund & Poppy appeal transfers); and the total bank balance reported (excluding the Branch BFI) does not exceed £5,000.”*

NOTE KEY CHANGES:

- **If the branch submitted a Small Branch Return in 2024-2025, and regardless of their income and expenditure during 2025-2026, they are only required to submit a Small Branch Return for 2025-2026.**
 - **Independent Examinations will not be required every year for those branches using the Full Return where their income and spend are under £2,500 (excluding transactions to/from other parts of the RBL) and the bank balance is within the £5k limit. RBL Branch accounts will select a number to be examined each year.**
5. If you think there will be problems with the Branch Accounts ask for help now from the County Treasurer in the first instance.

6. Use of RBL Funds - What follows are some key points but the full text can be found in the Membership Handbook and the various guides on MAP:

- Reasonable expenses from funds are allowed for Branch business including the purchase of relevant equipment.
- All funds held by RBL Branches, including CSBs, are charitable funds and as such fall within the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. They do not “belong” to the Branch. Should a Branch cease to exist, the funds remain an asset of the RBL.
- The MEO is obliged to inform Head Office of any donation received by a Branch of more than £5000 (but these funds will be retained at local level).
- Branches are permitted to use Branch funds to undertake Remembrance events, but a Branch must attempt to secure services at little or no cost. Expenditure must be reasonable and proportionate. Local Authorities must be encouraged to bear the cost of any Civil Act of Remembrance (i.e., Remembrance Sunday Services), even if the RBL assists in the organisation.
- If a Branch is made aware of a beneficiary requiring support, they must encourage the beneficiary to get in touch with the Contact Centre.
- No funds may be expended on the upkeep/maintenance of War Memorials unless the Memorial is owned by the Branch.
- No fundraising activity should run at a loss as expenditure incurred would not qualify as charitable. All surplus funds should either be donated to the Poppy Appeal or Branch funds (depending on the stated purpose of the fundraising activity. The donor must always be clear about what they are donating money for).
- Any funds raised specifically for Welfare may only be used for that purpose in accordance with the Royal Charter. A Branch must not “hold” funds when they can be used to provide support to our beneficiaries. Donations are given in the expectation that they will be used for charitable work, not for being held in a Branch account. It is suggested that any considerable funds are forwarded to the Poppy Appeal.
- Branches may not make donations to other Charities unless permission has been granted by the External Grants Team or the Board of Trustees. RBL members may not raise money for other charities whilst declaring themselves to be RBL members (i.e. by wearing the RBL membership badge, whilst standing at a RBL branded stand).
- Social events must not be subsidised. Expenditure incurred and income received may pass through the Branch but must be earmarked for that purpose only. Surplus funds left over after the event must either be transferred to Branch funds or the Poppy Appeal.
- Any funds held in Trust at Head Office may only be used for the purposes specified within that Trust document. Please ensure that if applicable, your Branch is fully conversant with those terms.

- If a Legacy is left to a Branch this must be referred directly to the Legacy team at Head Office as they have the legal expertise to deal with it. Failure to refer to Head Office could result in the loss of the Legacy. If a Legacy is £5000 or less, the funds will be transferred directly to the Branch funds. If it is a larger amount then the Legacy will be held in Trust at Head Office and its funds can be accessed with help from the MEO.
- Branches, including CSBs, must not subsidise RBL Clubs in any form. To do so would be a misuse of charitable funds and might result in being required to personally reimburse the Charity.
- Branch Property Trusts are not assets of the Branch but are separate Trusts linked to the Branch and usually require their funds to be used for the benefit of beneficiaries in a specific geographical area.

CHANGES TO MILEAGE RATES FOR TRAVEL CLAIMS

Following the recent Government announcement, the RBL has adopted the revised mileage rates for travel claims with effect from 5th April 2026 as follows :

Cars - 55p per mile for the first 10,000 miles in each tax year; 25p per mile thereafter

Motorcycles - 24p per mile

Bicycles - 20p per mile

All new travel claims must be paid according to the new rates above. Branch Treasurers should check all claims paid already and work out how much extra now needs to be paid to recipients for all travel from 5th April and make suitable arrangements for payment.

CEREMONIAL UPDATE

Standard Bearer Training Dates

Army Reserve Centre, Clare Street, Northampton NN1 3JQ:

Thursdays 18th June, 23rd July, 17th September, 22nd October and 5th November

The Hall, off, Thorpe St, Raunds, Wellingborough NN9 6LT:

Mondays 6th July, 7th September, 5th October and 2nd November

Times are 1900 till 2030 - refreshments will be available

Any queries to:

Northamptonshire.ParadeMarshal@rbl.community

BRANCH NEWS

RBL Rushden Branch - please visit the Rushden Branch website to view their latest Newsletter which features lots of great information and articles. The link is: <https://branches.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/rushden/newsletters/>

RBL Wellingborough Branch - Remembrance Benches installed in Swanspool Gardens on 2nd May 2026



RBL Desborough Branch - Commemorating the End of the Iraq War



RBL Brixworth Branch

On Saturday 6th June the SAMA riders will pay their annual visit to Gerald's grave at All Saints church Brixworth at 10.20.

August bank holiday Sunday the 30th we are in the process of arranging an RBL invitation XI vs Brixworth Cricket Club XI. **We are after competent players as BCC have the likes of Devon Malcolm amongst their team!**

EVENTS



ARMED FORCES DAY
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

ARMED FORCES DAY 2026
SAVE THE DATE!
Saturday 27th June | 10am - 3pm
Market Square, Northampton

Logos for Armed Forces Day, Royal British Legion, and Northampton Town Council.



Kettering Town Council presents

Kettering Armed Forces Day

Saturday 27 June
10am to 3pm
Kettering Market Place

Street Food • Live Music • Stalls
Entertainment • Community

www.ketteringtowncouncil.gov.uk/whats-on

Kettering Town Council logo.



ARMED FORCES DAY
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

ARMED FORCES DAY RUSHDEN
Saturday 28th June 2025
Parade Starts 1pm
Alfred Lord Tennyson School,
Playground, John Street NN10 9NL
At the Station from Midday-Late
Station Approach Rushden NN10 0AW

Stalls & Displays in the Goods Shed, B.B.M.F Flypast*
Train Rides. Bar & Buffet Carriage Open.

Contacts: Jake Baker
RHTS (Rushden Station) afdrushden@hotmail.com Tel: 07525 441267
Tel: 0300 3023 150 secretary@rhts.co.uk

Armed Forces Day Rushden is organised and run by Rushden & District Veterans Group (RDVG) in collaboration with Rushden Historical Transport Society and Rushden Town Council. The RDVG is supported by members of Rushden and District Royal Naval Association, Royal British Legion, Royal Air Force Association and the Northants Veterans Breakfast Club.
(*subject to availability)

Logos for Rushden Town Council, Rushden & District Veterans Group, and Rushden Historical Transport Society.



ARMED FORCES DAY
BRACKLEY
JUNE 2026

Saturday 27 June 2026
High Street, Brackley

QR code for more information.

Desborough & District

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

ARMED FORCES LUNCH

Contact linda.burnham@sky.com or
daveward3718@gmail.com for booking forms



Wednesday, 24th June 2026
12.00 pm for 12.30 pm Lunch
Desborough Indoor Bowls Club



ALL WELCOME
— LEST WE FORGET —