**Present:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Anne Midwinter | County President | Y |
| Peter Eldridge | County Chairman | Y |
| Fiona Lovesey | County Vice Chairman | Y |
| Tjark Andrews | County Committee Member/County Standard Bearer | Y |
| Andrew Bowes | County Treasurer/Committee Member | Y |
| Derek Bradshaw | County Committee Member | Y |
| Mark Garwood | County Parade Marshall | Y |
| Peter Clarke | County Dep Parade Marshall/Committee Member | Y |
| Brian Leach | County Committee Member | N |
| Rob Lovesey | County Minute Taker/Committee Member | Y |
| Hugh Ashton Moore | Membership Council Representative | N |
| Chris Jones | Membership Engagement Manager (Central) | N |
| Tom Coen | Membership Engagement Officer | N |
| Yanto Evans | Community Fundraiser | N |
| Nicole Mayall | Community Fundraising Manager, SE&SW Midlands | N |
| Pat Chadwick | Casework Services Manager- SE Midlands | N |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | | **Discussion/Decision** | | **Action** | |
|  | | 1. **Meeting Opened**   The Chair opened the meeting at 1140hrs. The Exhortation was spoken by the Chair. | |  | |
|  | | **Minutes of Previous Meeting** – circulated prior to meeting.  The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 Apr 23 were reviewed by the members of the Committee; passed as a true copy and signed by the Chair and Minuting Secretary.  Proposed: Fiona Lovesey  Seconded: Derek Bradshaw  The vote was carried unanimously | |  | |
|  | | **Matters Arising**  The Chairman informed the meeting that the format of the meeting will change going forward in as much that instead of working through all the items raise the Chair will select issues/items to enable greater focus in the timescale of the meeting. This will prevent any over running of the meeting. This was agreed by all in attendance. The agenda will be amended prior to the meeting and issues in advance. | |  | |
|  | | **County Chairman’s Report -** Circulated prior to meeting.  The Chair attended the Standard Bearer training taking part in the Eynsham Village Hall prior to the County Committee meeting and he wished to thank the Parade Marshal and the Ceremony Team on the improvements and raising the level of training standard. He also stated that he has received positive feedback from members that have attended previous training by the Team. Well done and keep improving the standard for the County.  The Chair briefly covered the main points in his tabled report; mentioning the event held on 7 May 23 at Annual gathering at Churchills grave in Bladen. The event was a huge success and credit to the Standard Bearers in attendance. The Annual Conference was discussed which the Chair attended online, the process was simple and easy although some delegates experienced IT issues especially regarding voting. Two further events were attended: the dedication of the Middleton Cheney Union Flag at the invitation of Northamptonshire and on the same day attended the Harwell Stone Ceremony.  The meeting moved on to County Committee Member roles:  County Secretary/Minute Taker – this role is now filled by Rob Lovesey.  County Training Officer – the Chair is in discussions with a potential candidate for the role.  County Youth Officer – a present there are no candidates for this role.  The Chair informed those present that the job specifications and Terms of Reference will be sent out shortly for the above positions to the incumbents.  Chair reiterated that since the appointment of the Ceremonial Team the County is now seeing the benefits and the roles are paying dividends with Branch Standard Bearers but also local Cadet Forces. Recent training had been undertaken with cadets in Chipping Norton and as seen today with Royal Air Force Cadets from Abingdon and Didcot. Discussions concerning safeguarding of youngsters and the role of the County Youth Officer raised several concerns; the role of Youth Officer it was felt is misunderstood and questioned the requirements of safeguarding, the Treasurer informed the meeting that the role job specification was being re-written to take account of these concerns. It was generally accepted that instead of pursuing a Youth Branch for the County, that the Ceremonial Team would liaise with the respective Cadet/Youth Organisations and work with their safeguarding teams being present for any activity or training. The Ceremonial Team were to review any future activities and ensure that compliance is adhered. The President was very keen to see activities with Cadet Forces and Youth Organisations fostered and expanded where possible as it opens the Royal British Legion to a wider audience and greater understanding of our aims.  Finally, the Chair mentioned the current issues with BCS training and representation, especially as all those members with previous BCS qualifications had been annulled. The solution for County was proposed by the Chair to engage with Mike Chamberlain from the Benson Branch who has been working closely with the BSC Central Team. As a result, the Chair has invited Mr Chamberlain to advise the County Committee County on policy and training matters. He will not be a Committee Members and not have voting rights. Both Pete Clark and Tjark Andrews have both completed the training, which comprises approximately 2hrs on-line presentations and a 2hr ZOOM Call, this accompanied with DBS Clearance greatly enhances the role.  Proposed: Pete Eldridge  Seconded: Tjark Andrews  The vote was carried unanimously. | | Chair  Ceremonial Team | |
|  | | **Oxfordshire County and Branch Compliance Issues**    The Chair has been notified by the Membership Council Representative prior to the meeting that the previously proposed dates for the Oxfordshire County Conference clash with other planned conferences. Oxfordshire were requested to reconsider the dates with the proposal of 28 Jan 24 or 04 Feb 24. Mark Garwood mentioned that we would have to ensure the availability of the Eynsham Village Hall facilities prior to any date change agreement. Upon confirmation members will be contacted to agree with the date change or if the facilities are not available consider a venue change. The consensus was that the 4 Feb 24 was the preferable. The Vice Chair Fiona Lovesey raised a question regarding the venue selection for future events, asking Branch delegates which are would they prefer to hold the event taking into consideration:   1. Availability 2. The facility has enough height for the Branch Standards 3. Capacity for 60-70 attendees. 4. Car parking facilities 5. Finally, catering facilities to enable teas and coffees.   It was agreed that the Secretary would produce a MS Form for Branches to reply with preferences.  The difficult issue of Branch Compliance was especially concerning for the Committee, with poor communications sited as one of the main issues. The Chair prosed to address this by requesting Committee Members to adopt Branches, fostering a closer relationship, and raising compliance issues with them. The Treasurer Andrew Bowes was thanked by the Chair for his support and assistance in resolving some of the compliance issues with some of the Branches. Of the 35 Branches in Oxfordshire only 9 were fully compliant which is unacceptable. Of the Branches in Oxfordshire 26 are active Branches and 9 in CSB totalling 35. Furthermore, 20 Branches have a secretary, whereas 6 did not; more concerning 22 have a Chair but not 4. Making these Branches without a full Office compliment non-Compliant. It was mentioned that RBL Secretariat had recently sent out a physical service pack or an electronic version however concern was expressed in knowing in County which Branches had received them. The Secretary was asked to raise the matter with the MEO.  The Secretary proposed the re-instatement of the County Newsletter which could be used to guide Branches in the Compliance Process ensuring that the qualification dates of Dec for the MS1 and Sep for the Branch accounts are attained. The Ceremonial Team requested that this proposal could be utilised to promote Standard Bearer Training and ensure that recently raised failing of due diligence of a couple of Branches within County can be avoided by promulgating information on Branch Administration. It was agreed this was the way forward, with the Secretary and Chair producing something of release in the coming weeks.  Two Branches have appeared to transgress Corporate and Financial governance and regulations, the Chair confirmed that he will be liaising with the MEO to investigate and ensure future compliance. | | Parade Marshal  Secretary  Secretary  Chair/Secretary  Chair/MEO | |
|  | | **Oxfordshire County Plan**  Nothing to report for this meeting. | |  | |
|  | | **Treasurers Report –** circulated prior to meeting.  The Treasurer summarised his written report however, he raised a couple of salient points for discussion. Great concern was expressed regarding Branch membership of those Branches having been identified as closed or in the process of closing, examples:   * Adderbury – Closed. * Chargrove – Closed. * Marston CSB still has 173 members, and it is not clear where the membership should be transferred. * Witney – Closed 8 members still should despite their desire to transfer to Bampton. * Bodicote merged with Banbury 44 members still shown.   The membership system still has members assigned to these Branches and the concern is that these may be lost and not offered the opportunity to transfer. As a matter of urgency this should be addressed to ensure RBL Membership cards reflect an active current Branch. Furthermore, it was suggested that County should be in receipt of a Branch Status Report to confirm active Branches in the CARE system. It is also believed that the Membership Council not being informed of any changes. The Treasurer expressed concern that corporate governance in the financial closing of the accounts for these Branches may not have been followed. The proposal was put for members to be moved to active or the Branch of their choice urgently. The Treasurer and Chair are to raise with as a matter of urgency with the Secretariat.  Proposed: Andrew Bowes  Seconded: Derek Bradshaw  The vote was carried unanimously.  The County Accounts were reviewed by the members of the committee; passed as a true copy.  Proposed: Andrew Bowes  Seconded: Mark Garwood  The vote was carried unanimously. | | Treasurer/Chair | |
|  | | **Oxfordshire Parade Marshal Report -** circulated prior to meeting.  The Parade Marshal’s Report was accepted by those present with the following points briefly discussed:   * 1. **Purchase of new County Standard** – the County Standard despite delays is ready for collection and is being handed over to a party from the County Committee on the 20 Jul 23.   2. **Standard Dedication** – Christ Church Cathedral have indicated that dedication ceremony cannot be considered this year due to capacity in the chapel area and cannot be discussed until 2024. More worrying is that a dedication ceremony of the new County Standard which needs to take place before it can be parade at the 29 Oct 23 Oxfordshire Poppy Appeal cannot not be undertaken. The Secretary suggested that he would contact the Bishop of Dorchester – The Rt Revd Gavin Collins to support our needs using Dorchester Abbey.   3. **Standard Bearer Training** – it was requested by the Committee that all new Standard Bearers having received training, that their details are passed to the MEO Tom to ensure records are updated and therefore covered by Royal British Legion Liability Insurance. | | Secretary  Parade Marshal | |
| 9. | | **Membership Engagement Officer Report** – circulated prior to meeting.  The MEO was not able to attend the meeting and submitted his apologies in advance however, Tom was able to submit a written report which was circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting and accepted. | |  | |
| 10. | | **Area Welfare Report** – circulated prior to meeting.  The Casework Services Manager was not able to attend the meeting and submitted her apologies in advance however, Pat had notified the Chair that a report was not yet available at this time but should be presented at the next meeting. | |  | |
| 11. | | **Poppy Appeal Update** – circulated prior to meeting.  The Community Fundraiser was not able to attend the meeting and submitted his apologies in advance however, Yanto was able to submit a written report which was circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting and accepted. The main point was that there is a £17k uplift in the monies raised in the 2023 PA over the previous year. A fantastic result in the current economic clime. | |  | |
| 12. | | **Update on the 2023 and 2024 Oxfordshire County Poppy Appeal Launches**   1. **2023 County Poppy Appeal Launch** – the Secretary updated the Committee on the status of the 2023 launch, all is on course however, it was proposed that a run though by the Ceremonial Team at Blenheim Palace should be undertaken. 2. **2024 County Poppy Appeal Launch** – the preparations of the 2024 Launch were discussed and the issues outlined. The Treasurer and Chair offered to support through SRFCA contacts. | | Secretary/Ceremonial Team  Secretary/Treasurer/Chair | |
| 13. | | **Membership Council Update** – not in attendance and nothing to circulate prior to the meeting. | |  | |
| 14. | | **Question to the Chair**  No questions presented prior to the meeting for the Chair. | |  | |
| 15. | | **Non-Agenda Matters**   * **RBL County Committee Polo Shirts –** Pete Clarke and the Ceremonial Team demonstrated, recently acquired Polo Shirts with professional embroidery of the RBL Crest, County Parade Marshal Team. The Service was offered to the other Committee Members with their Committee position. The cost £30 per shirt. Anyone wanting one should contact Pete Clark with the size required and the County Status. * **Recognition of Services –** Tjark Andrews requested that a County Award be presented to Chris Smitherson of the Banbury Branch for his outstanding support and contributions to the Legion and in particular the Banbury Branch.   Proposed: Tjark Andrews  Seconded: Derek Bradshaw  The vote was carried unanimously.   * **County Standard Parading at the National Festival of Remembrance** – a request was made by the Ceremonial Team for approval for the County Standard and Standard Bearer to attend the National Festival of Remembrance.   Proposed: Mark Garwood  Seconded: Derek Bradshaw   * **County Standard Parading at the Chipping Norton Remembrance Parade 2023** – a request was made for the County Standard to be paraded at the Chipping Norton Remembrance; the principle was accepted; concerns however, were raised that a Standard Bearer should receive and pass County Standard Bearer Training. The request was voted on and approved subject to the caveat of attaining the required level of training and inclusion on the amended MS1 for liability insurance.   Proposed: Tjark Andrews  Seconded: Fiona Lovesey   * **Microsoft Teams County Group Update** – the Secretary announced that he has been in contact with the Corporate IT Services regarding the setting up of a Teams Oxfordshire Group enabling easy access to Group Chat and Teams File Sharing. This will be based on official County Appointed Offices. It was requested that the following be raised as corporate email addresses:   + Oxfordshire President – Ann Midwinter   + Oxfordshire Vice Chair – Fiona Lovesey   + Oxfordshire Deputy Parade Marshal – Peter Clarke   + Oxfordshire County Standard Bearer – Tjark Andrews | | Secretary | |
| 16. | | **Presidents Address**  The County President address the Committee prior to closure and thanked the Team for their support and hard work clearly displayed. Ann went on to say that over a very short term the professionalism and the increased standard being displayed by the Committee exceeds and is clearly visible. It is clear by the dedication of the Chair and the team has created that Oxfordshire County Committee will continue to go on to greater things. Well done. | |  | |
| 17. | | **Dates of Future Meetings:**   * Sat 16th Sep 2023 Face to Face Eynsham Village Hall – it was discussed that 3 members of the Committee would not be able to attend the next meeting due to other unchangeable commitments. The Chair is to review the date and notify members. * Wed 13th Dec 2023 Teams Meeting * Wed 13th Mar 2024 Teams Meeting | | Chair | |
|  | | **Kohima Epitaph** | |  | |

**P ELDRIDGE R Lovesey**

**County Chair County Minuting Secretary**

**Date: Date:**