



Central News – August 2023

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Important dates	
30 September 2023	Deadline to submit Branch Accounts
17 October 2023	Membership Townhall
11 November 2023	Festival of Remembrance & Remembrance Day
12 November 2023	Remembrance Sunday
10 – 12 May 2024	Annual Conference 2024

Director General to Step Down

As announced last month, Charles Byrne will be stepping down as Director General of the Royal British Legion. Charles will remain in post until the end of November, seeing us through both this year's Poppy Appeal and Remembrancetide. The search for the next Director General is now underway, with the aim of identifying and appointing Charles' successor before he leaves.

Ten years is a huge commitment from anyone to an organisation, especially given the relentless daily pressures of its leadership, and Charles will therefore go on to his next venture with our thanks, respect and very best wishes.

Remembering Peter Cleminson CBE

We remember former National Chairman Peter Cleminson CBE, who also recently passed away. Peter made a huge contribution to Legion life over many years, significantly from 2007 to 2010 when he served as National Chairman. In more recent years he was also the number one supporter to his wife, Una Cleminson, during her own time as RBL Vice Chairman and then Chairman. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Remembering David Street

We remember David Street, who sadly passed away this month. David achieved phenomenally successful Army and Police careers and, after leaving the Army, continued serving out his 'Oath of Allegiance' through his Legion service. David's contribution to the RBL's mission cannot be overstated. His dedication and commitment to our Membership Council team effort was outstanding, resulting in him being awarded a National Certificate of Appreciation for his exceptional work in the fields of Membership Awards development as Chair of the Membership Awards Committee and Diversity and Inclusion advancement activity.

At this difficult time, we ask you to please keep David's family and friends in your thoughts and prayers.

Consolidated Payments Submission Guidelines

As communicated last week, updated versions of the *Consolidated Payment Submission Guidelines* and the *2023 Consolidated Payment Submission Form* have been created to provide clarity for both new and long-serving branch officials regarding the submission process.

The membership team often receives consolidated payment submissions that contain incomplete applications or incorrect information. Unfortunately, our Payments and Applications team is unable to process these submissions until any issues are resolved, causing unnecessary delays and frustration to members. Administering the correction and resubmission of rejected consolidated payments can also significantly impact the Membership Services team's limited resources and thus the experience for members.

With apologies to those of you who consistently submit impeccable consolidated payment submissions, we are introducing updated and refined guidelines to make them clearer and more streamlined. We have updated both the application form and the submissions form with clear instructions to follow when submitting. We do hope that these changes will help support branch officials in submitting consolidated payments, and will support us all in our shared aim of providing a first-class service to RBL members.

You can view the new guidelines and submission form [on MAP](#). If you have any queries, please email the team: membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk.

Membership Townhalls

The July Townhall saw members join us for updates on a variety of projects across RBL including the improvement of beneficiary journeys, improving care homes, the future of Membership and an update from Janet on Future Thinking. [You can watch the recording here](#).

Save the Date

The next Membership Townhall will take place on 17 October. Please save the date in your diaries; we will share the time and agenda of the session, once confirmed, closer to the date.

Summary of the Membership Council Meeting, 21 June 2023

June's Membership Council Meeting covered a variety of key areas, including the Branch Compliance Programme, Overseas Branches, Learning and Development's Training Strategy and

Policy, membership complaints, as well as updates from the Financial Compliance Working Group, Ceremonial Working Group and Training Working Group. [Read the full summary on MAP.](#)

2023 Annual Conference Highlights

Almost 500 delegates and attendees joined us in-person for Annual Conference 2023 in Torquay and helped to make it a success. Before minds turn fully toward next year's conference in Newport, we are delighted to be able to share the highlights reel and look back on what a great conference it was. You can watch the highlights reel [here](#).

Annual Conference 2024

We are now hard at work on the next Annual Conference in Newport, Wales. We know that many members are looking forward to it and may have booked their accommodation far in advance, so are therefore once again reminding you that next year's conference is taking place **one week earlier than usual** from 10-12 May. More information on the agenda, registration, resolutions, awards and more will be shared in due course, but please ensure your members know the correct dates.

New Event and Activity Guide and Event Health and Safety Guide

RBL has recently published new guides designed to assist with planning and delivering safe and successful events on our behalf. Their design is influenced by some of the most popular events in the RBL calendar and activities hosted by our dedicated Membership community year after year.

We all have a duty to keep staff, volunteers and members safe. Therefore, the *Event Health & Safety Guide*, in conjunction with the *Events & Activities Guide* will support you in keeping your members safe when carrying out all variety of Legion activities. Whether you are looking for a new approach to planning activities that will engage your local community, recruit new members, or fundraise, both guides will prepare you for each stage of the process. You can find both guides on MAP under [Branch Guides](#).

Credit their Service Campaign Update

Last month, we launched our latest campaign, [Credit their Service](#). Armed Forces compensation (such as a War Pension) is often treated as an income source when national and local benefit rates are calculated, whilst civil compensation is not. Many veterans and their families often receive less Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payments and Disabled Facilities Grants as a result.

We need your help to change this. Will you and your members ask your MP to Credit their Service by [clicking here](#)? So far, over 500 of you have told your MP about Credit their Service. Many have written to us in support of the campaign and to tell us your MP's response - thank you for your support so far.

If you believe you or somebody you know has been disadvantaged by this problem, get in touch with us through this [short survey](#), or email us at: publicaffairs@britishlegion.org.uk.

Parade Marshall Training Course

The Learning and Development team is pleased to offer a three-day Parade Marshall Course from the 1-3 September 2023 at the Army Reserve Centre, Loughborough. Approximate timings for each day of the course are as follows:

- Friday 1 September - 15:00 – 18:30
- Saturday 2 September - 09:00 – 16:30
- Sunday 3 September - 09:00 – 14:30

There are only a limited number of places available for this course, so please email L&D@britishlegion.org.uk to express your interest. Overnight accommodation can be provided for delegates as necessary.

Specialist Officers Away Day

The Membership Directorate will be holding an Away Day for C/DTOs, C/DROs, C/DYOs and C/DCSCs on Saturday 7 October from 09:30 – 15:30 at Haig House, London. The agenda includes updates from the organisation and highlights from the September 2023 County Chairs Seminar. From late morning until 15:00, a facilitated breakout session for each group will be held and will include, for example, future ways of working, role requirements and best practice. At 15:00, the groups will come together for an open session and the event will close at 15:30. A light lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Since there will be a requirement for some for accommodation on Friday 6 October, the following criteria applies:

1. The invitation is extended only to those who already hold one of the roles listed above.
2. Substitutions cannot be accepted. If the post is currently vacant or the holder is unable to attend, their place cannot be filled by anyone else from the committee for the purpose of

attending the Away Day.

3. If a committee member holds two roles, they must choose which group they are representing for the breakout groups.
4. If the role is shared, only one of the role holders may attend.

If you would like to attend, please complete [this application form](#) and have it counter signed by your MEO. Please note that applications with no counter signature will not be accepted. The closing date for applications is Friday 1 September 2023.

Yammer is now Viva Engage

As you may be aware, Yammer has recently been renamed Viva Engage. Functionality is exactly the same as Yammer and there should be no difference to your user experience aside from the name change.

Regional Voice

Stevenage, Hertfordshire – the Hertfordshire County Committee organised a successful branch get-together with Officers representing 17 different branches across three counties in attendance. The event included guest speakers Patsy Wilkinson, a representative of the Board of Trustees, and Elywn Pickering, RBL's Senior Compliance and Investigations Auditor.

With branch return accounts due in over the next months, Elywn explained how the compliance team is responsible for ensuring branch compliance and undertaking audits as appropriate. An appeal was made for branches in difficulty with compliance to seek help from their respective county committees. Feedback about the event was very positive.

In this section we want to share stories about great branch and county/district management, so please contact your MEA with examples of how you have developed and delivered ideas or activities that have made your county/district/branch more effective.
