

Editor's Notes

A belated Happy New Year to all Branches. This edition features the 2026 County Conference as well as any updates to policy and guidance which may have been issued recently.



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County Chair's Message

So the Legion year is up and running with a very well attended County Conference held in the Great Hall of the Guildhall in Northampton, with ten standards on parade which included our newly minted Youth Standard Bearers who were exemplary in their attire and performance, as were all Standard Bearers on parade. My congratulations to them all and to County Parade Marshal Nick Fall. The smooth running of Conference was once again down to the efforts of the County Secretary who was the rightful recipient of the County Chair's Award for the second year in a row.

Beacon Branch awards were made to four Branches at Bronze level, one at Silver level and Gold Awards this year to Rushden and Brixworth Branches. Brixworth took the "Bill Rose" Award for 2026 and also scooped the Large Poppy Appeal District award with 20 plus percent increase. Middleton Cheney Branch took the Small Poppy Appeal District with 101 percent increase - these were for the year 2024/25. Of course the current Poppy Appeal year still has months to go, so let's keep the coffee for the Coffee Mornings brewing and collecting for tombolas across the county. Perhaps we could top £600,000 as a county this year - we stood at £577,000 for the year just recognised at our Conference.

To for all the efforts that created those Poppy Appeal totals and the work that went into the Beacon Award submissions thank you all.

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/)

BRANCH AND COUNTY TRAINING

All RBL training (except for Standard Bearers) is available on the Discover Portal which everyone can register on and then book those courses which are mandatory or they wish to do. Some are on-line only whilst others might need you to attend face-to-face.

The following courses are currently available:

- **Safeguarding Adults (mandatory for all BCS staff)**
- **Data Protection (mandatory for all County and Branch Officers)**
- **Branch Management (mandatory for all new branch officers)**
- **County Management (mandatory for all County officers)**
- **Branch Recruiting Advisor**
- **Branch Treasurer (mandatory for all new treasurers)**
- **LOMAS (recommended for all new LOMAS users)**
- **Secretaries Course (Branch and County)**
- **Branch Community Support (BCS) - New Supporter (mandatory)**
- **BCS Coordinator (mandatory for all Coordinators)**
- **BCS Refresher (to be completed every two years by all BCS staff)**
- **Informal Resolution**
- **Outlook Navigation**
- **Membership Administration Portal (MAP) General**
- **Safeguarding Children**
- **Membership IT Basics**
- **Preparing Motions for Conference**

For further details including Course Prospectus, guidance on how to register and book on Discover, please visit the Training for Branches page of our website at <https://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/northamptonshire/training-for-branches/>

Standard Bearer Training

Training will now take place at 2 locations as follows:

Army Reserve Centre Clare Street Northampton NN1 3JQ 7.00 to 8.30pm	The Hall, off Thorpe Street Raunds NN9 6LT 7.00 to 8.30pm
18th February 12 th March 23 rd April 21 st May 18 th June	2nd February 2 nd March 9 th April 4 th May 1 st June

Any queries, please contact Nick Fall via Northamptonshire.ParadeMarshal@rbl.community



Anyone interested in being a Standard Bearer or Parade Marshal, please come along to one of our sessions.



COUNTY COMMITTEE

Full details of County Committee members are available on the County website.



County Committee Meeting AGM 15th January 2026 - Key Points

- We welcomed our newest Committee members, Steve Corcoran from RBL Northampton Branch and Eddie Edmunds from RBL Brixworth Branch
- Alan Short was co-opted as Vice Chair for one year.
- Committee members were appointed to roles as follows:
 1. Recruiting Officer - Ian Byrnes.
 2. Armed Forces Covenant Rep - Allan Short.
 3. Secretary - Steve Thatcher.
 4. Interim Treasurer - Steve Thatcher.
 5. Parade Marshal - Nick Fall.
 6. Youth Officer - Peter Armstrong.
- It was agreed that those branches which had not yet submitted their 2024-2025 accounts correctly would have until 5th March 2026 to do so, otherwise they will be taken into County Administration.

The next County Committee meeting will take place on Thursday 5th March 2026. If you have any topics you would like to be included, please contact the County Secretary.

County Committee Vacancies

On the County Committee, there is still one vacancy, and also two appointed positions which need to be filled from it's members as follows:

- County Community Support Coordinator
- County Training Officer

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 interest.

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

DIARY NOTES

- Friday 6th February - First RBL Roadshow (see January 2026 Central News for link).
- Friday 13th February - Deadline for submission of Annual National Awards Nomination Form (see January 2026 Central News).
- Monday 2nd March - 2025/2026 Election Candidate and Ballot Papers issued to all branches. Election window opens.
- Thursday 5th March - County Committee Meeting (on-line)
- Monday 23rd March - Deadline for in-person registration for the National Conference
- Monday 6th April - Deadline for remote registration for the National Conference.
- Thursday 9th April - 2025/2026 National Elections window closes.

RBL POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

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

- Youth Policy (in Youth Policy and Affiliation folder).
- Changes to cheque processing (in Branch Finances folder).
- Various safeguarding policy and guidance updates (in Governance and Policy folder)
- Updated Membership Application Form and Youth Band Member/Standard Bearer. Application forms (in Recruitment and Retention folder).
- Aspire Leadership Programme Overview 2026 (in Training folder).
- Revised Application Form for Meritorious Service (in Membership Forms Library).

2026 COUNTY CONFERENCE



A very successful County Conference took place on Saturday 10th January 2026.

Full details including the minutes and photographs are on the [County website](#).

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/>