

Minutes from: Newent & District Branch of The Royal British Legion.

Held 25th May 2023 Newent Memorial Hall.

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richard Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Deputy Chairman, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership Secretary
Mary Curtis	Secretary
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Elaine Balding	
Sue Urch	
Pat Price	
John Price	
Tom Heseltine	
Colin Calcutt	
Hayden Selwyn	Guest (Newent Fire Service)

1. Act of Remembrance.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1901 hours and asked us to think of the people who couldn't be with us due to ill health. He went on to read the names of those from the Parish of Newent who lost their lives during WW1 and WW2 during the month of June and concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Simon Mason, Colin & Susanne Britt, Rick Axon, David Pollock, Adrian Dover & Andrew Woodruff.

3. Chairman's Report.

Introduction.

My report this month is again very short, and begins with:

Guest Speaker – Hayden Selwyn – Newent Fire Service.

This evening it gives me pleasure to welcome Hayden Selwyn from Newent Fire Service who takes over from Rachel Smith as this evening's Guest Speaker, Rachel has a Competency Assessment this evening, so we wish her well. You will hear from Hayden a little later in the evening, so have your questions ready.

Guards Association Lunch – 2 May 2023

If you remember from last month's meeting Graham, who is the Social Secretary for the local Guards Association, invited members of the Branch to attend lunch at the White Hart in Maisemore. As the White Hart was somewhere Elaine and I had been meaning to try, we eagerly took up Graham's offer to attend. For anyone who hasn't been to the White Hart, I would highly recommend it, the food was

delicious and the company witty and welcoming. My thanks go to Graham for the opportunity to join in such a prestigious occasion, it was a fun afternoon.

New Newent Town Council Veterans Representative

After this month's Town Council Elections, I am pleased to announce that Councillor Julia Gooch has taken up the mantle of Veterans Representative from Christine Howley, I would like to thank Chris for all her support and help over the past couple of years and to wish Julia every success with this and her other roles on both NTC and FoDDC.

National Conference – 19- 21 May 2023

The Deputy Chairman and myself made National Conference which took place over the weekend of 19 – 21 May at the Riviera International Centre in Torquay. The Deputy Chairman has done a full report so I will restrict my report to a paragraph. The Conference followed the traditional format of Standard Bearer Competitions and Women's Section Conference on the Friday, with the main Conference set over 4 sessions on Saturday and Sunday, for which as delegate we have to attend all 4 sessions to be eligible to receive funding from the Jim Prince Fund. This fund has been set up to help Small Branches (under 50 members) attend conference and is most helpful.

Cinderford Branch Trips.

Most of you will have seen the information received from the Cinderford Branch that I sent out during the month, the details are:

Gin distillery Cheltenham 12/0/2023

5-7pm tour –up to 32 people on coach

Coach would meet outside of Tesco's, Cinderford at 1545hrs.

Cost would be £40 and this is inclusive of the tour which costs £30

Deposit would be required by our next meeting 07 June or as close as (details to follow)

Cider Tour Much Marcle – September

£30 for the bus and an option for a ploughman lunch at the restaurant for £10. Or alternatively a meal and drink at the local pub.

16 people can go on the tour which would mean a 16-seater minibus, or if more interest, a coach could be looked at. The tour would be at 11am on a weekend. If anyone would like to attend either or both events, please let me know by Monday 5th June, so I can get him the numbers.

Innsworth Military Wives Concert – 25 June 2023

I distributed Posters to most of the shops in Newent and Tickets for sale to Manna Coffee Shop, Cobblers and the Wye Inn. Manna was doing well with 31 tickets so far sold; however, it was very slow with the other two outlets with Cobblers selling 6 and the Wye Inn having closed it's doors. With the tickets sold by members the total so far comes to: 53, so now is the time to start pushing the sales. Graham will update us further during his report.

Branch Membership 2023

Branch Memberships has consolidated this month, Keith will give you this month's numbers during his report, but if anyone has ideas on how to recruit new members, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss it.

Finally

Don't forget that as normal if anyone needs help in any way at all please do not hesitate to get in contact, and if we can help, we will.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.

In the Chairman's report Rachel Smith is meant to be our guest speaker this evening but as she is unable to make it Hayden has stepped in. There were a few typos in last month's minutes thanks for GB for pointing them out they are:

Chairman's report – County Briefing –royal should read Royal. New Member – branch should read Branch,

5.a. Membership – on-lone courses should read online courses.

The previous minutes were proposed by GB and Seconded by SU and accepted as a true and accurate record.

5. Guest Speaker – Hayden Smith – Newent Fire Service

Hayden gave a very informative talk, highlighting the structure and scope of Newent Fire Service, the gist of which was: Hayden is hoping to raise the profile of the Station and the Fire Service as whole. He told us that recruitment is difficult. They work on two different systems of how a station is manned. The one system is permanent which is set shifts and the other system is 'on call' otherwise known as retained.

The On Call staff continue to do their main jobs and will attend when bleeped. They have 4 minutes from the time the pager goes off to be at the station. A crew usually consists of 6 people, but they must have a minimum of 4 people to send the unit (Fire engine) out. At the Fire Station they have a community room that can be hired for free, but unfortunately it isn't that well known about and only used by a few groups.

Hayden mentioned that most fires in the home are caused by 'white goods' e.g.: Fridges, Freezers, washing machines etc.

Hayden also mentioned about Jamie Alcott who will be at the Lake Carpark on 14 July, with his Shire horses, which will be his home leg of his recent fundraising events.

6. Reports by Officers.

5.a. Vice Chair/BCSO/ Youth Liaison.

Fortunately, on the veteran and support side, this particular month has been very quiet, which in itself is credit to the welfare of our much-valued members and their families. The highlight of TRBL season took place in Torquay this last weekend, The Annual Conference, which was attended by both myself and your Chairman, more of which is included within our respective reports.

Deputy Chairman/ Membership/ youth Liaison/ Branch Community Support (BCS)

We remember those veterans, friends and Branch colleagues suffering ill health, or experiencing difficulties: please remember that we are here to assist you; you only need to contact one of your Committee Members.

Membership, Branch Community Support Representative and Youth Liaison Officer

Members are reminded that those wishing to take a more active role as a BCS Representative, on-line courses are available: see your Branch Chairman or BCS Representative.

Welfare and Membership

Welfare

The Branch continues to aid and support its members and veterans, initially by signposting them to the National RBL Helpline and by interaction with local community and national organisations.

Members are reminded that The National RBL Helpline telephone number is: 0808 802 8080

The Veteran's Gateway:

https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/answers/a_id/127/~the-royalbritish-legion

Please be assured that we will always continue to utilise our local knowledge and contacts to support our members and veterans.

Branch Membership

In accordance with TRBL records, Branch Membership stands at 36 members.

Branch Statistics

The Branch has continued to provide support Members and veterans this period.

In the event that members identify a comrade in need, they are encouraged to contact a committee Member or BCS Representative at the earliest convenience. All communications are confidential.

Branch Statistics for this period are therefore as follows:

Total Number of Welfare visits:	4
How many beneficiaries visited:	4
How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters)	4
Total Welfare Expenditure: NIL (see Note 1)	
Telephone Buddies:	
Total number of Calls made by Branch Executive:	8
Telephone – How many beneficiaries called:	2
Telephone – How many telephone buddies:	4

Notes:

1. Your Branch still awaits the outcome of the RBLHQ review of our recent "Crisis Grant" to one of our Veterans.

2. A small number of email and telephone communications were made to TRBL staff during this period.

Community, Youth and Veterans Liaison Activities

1. The Buchanan Trust

Further to our previous meeting, we have again contacted The Charity's Veterans Support Manager, Samantha Brittain and have pleasure in informing you that she will be visiting the Branch, providing us with an overview of The Trust's activities following our summer recess: more information will be published shortly.

<https://www.buchanan-trust.org.uk>

2. Other Matters.

During this evening's meeting a presentation will be given by a representative of Newent's Fire Services.

Activities continue on works to upgrade Newent's War Memorial and incorporate those names originally omitted.

Members are reminded that HMG and Service grants continue to remain available for those suffering hardship.

Liaison continues with Newent's youth and community organisations, the aim of which is to promote TRBL and its specific activities in and around Newent.

The process for TRBL Branch Affiliation is currently being reviewed by TRBL HQ

Despite the heavy rain during the earlier part of events in Newent to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III, it still proved to be an enormous success – many thanks to everyone involved and those attending the event.

3. TRBL HQ, County Liaison and Branch Communications (O365)

For further matters relating to other specific HQ/County/Branch communications and local activities, please see your Chairman's and other Representative Reports.

4. The National Conference – Torquay 2023

The highlight of TRBL year took place last weekend, 20th/21st May and was attended by your Chairman and Deputy.

As with events such as this, it was not without its little hic-ups and surprise membership interventions, especially during the Motions Session on Saturday.

The Women's Section of TRBL donated £500K to the Invictus Games in support of our injured veterans.

A total of 378 Branches participated this year (in person and virtually), 250 of which sent representatives to The Conference.

A total of 75 Standards were presented at Conference.

Membership is reducing by some 5% year on year: TRBL are reviewing their membership strategy and offering to encourage younger participation and increase membership overall.

TRBL Director General acknowledged the failings of the past, apologising to members: the proposed new structure should rectify this.

A total of circa £48m was generated during the 2022 Poppy Appeal, £6m via Contactless donations.

New Paper based Poppies will be rolled-out this year, albeit the division will be utilising existing stocks first – spilt 70% old and 30% new.

£8m has been utilised as part of supporting veterans as part of the Energy Programme, £6m towards Combat Stress and a further £2m allocated towards those veterans suffering social isolation, an area in which TRBL is particularly concerned as the number of veterans affected is growing year on year: this brings with it a variety of issues.

Excellent presentations were given by Rt Hon James Heapey MP (Minister for Armed Forces), highlighting the UK's role throughout the world, Prof Gavin Oxburgh (Veterans in prison and effects of PTSD etc., on veteran's lives and welfare), and Bill Chafe, Dominion Chairman, Canadian Veterans Affairs, Welfare and Poppy Appeal.

Janet Talman (Executive Director, Membership) provided an overview of TRBL HQ membership activities including:

Membership totals 196,000 with an average age of 66yrs.

Compliance –1,300 Branches Compliant out a total of 2,300.

Ongoing review of membership documentation, especially aimed at new members.

On-line banking is now being encouraged.

The Membership Directive are establishing a new BCS section especially focused on Branch support and showcasing Branch activities.

There will be a Flexible Interest Group (FIG) introduced at County level, supporting Branch, new membership objectives and promoting a new "Membership Experience".

There will be new BCS training from June and a new RBL County Management Training Programme.

#Network Engagement, aimed at encouraging youth membership is being developed, anticipated to be launched during the coming year.

NOTE:

During the Membership Forum, Membership requested that TRBL actually record and report upon all activities (success and failures) at next year's Annual Conference as a clearly identifiable and transparent level of TRBL HQ's progress.

Charter Motions:

Charter Motion (promoted by The Board TRBL) For 66 Against 289 – Motion Failed

Reason for failure as a direct result of Charity Commission review – membership not notified, all trustees not given the opportunity to vote.

Motions

Motion 1 For 113 Against 240
Motion 2 For 202 Against 149
Motion 3 PASSED without need to vote
Motion 4 NO PROPOSED OR SECONDER – MOTION FAILED
Motion 5 For 345 Against 5
Motion 6 For 315 Against 8
Motion 7 For 346 Against 0
Motion 8 For 288 Against 53
Motion 9 For 270 Against 76
Motion 10 For 209 Against 138
Motion 11 For 334 Against 11

Special Motions – All relating to lack of confidence in TRBL Executive and Directors

Motion 1 For 53 Against 287
Motion 2 For 26 Against 315
Motion 3 For 145 Against 188

Forthcoming Date for TRBL Diary

Next year the TRBL Conference will be held at the ICC in Newport, Wales during the 10th/12th May – more information as time progresses.

5.b. Treasurers Report.

We have received £340 from Jim Prince Fund, to cover the majority of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman's Conference expenses. The full amount being £348.43. This brings the Branch Current Account to £1365.84

5.c. Parade Marshal.

The Service on 7th May for the Coronation went very well. Standards from Guides, Air Cadets and Newent Town Council were present.

5.d. Bar and Entertainments Member.

June – Innsworth Military Wives Concert
July – Meeting at Cobblers
August & September – No plans
October – Cheese & Wine at AGM
November – Cobblers
December – Christmas meal

7. Any Other Business.

7.a. Innsworth Military Wives Concert – Update.

GB has a meeting with Mary from the Memorial Hall and Choir Mistress on 30th May.
There are offers of cakes from Branch Members. The Branch will pay for the purchase of tea, coffee, milk & squash for the event.

We will need helpers for the day, 4 for the refreshments and 2 on the door. Several members volunteered to help out on the day including: CC, HA, RA and the Chairman. Helpers will be need to be at the Memorial Hall from 1pm to set up.

The Chairman is to give thanks to the Choir at the end of the concert. The Chairman also gave a vote of thanks for all those volunteers and organisers for all their hard work so far.

7.b. Restarting of Lea RBL Branch.

TH informed all present that the RBL Branch at Lea were hoping to re-start. The Chairman asked TH to pass on our best wishes and let them know, if there is anything that the Branch can do to help just ask.

7.c. Chairman.

The Chairman informed that he will not be able to attend next month's meeting, as the Deputy Chair & Secretary will also not be available, the decision was to cancel the meeting.

EB Proposed GB Seconded

27th July Meeting – Cobblers – Chairman and Secretary will unavailable so the Deputy Chairman will take the meeting, the Treasurer volunteered to take the minutes.

7.d. Minchinhampton RBL

KU mentioned the Earthcott Green, Memorial Woodlands, Annual Service of Remembrance, which takes place on 14th June 2023.

7.e. Grenadiers Guards Garden Party.

GB extended an invitation to Branch members to attend the Annual Grenadiers Association BBQ on Sunday 11 June, the cost will be £20 pp and includes food and drink.

8. Date of Next Meeting.

The Meeting closed 2105hrs with the next meeting taking place 27th July at 7pm in Cobblers, June's meeting postponed due to members and committee availability.

Agenda for Meeting of Newent and District Royal British Legion Branch on 27 July 2023.

1. Welcome and Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.
5. Reports by Officers.
6. Any Other Business.
7. Date if Next Meeting