



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

## Membership Engagement Officer Report - Clare Pillinger

This is my first Hertfordshire County Conference and coincides with my first anniversary in this role with the Royal British Legion.

During this time, I have attempted to get out and about and meet as many Hertfordshire branches as possible. Apologies to the handful still to tick off, I am delighted to be working alongside your new county chairman Andy Stephenson and, although only in post since December 6, he has already given me considerable assistance with some outstanding issues.

A massive thank you to County Treasurer Pat Jeffery who has worked tirelessly and diligently to resolve account issues. Some of these legacy problems dated back many years. The hours Pat has spent on this, working closely with me, has helped significantly to boost compliance rates.

In Hertfordshire, we have had successes such as the opening of Watford RBL. Other good news includes the rebooting of Buntingford, Baldock and Ware with full committees signed up after holding Special General Meetings. In addition, St Albans, after years of being dormant, is now back in action operating as a county supported branch.

North Mymms and Benington, both smaller branches run by dedicated, long standing RBL members, have converted to county supported branches.

In total, last year 51% of our county branches were compliant – meaning satisfactory paperwork received for accounts and MS1s on time. This year that figure is around the 80% mark. Something to celebrate!

Membership data for Hertfordshire is at 3768 members – hovering a little more than the 3741 this time last year. Though these membership figures are deceptive, it does not reflect the very much smaller pool of dedicated, loyal RBL members wearing multiple hats for branch meetings, activities, outreach plus volunteering for Poppy Appeal.

At present, there are 35 branches in Hertfordshire – some flourishing, some not functioning, the majority existing or doing their best.

Compliance and paperwork aside, it is the uplifting experiences that are the highlights.

My first trip to the National Memorial Arboretum – thank you Letchworth RBL – was a pleasure to join your branch for that memorable, moving day.

The humbling sight of our standard bearers in action out in all weathers attending funerals, ceremonial and Remembrance events. Thank you to all of you and our County Parade Marshal, Tony Cousins.

Meeting members and engaging with branches - with the bonus of sometimes helping them reach out to form a new committee.

Above all witnessing branch community support in action and appreciating first hand how it can genuinely help and enhance the lives of our veterans.

Thank you Hertfordshire RBL members for your time, commitment and everything you do for the Legion.

*Clare Pillinger MEO January 2024*