



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Central News – May 2026

News and updates for all members

Key Information

Title	Page	Summary
Branch Chair Tenure	2	Important information about changes to tenure
Poppy Appeal 2026	2	Update on stock and new seals
Branch amalgamations	2	Clarification on anniversary pennants
Branch Crisis Grants	3	Increase to limit
Annual Conference	3	Get set for the weekend's activities

News and Updates

Insights research webinar	3	Register to attend our member-exclusive event in June
Plan for Service children	4	RBL's call to the government
London Poppy Day	4	Registration now open!
Welfare listening event	5	Join online to share your experience
Fireside Chats	5	Catch up on Episode 1 and save the date for Episode 2
April Townhall	6	Catch up on April's Membership Townhall
Festival of Remembrance	6	Ticket ballot information for 2026

Important dates

7 May 2026	Deadline to submit motions of urgency
27 May 2026	Festival of Remembrance ballot opens
28 May 2026	Welfare listening event
8 June 2026	Fireside Chat Episode 2

Change to Branch Chair tenure

Following the April Membership Council meeting, it has been agreed by the MC to align Branch Chair tenures with those of County Chairs. It is hoped this will stimulate innovation in branches and encourage leadership development.

Branch Chairs will now be able to serve a maximum of three three-year terms (nine years in total). We recognise that some Branch Chairs have served longer than nine years due to difficulties in recruiting successors. To prevent branches entering county administration, a revised approach has been agreed. Where no suitable candidates come forward following the completion of a nine-year tenure, the existing chair may continue for one additional year. In these circumstances, elections must be held annually to allow opportunities for new officers to take on the role. Any Branch Chairs who have served for more than nine years will therefore be required to stand for election at the next AGM period starting in October, regardless of previously agreed tenures.

Poppy Appeal 2026: stock and seals

We're really grateful to our members for the fantastic support they give each year, helping our Poppy Appeal Organisers get ready for the appeal.

All Poppy Appeal Organisers will be hearing from us in May with details of the stock available to them, ahead of the ordering window opening in early June. This year's tin seal is PURPLE and must be used on all tins to make sure collections are fully compliant. Please remember to **destroy any old seals** you may have as they can no longer be used. Your Poppy Appeal Organiser will be happy to provide you with the new purple seals as needed – thank you.

Branch amalgamations & anniversary pennants

Following questions around branch amalgamations and anniversary pennants, we wanted to take the opportunity to clarify several points:

- When two or more branches amalgamate, all existing standards must be laid up, and the constituent branches formally cease to exist.
- The new, amalgamated branch must procure a new standard.
- The date on which the amalgamation is confirmed becomes the new branch formation date.
- Amalgamated branches cannot retain the oldest constituent branch's formation date for the purpose of anniversary pennant eligibility.

To be eligible for 50-, 75-, or 100-year anniversary pennants, branches must have existed continuously for the relevant period. Branches that close and later re-open under the same name

are not entitled to claim the original formation date or lifespan of the previous branch.

Branch Crisis Grants update

We are pleased to inform you that following a motion to Conference to increase the Branch Crisis Grant in line with the increased cost of living, the Branch Crisis Grant has been increased from £200 to up to a maximum of £500 per year per beneficiary. This is with immediate effect.

We will continue to review the policy to ensure it accurately reflects the process. For information on the Branch Crisis Grants, please speak with your Branch Chair or Branch Treasurer.

Get set for Annual Conference

We forward to welcoming members to Annual Conference 2026 this weekend in Brighton. Whether look you're attending online or in-person, this weekend is sure to be full of pride, success and achievement. View the weekend's agenda in the [Delegate Pack on MAP](#).

[Online attendees](#) will be emailed details and FAQs on how to log in to the Annual Conference stream by our streaming partner, Lumi, this week. Branch delegates will receive a voting login to the Lumi platform.

[In-person attendees](#) received pre-arrival information by email last week. All in-person attendees should enter the venue through the main entrance on Kings Road. Security checks will be in place throughout the weekend, and attendees are kindly asked not to bring luggage on site, as full open bag checks will be carried out.

A [silent auction](#) for two Spitfire paintings by Shropshire-based artist Lisa Pitchford will take place across the weekend, starting from 1pm on Friday 8 May in the Exhibition area. Please see the [auction details](#) and [Terms and Conditions](#) for further information.

Lastly, the [2025 Annual Report](#) is now available to view on the [governance webpage](#). A booklet of Annual Report extracts will be available at the venue for branch delegates.

Join our webinar to hear new research insights

Over the past year, we've carried out a programme of research to help us better understand the needs, experiences and priorities of the Armed Forces community (AFC). **Join us for a member exclusive webinar on 30 June, 6pm-7pm**, where we'll share the research we've completed and how it will guide our future priorities, support, policy asks and campaigns for the AFC. Our research covers:

Demographics & Needs: Looking at the latest national data to build the clearest picture ever available, of who makes up the AFC and what support needs are most common.

How the AFC is Changing: Exploring how the size and shape of the AFC may change in the years ahead, and what this could mean for future support.

Voices & Experiences: Gathering views from serving personnel, veterans and families to understand their daily experiences, challenges and priorities.

Health & Wellbeing: Studying issues that affect everyday life for veterans, including:

- Intimate Partner Violence and Abuse (IPVA).
- Gambling.
- Help-seeking for physical health, mental health and alcohol problems.

[Register here to join the Webinar](#) and hear from the Campaigns, Policy & Research team about how this work is helping shape our future plans and priorities.

RBL's call for government to plan for Service children

Armed Forces life can present unique challenges for families. Service children are more likely to experience school moves across the UK and overseas, and experience periods of separation from a serving parent.

The uncertainty and disruption this creates can particularly affect Service children with special or additional educational needs or disabilities, who often benefit from stability. Differences between education systems across UK nations, overseas postings and even between local councils can significantly impact the support received, making transitions stressful.

The Royal British Legion is calling on governments and councils across the UK to Plan for Service Children. We are asking central, devolved and local government to work together to improve the portability of special or additional educational needs or disabilities provision; for every local authority to appoint a lead for Service children; and for national education departments to embed awareness of Service children's needs into professional training and inspection frameworks.

If you are from an Armed Forces family and were affected by lack of support in the education system, we want to hear about your experiences. Contact publicaffairs@britishlegion.org.uk.

Registration open for London Poppy Day

In 2025, London Poppy Day raised over £1.487 million in just 12 hours – the largest one-day

collection in Europe – thanks to thousands of volunteers including over 1,000 uniformed personnel and nearly 2,000 veterans, volunteers, and supporters.

Registrations are now open to support this flagship event on 29th October 2026. Volunteers will be provided with travel passes that grant free travel the day before, the day of and the day after London Poppy Day across the National Rail network, and on the day across the TfL network. To find out more [visit our website](#).

Welfare listening event

Following the April Townhall and questions raised about welfare, an online listening event will be hosted by Ruth Efunuga, Interim Director: Membership, and Sam Wileman, Director: Casework and Recovery Services.

At 6:00 pm–7.30 pm Thursday 28 May, members are invited to join Sam and Ruth to share their experiences relating to BCS and Welfare. The aim of the event is to better understand the experiences of services from a membership perspective, and for that insight to be fed into conversations and future plans regarding service delivery.

Save the day and [click the link provided here](#) to join.

Fireside Chats: Listening, learning and connecting



Thank you to everyone who joined our first Fireside Chat in April. If you missed it, a recording of *Episode 1: **Gritty leadership lessons that stick – from a soldier’s perspective*** is available to watch by [clicking the link here](#). In this episode, Steve Armon (pictured left) takes us through the real journey from private to regimental sergeant major and the gritty lessons that stick.

Join us for our next Fireside Chat on 8 June – *Episode 2: **When the move to civilian life isn’t part of the plan!*** In this episode, RBL’s Jon Summerson will sit down with Paul Findlay MBE, Chief Executive Officer of

the Wembley Stadium Foundation. A former soldier and leg amputee, Paul’s life and leadership have been shaped by his time in the army and an unexpected transition into civilian life. In an honest and powerful conversation, Paul shares his real journey, from joining the army to being forced to leave following injuries sustained on operations in



The morning of the day Paul was hit in an IED strike

Afghanistan. Together, Jon and Paul will explore the tough moments of service life, the realities of identity and loss when a military career ends before you're ready, and what it truly means to rebuild purpose when 'the plan' changes. Paul will reflect candidly on resilience, leadership, and the lessons learned from navigating adversity, insights that resonate far beyond the military community.

This is a frank and thought-provoking discussion about service, transition, and what comes next. Expect moments that challenge assumptions and question long-held beliefs within the veteran community, alongside honest reflections on change and identity.

[Click here to join on Monday 8 June, 12pm–1.30pm.](#)

Membership Townhall – thank you and save the date

April's Membership Townhall brought members together for an open conversation where they were invited to raise questions or topics for discussion. Updates included the success of the 2025 Poppy Appeal, which raised £56.6 million thanks to the hard work of volunteers and supporters. You can [view the recording of April's Membership Townhall](#) or [read a summary of the Townhall here](#).

Save the date for our next Membership Townhall on Thursday 23 July, 12.30pm–2pm [Join on the day using this link](#).

Festival of Remembrance ticket information

This year's Festival of Remembrance will take place on Saturday 7 November 2026. Tickets will once again be allocated through a ballot to ensure all members have a fair chance to purchase tickets. Members must enter the ballot when it opens later this month for a chance to secure Festival of Remembrance tickets.

Wednesday 27 May: ballot opens for both performances.

Wednesday 24 June: ballot closes for both performances.

For more key dates and further information, [please visit our website](#).

Useful information

Contact Centre number: **0808 802 8080**.

Thank you for reading! The next edition of Central News is due to be published Tuesday 2 June