

# Royal British Legion Oxfordshire Spring Special Edition 2025



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August 2025

*(This Newsletter is produced quarterly Apr, Aug, Dec annually)*

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*Message from the County Chair - Steve Kingsford*



All - I am still finding my way in this new role as County Chair, one of the crucial aspects of the role is to ensure the free flow of vital management information between Haig House, County down to Branch and RBL membership. One given method of ensuring this flow of information is the County Newsletter which augments the Central News. Whilst Oxfordshire produces a quarterly newsletter, we sometimes like on this occasion release a special edition as in this version. The Spring Edition contains significant information pertinent to the effective and efficient management of Branches and CSBs. One article that should be of interest to each Branch Chair and Treasurer is the article by Andrew Bowes (County Treasurer) on the submission on the Annual Financial Statement. This is a mandatory submission by each and every Branch (CSB Financial Reports are completed by the County Treasurer) which needs to be submitted by 30 Sep annually however, the RBL Financial Year ends on the 30 Jun annually. Each Branch should start preparing their Branch Financial Reports as soon as the end of the financial year has passed. Early submission helps reduce any issues and means your Branch is compliant for another year. The County Treasurer should be approached if you have concerns or need assistance. You will find in Pete Clarke's article a reminder to all Branch and CSB Standard Bearers (SBs) and Branch Chairs to ensure that post 18 May 25 of the correct attire for SBs in the wearing of the correct Beret Badge, Sling Brooch and Tie Motifs - you will not be permitted to wear mixed badges or the late Queen's crown.

Branches are reminded of the mandatory requirement for Branch Officers in using a @RBL.Community email address. Branch Officers are no longer permitted to use personal address due to GDPR-PCR Regulations. There are benefits however, obtaining an @RBL.Community address enables access to the RBL Membership Administration Portal (MAP) where all the Branch information (membership lists), guides, handbooks, templates and much more.

March saw the release of the latest edition of the Membership Handbook (MHB) with some changes that affect Branches, all previous editions are now superseded with this release and should no-longer be referred to.

I have asked to repeat the article on the Beacon Branch Scheme as we have already had interest from some Branches to partake; this is a great opportunity to achieve an award for your Branch and extend your management knowledge. If you wish to take part then please contact me.

Finally, I am particularly drawn as I hope you will be to Pete Clarke's report on the Oxfordshire Standard Bearer Competition scheduled for October. This is the first time in many years that the County is holding this competition. Please encourage your Standard Bearers to attend, the experience will enhance the SB experience regardless of your abilities; there are SB training sessions scheduled to brush up your skills and a great opportunity to network within the County.

Steve

## *Oxfordshire County Committee*

### **County Committee Members**

#### **County President**

Mrs Ann Mid-Winter [Oxfordshire.President@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.President@RBL.Community)

#### **County Chair**

Mr Steve Kingsford [Oxfordshire.Chair@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.Chair@RBL.Community)

#### **County Vice Chair**

Mrs Fiona Lovesey [Oxfordshire.ViceChair@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.ViceChair@RBL.Community)

#### **County Secretary**

Mr Rob Lovesey [Oxfordshire.Secretary@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.Secretary@RBL.Community)

#### **County Treasurer**

Mr Andrew Bowes [Oxfordshire.Treasurer@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.Treasurer@RBL.Community)

#### **County Parade Marshal**

Mr Peter Clarke [Oxfordshire.ParadeMarshal@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.ParadeMarshal@RBL.Community)

#### **County Training Officer**

Mr Derek Bradshaw [Oxfordshire.CTO@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.CTO@RBL.Community)

#### **County Recruitment Officer**

Mr Brian Leach [Oxfordshire.Recruitment@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.Recruitment@RBL.Community)

#### **County Community Support Co-ordinator**

Vacant

#### **Oxfordshire Club Liaison Officer**

Vacant

#### **County Standard Bearer**

Mr Tjark Andrews [Oxfordshire.StdBearer@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.StdBearer@RBL.Community)



## ***Legion Staff***

### **Membership Engagement Manager (MEM)**

Mr Chris Jones [Central.MEM@RBL.Community](mailto:Central.MEM@RBL.Community)

### **Membership Engagement Officer (MEO)**

Ms Lebo Nyoni [Oxfordshireshire.MEO@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshireshire.MEO@RBL.Community)

### **Poppy Appeal Manager (Oxfordshire)**

Mr Yanto Evans [YEvans@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:YEvans@britishlegion.org.uk)

## ***National Conference Motion Update***

Over the weekend 17-18 May 25 the RBL Annual National Conference was held in Harrogate. As you are aware part of the Conference enables for Branches and Counties to submit motions for changes to the Royal Charter, Membership Handbook and Ceremonial Handbook. This year there were nine motions and all were voted on by eligible Branch Representatives. Of the nine there were 2 that are of particular note and will affect each Branch. The first was successfully vote "FOR" - the motion was ***"To reduced the minimum of Branch Committee members from seven to five committee members which would allow more Branches to retain their full status and allow more members to stand for County/National office"***. The main argument was ***"The new minimum would be made up of the three mandatory Branch Officers, Chair, Secretary and Treasurer plus two other committee members. The current is the three officers plus 4 other committee members. As our numbers are reducing, all Branches are feeling the same pressures. This has been eased somewhat by members being allowed to be members of up to four***

*Branches, but the same people are wearing several hats. The same faces are seen at Poppy Appeal seminars, CT training days, standard bearer days etc. This motion wouldn't alleviate the problem, but it would allow more Branches to retain their full status".* The motion has now been passed to the Board of Trustees and may need rule changes to the Royal Charter and certainly the Membership Handbook. This has significant impacts on those Branches that are struggling to find the minimum requisite number of Branch Officers. This Once the Membership Handbook has been updated then the County Officers can work with those Branches that are struggling to form a committee. Reducing to five committee members may mean that Branches may not be required to move to County Supported Branch Status.

The other Motion that would have had significant impact was "***That the Board of Trustees consider a change to the dress regulations to allow Standard Bearers an option to wear their Regimental Headdress including Cap Badges when carrying out ceremonial duties on behalf of the RBL***". The main argument presented was that *Service Veterans take great pride in their unit identity, the British Army have succeeded because of it and the rivalry between units is a powerful method of maintaining the highest standards and traditions. The sight on Remembrance Day, of the many different headdress and badges, many of which no longer exist, is a source of great National and individual pride. Why would the RBL not wish to capitalise on such a clear link to past service, sacrifice and tradition. To say it was for uniformity would surely be missing the point*". This motion was voted "Against" by a large majority. The regulations on dress and deportment laid down in the Ceremonial Handbook remains unchanged and should be continued to be followed by all Branch Standard Bearers.

## ***Annual Branch Financial Submission (Mandatory) - Andrew Bowes***

### **Branch Compliance**

During the membership year, there are two key dates for which Branch Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers need to prepare and that have an important role in ensuring your branch is compliant.

The ***30th of September*** is the cut-off date for your submission of branch annual accounts.

The ***31st of December*** is the cut-off date for the return of the fully completed MS1 Forms. Compliant branches can:

- propose a motion at the county AGM for Annual Conference.
- send delegates to both county and annual conferences.
- apply for county grants.

- vote in elections for the Trustees and the Membership Council.

It is every branch's responsibility to ensure that its members have a voice in shaping the membership for the good and benefit of our Armed Forces community. To summarise, achieving compliance means that your branch can play a full and active role in the governance of RBL membership.

### **Annual Branch Accounts Return**

**In order to streamline the year end audit and to reduce pressure on Branch treasurers close to the Poppy Appeal, the accounting period year end is now 30 June. Your return should be submitted by 30 September each year, at the latest, as stipulated in the Royal Charter. Do not wait until September to complete and file your Annual Branch Return; it is good governance to complete and submit as early as possible. Note: the submission of Annual Branch Accounts Returns is MANDATORY. CSBs will be completed and filed by the County Treasurer. If you are unsure on completion or submission please contact the County Treasurer (Andrew Bowes) on [Oxfordshire.Treasurer@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.Treasurer@RBL.Community).**

An Effective Branches should:

- attend branch accounts sessions alongside the Independent Examiner and MEO to ensure collaborative and supportive working.
- engage, through the Branch Treasurer, with the MEO who has oversight of submissions.
- through the Branch Chair, have oversight of the branch return.
- encourage Branch Treasurers to undertake necessary training ahead of time.
- encourage the use of the advanced accounts pack.
- keep branch accounts as a regular agenda item for branch meetings.

The County Committee has collective responsibility to ensure maximum compliance in its area. The County Committee will communicate with the Branch Chair, who leads on this at Branch level in close collaboration with the Branch Treasurer. All have a significant part to play when it comes to achieving compliance for the Branch annual accounts return.

Branch officers should be prepared to support the Branch Treasurer where required in the completion of the return. An example of this would be to ensure expenses are submitted on the correct SOP 42 form, with receipts attached for any expenditure claimed. Your MEO is there to support and advise you regarding branch accounts and is a direct link to finance. Queries relating to branch accounts can be sent to **[BranchAccounts@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:BranchAccounts@britishlegion.org.uk)**.

**Best practice would see your Branch submit its return as early as possible, with the 1st of September being a realistic and achievable date. This will provide ample time for the county, branch and MEO to carry out any checks, and request any further information from the branch that may be required.**

[Oxfordshire.Treasurer@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.Treasurer@RBL.Community)

**Andrew**



***Ceremonial Update and County Standard Bearer Competition - Pete Clarke***



*Hello everyone,*

It has been a busy few months, ceremonial wise, our Standard Bearers (SB) have been busy paying respects at the funerals of many veterans and former RBL colleagues, sadly this is a duty that is becoming more common place. If your Branch SB is available to cover this highly important duty as it arises please ask them to get in touch with me so I can add their contact number to our list of SBs.

We had our new Union parade flag blessed as part of the VE day drum head service at Benson, as well as our County SB taking part in events in the Netherlands as per of a RBL cycle ride. Training, this has been going very well in our new location at Stanton Harcourt Village Hall, with the emphasis on the sharpening up of drill movements for our SBs to be able to part in the County Competition.

We are required annually between October and January to hold a County Competition, this decides who has the honour of carrying the County Standard, and of course the winner also goes to the regional competition, of which the winner takes part in the national competition at National Conference. Should your Branch SB wish to take part in this year's County Competition, to be held at Carterton Community Centre on the 25th of October, then in the first instance I ask they or your Branch Secretary contact the County Secretary by email and copy me in.

### ***Standard Bearer Attire***

An update from the Ceremonial Working Group and the National Parade Marshal, by the end of the National Conference (18 May 25) **all Standard Bearers and Parade Marshals are to be wearing and using beret badges, membership badges, ties and sling badges with the Tudor Crown.** There is to be no mixing of the old Edwardian Crown and new Tudor Crown, the only exception to this is for those issued with gold, life membership badges, youth badges and life time achievement badges and at present all women's section badges and equipment. Otherwise, there is to be no mixing of the two types of crowned badges and ties. If any Branch or individual has any questions regarding this please contact me in the first instance on [Oxfordshire.ParadeMarshal@rbl.community](mailto:Oxfordshire.ParadeMarshal@rbl.community).

All the best and please do get in touch should you need advice or assistance regarding ceremonial or Standard Bearing.

***Pete***

## ***Training - "Discover" Portal***

All Branch Officers and Committee members should attend training sessions commensurate to their role in the Branch. A useful guide to Branch (and County) Roles including the relevant Terms of Reference can be found at the embedded document.

The County Training Officer (CTO) is Derek Bradshaw and can be contacted [Oxfordshire.CTO@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.CTO@RBL.Community)

### **TRAINING NEWS**

There is now a great selection of development and management training which members may find beneficial, especially if you are new to an Officer or Committee post in your branch. All these are now available on the Discover Training Portal which everyone can register on and then book those courses you would like to do. Some are on-line only whilst others might need you to attend face-to-face. The following are currently available:

- Branch Management
- County Management
- County Training Officer
- County Recruiting Officer
- Branch Recruiting Advisor
- Branch Treasurer LOMAS Independent Examiner
- Secretaries Course (Branch and County) ***(new)***
- Branch Community Support Branch Community Support Coordinator ***(new)***
- Branch Community Support Refresher Informal Resolution
- The next Branch Management (Parts 2 and 3) sessions will be held via MS Teams on Saturday 12th April and 10th May 2025

For further details including Course Prospectus, guidance on how to register and use Discover, please contact Derek Bradshaw [Oxfordshire.CTO@RBL.Community](mailto:Oxfordshire.CTO@RBL.Community)

## *Keeping in Contact - RBL Community E-Mail Addresses*

All County and Branch officers whose role requires access to sensitive information are required to use an RBL-issued email when communicating on behalf of the charity, and to use provided tools for sharing and storing this information.

This is to keep our charity, our members and our beneficiaries safe from cyber crime and identity theft, and to comply with the law.

All qualifying County and Branch officers without access to an RBL.Community email account can now register for an account.

Registering for your account is easy. All you need to do is contact the Membership Engagement Officer (MEO) [Oxfordshire.MEO@rbl.community](mailto:Oxfordshire.MEO@rbl.community) who will get you started.

Training support is available from the County Training Officer (CTO) once your account is activated, in addition to using it for communicating on behalf of RBL. You will be able to receive direct RBL communications, access important county and/or branch information, and interact with other branch and county officials around the UK and overseas via the RBL-exclusive social network, Viva Engage.

The following are eligible for accounts at Branch level:

- Chair (**mandatory**)
- Vice Chair
- Secretary (**mandatory**)
- Treasurer (**mandatory**)
- Standard Bearer Branch
- Community Coordinator (BCC)
- Events Mem Sec (subject to review)

This applies also the County Supported Branches and the requirement for the Point of Contacts for have an official email address:

- Point of Contact 1 (**mandatory**)
- Point of Contact 2 (**mandatory**)

To obtain your Branch RBL.Community accounts please email Lebo our Oxfordshire Membership Engagement Officer at

## **Beacon Branch Scheme**

The RBL are introducing a new Award Scheme based at Branch Level determined on the positive work carried out and the management of Branches and CSBs.

### **Background**

While national awards and recognition exist, there is more opportunity for us to identify and celebrate the positive work that our branches do. On a day-to-day basis, our branches are fulfilling the purpose of membership and bringing value to the RBL through the six functions. The positive community activities, commitment and achievements of our branches often takes place behind the scenes – it's just something the branches do. We want to highlight the great work that is going on and encourage branches to be more actively involved. The Beacon Branch initiative provides a standardised process to recognise and reward this positive work across our branch network.

### **Benefits of the Beacon Branch Scheme**

- It recognises the best of what our branches do.
- It highlights good practice that can be shared with other branches.
- Improves county committee engagement with branches.
- It encourages branches to identify areas to improve how they work.
- Provides an opportunity for effective branches to act as mentors to other branches.
- It reiterates the purpose of membership and the value that membership brings to the RBL.
- It builds stronger connections between county committee and branches.
- It informs county committee support plans for Branches who do not achieve an award.
- It enables counties to have an in depth-conversation with branches to learn about them and what they are up to.

### **How does it work?**

The awards work on an annual basis, starting and ending at the County Conference each year.

### **Implementation.**

The scheme is delivered as follows:

- At the start of the year, after County Conference, the County Committee holds a meeting to discuss:

(a) Which branches each committee member will become the liaison for to carry out the visits for Beacon Branches.

(b) Any key county-level activities that they wish to add to the checklist.

(c) What is expected at each award level, so that all visiting committee members can have a consistent approach.

(d) The general approach that should be taken with branches – highlighting that the Beacon Branch scheme is not an inspection or audit and that the initial communication to the branch is key to establish the relationship.

- The scheme is communicated to branches, highlighting that the visits are to identify and celebrate the positive work that branches are doing and that branches can qualify for a bronze, silver or gold certificate. Counties may wish to introduce branches to the scheme at the County Chair's briefing for branches following the March County Chairs' Seminar.

- Between the county conference and the start of the committee members visit their branches and have an informal chat to find out about the branch, using the scoring guide as a foundation for their discussion.

- Branches are scored and achieve either: no award, Bronze Award, Silver award or Gold Award depending on their score.

- The final awards are dependent on the branch being fully compliant so this should be checked with the MEO in early January. Non-compliant branches, irrespective of their score, do not receive an award.

- Certificates are presented at the County Conference.

### ***What happens next?***

- The scheme then begins again for the new calendar year.

- The county should put in place support for branches who want to improve.

- Great practice that is identified during the scheme should be shared to all branches.

- Gold Award branches do not need to be revisited for the purposes of Beacon Branch Awards for a further two years but should be encouraged to support other branches in the county who want to achieve the award to work towards it.

- On top of the Beacon Branch scheme visit, normal county visits should go ahead each year with all branches to maintain a strong connection with them.

**Bronze: 35 to 49**

**Silver: 50 to 64 points**

**Gold: 65 points or more**

The Branch and CSB Check sheets are:

## BEACON BRANCH SCHEME - Branch Check List

<b>Branch Management</b>	
Branch Compliance: to be confirmed with the MEO	
The MS1 was submitted on time	The accounts were submitted on time
<i>Note: if the branch is not compliant then it cannot achieve the Bronze, Silver or Gold regardless of score</i>	
<b>Branch Committee</b>	<b>Branch Administration</b>
The branch has a full committee.	Is the branch GDPR compliant? e.g. no more than 7 years accounts or 5 years worth of MS1s held at Branch? Do they hold personal details or destroy after use as per the guidelines?
Branch officials have attended the relevant training courses within the past 3 years.	
The branch has a clear branch plan	Branch and branch committee meetings are held separately
Are they an active committee? (regular meetings, clear roles and responsibilities)	Branch meetings are regularly held (at least quarterly)
All officers are registered for and using the official branch email addresses	They are at an accessible time for all
They are saving branch documents on MAP	Is the venue appropriate for all users (disabled/ youth etc.)
<b>Branch Finances</b>	The Branch AGM was held (or is scheduled for) between 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct and 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov
There is one bank account	<b>County and National engagement</b>
The signatories on the bank account are current and include the treasurer	The branch attended the last County Conference
Bank acct is under £5000 (not including BFI)	The branch attends County events/ meetings
<b>Ceremonial</b>	They are represented at the County Chairs Seminar back-brief (twice-yearly)
They have a Branch Standard, which is in a good condition	They have or have applied to have a representative on County Committee
The Standard Bearer attended training in the past year	They are represented at National Conference – delegates and/ or visitors
The MS1b been signed	
They enter the County SB competition	
<b>Recruitment and Retention</b>	
They have youth members	They make contact with and welcome new members, providing key branch information such as officer names and meeting times and dates

The branch has trained Recruitment Advisors		The branch had an increase in members in the past year	
The branch has a recruiting plan		Do they actively recruit, including promoting membership to underrepresented groups?	
The branch has a diverse range of ages in their membership		Does the branch engage with and communicate with all members including members who don't attend branch meetings.	
The branch checks MAP for new members regularly		The branch regular stays in touch with its members including letting them know planned activities and events	
<b>Purpose of Membership</b>			
<b>Membership exists so that the Armed Forces Family have friends and allies in every community</b>			
<b>Remembrance and Commemoration</b>		<b>Fundraising</b>	
Are the branch actively involved in Remembrance activities within the local community		Do the branch actively fundraise during Poppy Appeal	
Do the branch liaise with the Local Authorities regarding Remembrance activities		Do the branch support the PAO?	
Do the branch support commemorative events outside of Remembrancetide eg: D-Day 80		The branch actively fundraises for the branch itself	
<b>Kindness</b>		<b>Knowledge</b>	
Does the branch have an active BCS supporter(s) ie: supporters who have completed all required training and have a DBS.		The branch is using up to date literature/ leaflets	
The branch knows the contact centre number and refers members of the Armed Forces Community to the contact centre for welfare support.		The branch promote themselves and the Legion within the local community through stands at local events and is involved in local activities	
The branch SB supports funerals.		The branch has its own social media accounts. If so, these comply with policy.	
The branch has links into the Armed Forces Community.		The branch promote all aspects of the RBL	
<b>Campaigning</b>		<b>Camaraderie</b>	
The branch actively support National Campaigns		The branch holds regular social activities for members of the Armed Forces Community. 1 point each for:	
The branch has a positive relationship with civic authorities.		Veterans' Breakfast/ lunch	
The branch has a positive relationship with key civic figures eg: the Mayor, High Sheriff, Lord Lieutenant		Coffee Mornings	
		Family days	
		Other (1 point for each):	
<b>Community Engagement</b>			
The branch has Youth affiliations		The branch has ordered resources and marketing via their MEO to aid community engagement	
Have they actively engaged and work jointly with the groups with their Affiliation in the past year		The branch has led or organised any community events	

The branch has connections with external organisations and schools to do visits/ talks		The branches uses the Branch Event Guide	
The branch uses the Branch H&S guide		The branch uses social and local media to promote their work	
<b>Values and Behaviours</b>			
The branch have a good reputation		The branch collaborates with other local groups, branches and civic authorities	
The branch is passionate about what it does		The branch embraces new ways of working, new ideas and is forward planning	
The branch values its members and involves them as much as possible			
<b>Bonus points:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The branch has submitted motions to county conference.</li> <li>• The branch has made donations to the Poppy Appeal/ Care Home/ Battleback or Almonisation in the past year.</li> <li>• The branch run a Touchpoint – a permanent stand or location or one that is a fixture in the calendar eg: a market stall every Thursday</li> </ul>			
<p>Branches can gain additional points by participating in activities or events which form part of the County Plan and which the County encourages branches to be involved in (<i>to be added as agreed by the county committee</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity 1:</li> <li>• Activity 2:</li> </ul>			

## BEACON BRANCH SCHEME - CSB Check List

Branch Management		
Branch Compliance: to be confirmed with the MEO. Was the MS1 was submitted on time		Yes / No
<i>Note: if the branch is not compliant then it cannot achieve the Bronze, Silver or Gold regardless of score</i>		
Branch management		Branch Administration
The branch has two points of contact (PoC) who are clear about their role.		Is the branch GDPR compliant? e.g. no more than 7 years accounts or 5 years worth of MS1s held at Branch? Do they hold personal details or destroy after use as per the guidelines?
The PoC keep in touch with the branch members		
The branch has a clear branch plan		There have been at least two branch meeting held in the year, one of which is the AGM
All PoC are registered for and using the official rbl.community email addresses		The branch meetings are at an accessible time for all
They are saving branch documents on MAP		Is the venue appropriate for all users (disabled/ youth etc.)
The PoC are actively engaged with the County committee.		The branch AGM was held (or is scheduled for) between 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct and 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov
Finances		County and National engagement
The PoC are actively engaged with the County Treasurer, and understand their branch financial situation.		The branch attended the last County Conference
The branch finances have been handed over to the County to manage		The branch attends County events/ meetings
		They are represented at the County Chairs Seminar back-brief (twice-yearly)
At an AGM the branch has agreed the expenditure that the PoCs and County Treasurer are authorised to process without seeking Branch approval.		They have or have applied to have a representative on County Committee
		They are represented at National Conference – delegates and/ or visitors
CSB ELIGIBILITY		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Branch is actively trying to recruit new members</li> <li>2. The Branch is providing comradeship</li> <li>3. The Branch is parading its Standard and is visible in the community</li> <li>4. The Branch is committed to delivering the Branch Community Support activities</li> <li>5. The Branch is delivering on wider charitable objectives as specified in the Royal Charter</li> </ol>		
Recruitment		Camaraderie
The branch actively recruit, including promoting membership to underrepresented groups		The branch has a plan of how it will connect with the Armed Forces Community throughout the year
They make contact with and welcome new members, providing key branch information such as officer names and meeting times and dates		The branch holds regular social activities for members of the Armed Forces Community.

The branch had an increase in members in the past year		The branch has links into the Armed Forces Community.	
The branch checks MAP for new members regularly			
<b>BCS</b>			
The branch knows the contact centre number and refers members of the Armed Forces Community to the contact centre for welfare support.		The branch has active BCS supporter(s) ie: supporters who have completed all required training and have a DBS.	
<b>Visibility in the Community</b>		<b>Ceremonial</b>	
The branch are actively involved in Remembrance activities within the local community		They have a Branch Standard, which is in a good condition	
The branch actively fundraise during Poppy Appeal		The Standard Bearer attended training in the past year	
The branch promote themselves and the Legion within the local community through stands at local events and is involved in local activities		The MS1b been signed	
		They enter the County SB competition	
<b>Campaigning</b>			
		The branch has a positive relationship with civic authorities.	
		The branch has a positive relationship with key civic figures eg: the Mayor, High Sheriff, Lord Lieutenant	
		The Branch actively support National Campaigns	
<b>Community Engagement</b>			
The branch has active Youth affiliations		The branch has ordered resources and marketing via their MEO to aid community engagement	
Have they actively engaged and work jointly with the groups with their Affiliation in the past year		The branch has led or organised community events	
The Branch has connections with external organisations and schools to do visits/ talks		The branch uses the Branch Event Guide	
The Branch uses the Branch H&S guide		The branch uses social and local media to promote their work	
The branch attends the local covenant partnership group		The branch has its own social media accounts. If so, these comply with policy.	
The branch promote all aspects of the RBL		The branch is using up to date literature/ leaflets	
<b>Values and Behaviours</b>			
The branch have a good reputation		The branch collaborates with other local groups, branches and civic authorities	
The branch is passionate about what it does		The branch embraces new ways of working, new ideas and is forward planning	
The branch values its members and involves them as much as possible			
<b>Bonus points:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The branch run a Touchpoint – a permanent stand or location or one that is a fixture in the calendar eg: a market stall every Thursday</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The branch has made donations to the Poppy Appeal/ Care Home/ Battleback or Almonisation in the past year</li> </ul>			
Branches can gain additional points by participating in activities or events which form part of the County Plan and which the County encourages branches to be involved in (to be added as agreed by the county committee):			

## *County and Branch Toolkit - MAPs - County Secretary*

A new Section invaluable to effective County and Branch Management has been added to the Documents Section In MAPs. The new section is entitled "County and Branch Toolkit which is a one stop shop for the following:

- Branch Beacon Scheme (for Counties) - this includes PDF Guides to the Scheme and copies of the Checklists for both Branch and CSBs
- GDPR Resources - GDPR-PECR Guide, GDPR Decision Tree and GDPR Communication Examples all of which are PDF format and each Branch Officer should be aware of their content.
- Guides - at present the only Guide in this folder is "Good Spend Guide" in PDF Format
- Recruitment Resources - this folder is full of Recruit Leaflets to assist with recruit to the RBL
- Welcome Email Templates - this is probably the most useful aspect of this new Section as it contains templates such as:
  1. Branch Checking In
  2. Branch Welcome
  3. County Chair New Member Welcome

All are editable documents and should help with Branch Officers correspondence to membership. To gain access to MAPs please see the section in this newsletter entitled "Keeping in Contact RBL.Community Email Addresses". Obtaining an @RBL.Community is mandatory for Branch Officers and gives you access to MAPs.

## Diary Dates



### General Branch and County Dates

- **01 Jul 25** - The MEO must request nominations from branches by 1st July and circulate the nomination sheet
- **20 Jul 25** - County Committee Meeting (Face-2-Face) - venue TBC County Committee Members Only
  - **30 Aug 25** Annual Oxfordshire Poppy Appeal Seminar - Islip Village Hall.
- **30 Sep 25** - Last date for submission of Branch Accounts to MEO (although 31st August preferred if at all possible).
- **01 Oct – 30 Nov 25** – Branch Annual General Meetings to be held between these dates. MS1/MS1B/MS1CSB to be completed. (Branches Note: MS1B must be completed in addition to MS1 or MS1CSB otherwise Branch and Standard Bearer not compliant)
- **22 Oct 25** - County Committee Meeting (Teams) - County Committee Members Only
- **31 Dec 25** - Deadline for the submission of all **MS1s or MS1CSBs and MS1Bs** to the MEO and County Secretary by email
- **14 Jan 26** - County Committee Meeting (Teams) – County Committee Members Only
- **31 Jan 26** – 101st Oxfordshire Annual County Conference – Carterton Community Hall

### Standard Bearer Training Dates

- 13 Apr 25 Stanton Harcourt Village Hall
- 18 May 25 Stanton Harcourt Village Hall

- 01 Jun 25 Stanton Harcourt Village Hall
- 07 Sep 25 Stanton Harcourt Village Hall
- 05 Oct 25 Stanton Harcourt Village Hall

### **Oxfordshire Standard Bearer Competition**

The CPM has announced that Oxfordshire Standard Bearer Competition is to be held on 25 Oct 25 at Carterton Community Centre.

## ***Events***

### **Holger Danske 80th Anniversary Commemoration - 05 May 25**

On 04 May 25 members of the Royal British Legion joined Commodore Dan the Danish Military Attaché at Sir Winston Churchill's graveside to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of Holger Danske - Liberation of Denmark. The Holger Danske were a Danish resistance group during World War II. It was among the largest Danish resistance groups and consisted of around 350 volunteers towards the end of the war. The group carried out sabotage operations, including blowing up railway lines strategically important to the Germans. Among their largest sabotage actions was the blowing up of the Forum Copenhagen in 1943. The group was named after the legendary Danish hero Holger Danske (Ogier the Dane). On 04 May 1945 Sir Winston Churchill gave thanks to the resistance group for the liberation of their country. This is a very special date and time (2030hrs) commemorating the exact moment when Sir Winston gave thanks to all those in the Danish Resistance Movement who through their courage helped bring about the liberation of their country and the end of the war. The Oxfordshire RBL Chair Steve Kingsford lead the Standard Bearers from Oxfordshire: Steve Holland Chipping Norton, Natalie Buxton with the Union Flag from Bampton with her partner Ben, Clive Cantwell from Carterton. Melanie Watkins Woodstock Woman's Section RBL; Northamptonshire's Finedon and Irthlingbrough and District Benn Hitchen and Hampshire Sutton Scotney.

### ***County 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day Commemorations - 08 May 25***

#### **Benson**

Thank you to the Benson Parish Council for including a Drum Head Service into their commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day. The Service was made even more special with Rev(Sqn Ldr) Michael McCormick blessing the first parade of the Royal British Legion Oxfordshire County Union Flag. Royal Air Force Benson personnel lead by the Station

Commander Wing Commander Alice Tierney and her Ceremonial Team WO Wozza Warren and FS Bob Hope provided a fabulous spectacle with personnel from the Station, which included a Chinook Flypast. A great honour for the village and helped the community remember those that served and still serve from the community. The event was supported by youth groups from the village with two readings from pupils of RAF Benson Primary School. The commemoration was a massive success fully supported by the community, village businesses and the Parish Council. The RBL Oxfordshire County Parade Marshal Pete Clarke, County Standard Bearer Tjark Andrews and Deputy County Parade Marshal Jacqui Graves paraded alongside RBL Benson's Standard Bearer Dave Cooper.

### **Chipping Norton**

The Chipping Norton RBL Branch supported the Town in their commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day on 08 May 25. Deputy Lord Lieutenant Philip Sharman attended the event supported by the RBL Chipping Norton President Linda Maia E Silva, Oxfordshire County Chair Steve Kingsford, Deputy Standard Bearer Steve Holland, Malcolm Holland former Branch Standard Bearer and Roy Holland.

### **Cookly Green**

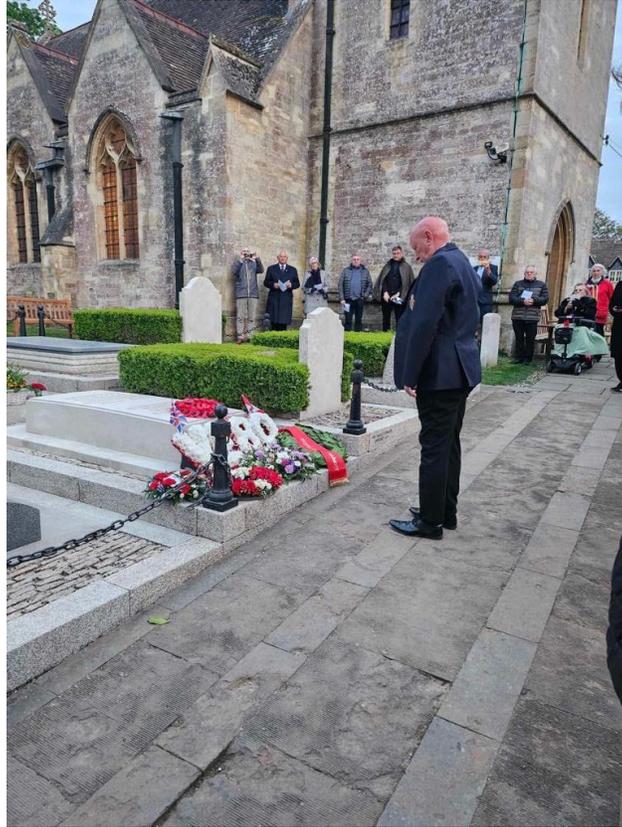
Cookley Green held their VE/VJ Commemoration on 08 May 25 supported by the RBL Nettlebed Standard Bearer - David Mannering. Great to see the local event of remembrance no matter how small in Oxfordshire.

### **Deddington**

RBL Deddington Branch lead by Robert Forsyth the Branch Chair and their Standard Bearer James Greenwood supported by the Oxfordshire County Chair Steve Kingsford, the County Parade Marshal Pete Clarke and County Standard Bearer Tjark Andrews in their commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day. It is a great honour for the County Ceremonial Team and Chair to support this event and we thank the Branch Management for their invite and continued support for the village.



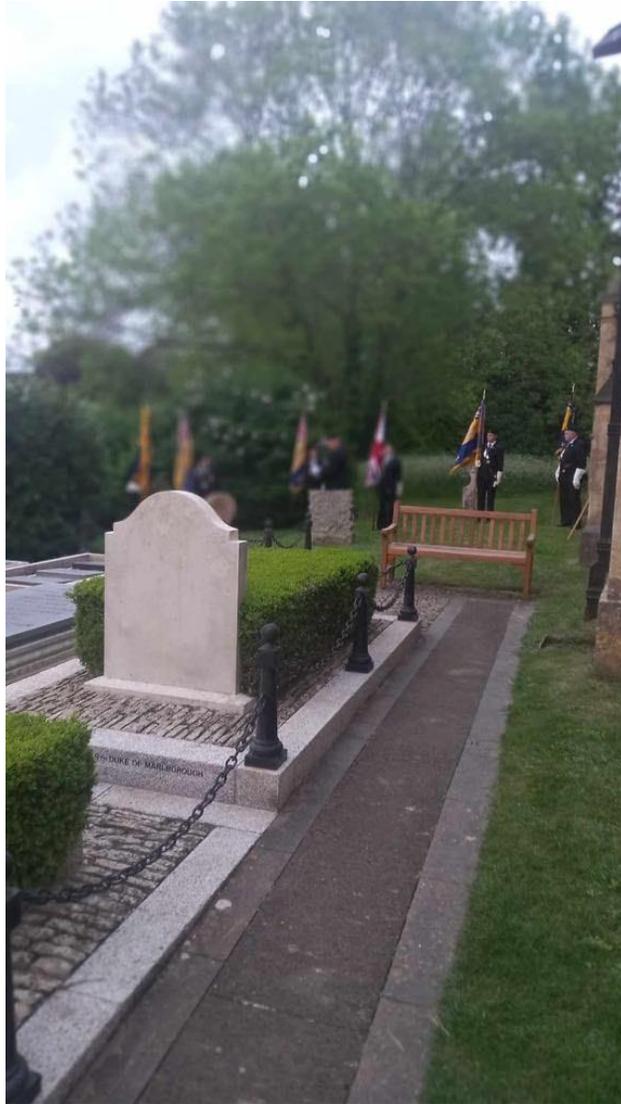
*1 - Holger Danske 80th Anniversary Commemoration - 04 May 25*



*2 - Holger Danske 80th Anniversary Commemoration - 04 May 25*



*3 - Holger Danske 80th Anniversary Commemoration - 04 May 25*



4 - Holger Danske 80th Anniversary Commemoration - 04 May 25



5 - Holger Danske 80th Anniversary Commemoration - 04 May 25



6 - Holger Danske 80th Anniversary Commemoration - 04 May 25



7 - Holger Danske 80th Anniversary Commemoration - 04 May 25



8 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



9 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



10 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



11 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



12 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



13 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



14 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



15 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



16 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



17 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



18 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



19 - Benson 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25 - Drum Head Service



20 - Chipping Norton 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25



21 - Chipping Norton 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day 08 May 25



22 - Cookley Green 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day - 08 May 25



23 - Cookley Green 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day - 08 May 25



24 - Cookley Green 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day - 08 May 25



25 - Cookley Green 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day - 08 May 25



26 - Cookley Green 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day - 08 May 25



*27 - Cookley Green 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day - 08 May 25*



*28 - Deddington 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day - 08 May 25*



*29 - Deddington 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day - 08 May 25*

## *Roll of Honour*



- **Late Kenneth David Babington former Thame Branch** – funeral held on 19 Dec 24 at North Oxfordshire Crematorium.
- **Late Peter Meldrum Macgregor former RAF 617 and 213 Sqn** – funeral held on 17 Mar 25 at Oxford Crematorium.
- **Late Kenneth Goatley former RAF** – funeral to be held on 07 Apr 25 at St Edburges Church Bicester.
- **Late Arthur Brian Miller (known as Brian) former SB former Stanton Harcourt and ex-Army** – funeral held on 02 May 25 at St Mary’s Church North Leigh.
- **Late Stan White former Kidlington Branch, and County Committee** – funeral held on 25 Apr 25 at the North Oxfordshire Crematorium.
- **Late Roy Burton former Army** - funeral held on 21 May 25 at the North Oxfordshire Crematorium
- **Late Francis Edwin Wastie former Witney Branch and Kings Shropshire Light Infantry** - funeral held on 23 May 25 at the North Oxfordshire Crematorium.

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*RBL Oxfordshire Web-Page*



*30 - Keep updated with RBL Oxfordshire information at*

*<https://counties.britishlegion.org.uk/counties/oxfordshire>*

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