

October Circular

# Annual Conference 2026

The Brighton Centre, Brighton  
8–10 May



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

# Contents



	Page
Foreword	3
The venue	4
What's on?	5
Registration and attendance	6
Expenses and Jim Prince Fund	8
Awards	9
Main sessions and deadlines	12

# Foreword

Dear Member,

As Chair of the National Conference Committee, I am pleased to introduce you to the Annual Conference 2026 October Circular.

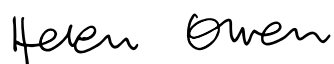
I would like to extend sincere thanks to my predecessor, Anny Reid, who successfully chaired the Conference Committee over so many years and was deeply passionate about making Conference both welcoming and effective. I would also like to thank you all for your part in making last year's Conference in Harrogate a successful, positive and productive event.

The Conference Committee and Membership Directorate are now hard at work planning for our Conference in Brighton next May. Brighton has strong military links and an interesting history to explore – particularly that of its Royal Pavillion – which makes it a very fitting location for our Annual Conference.

Following recent changes to compliance requirements within the Rules in the Schedule of the Royal Charter, all branches may send a voting delegate to Annual Conference, regardless of their compliance status. We hope our branches will take advantage of this change and ensure their voices are heard in Brighton.

The Conference Committee and I look forward to seeing you at the Brighton Centre, 8–10 May.

With best regards,



Helen Owen  
Chair, National Conference Committee



# The venue

The Brighton Centre, King's Road, Brighton BN1 2GR

Next May, Annual Conference 2026 will take place at the Brighton Centre, located right on the seafront of the vibrant southeastern seaside town of Brighton, East Sussex.

One of the largest purpose-built conference and entertainment venues in southeast England, the venue is in the heart of Brighton, with a plethora of places to eat, drink, shop and sleep to be found nearby.

Brighton has a rich military history. During the First World War, the Royal Pavilion was converted into a hospital for wounded soldiers. It became one of the most famous military hospitals in Britain. From 1914 to 1916 it was used for Indian soldiers who had been wounded on the battlefields of the Western Front, and from 1916 to 1920 it was used as a hospital for British troops who had lost arms or legs in the war. During the Brighton Blitz, the town was attacked from the air on 56 recorded occasions between July 1940 and February 1944.

The city of Brighton and Hove has plenty to keep its visitors occupied. To find out more about things to do, head to the [Visit Brighton website](#).

## Accommodation

For Annual Conference 2026, we're pleased to offer a bespoke online accommodation booking portal through the Brighton Centre.

Simply [head to the portal](#) and input the dates of your stay to see all the hotels available on your dates.

## Travel

Car parks, bus stops and taxi ranks are all near to the venue, with Brighton Station just a 15-minute walk away. Find out more about getting there [on the venue's website](#).

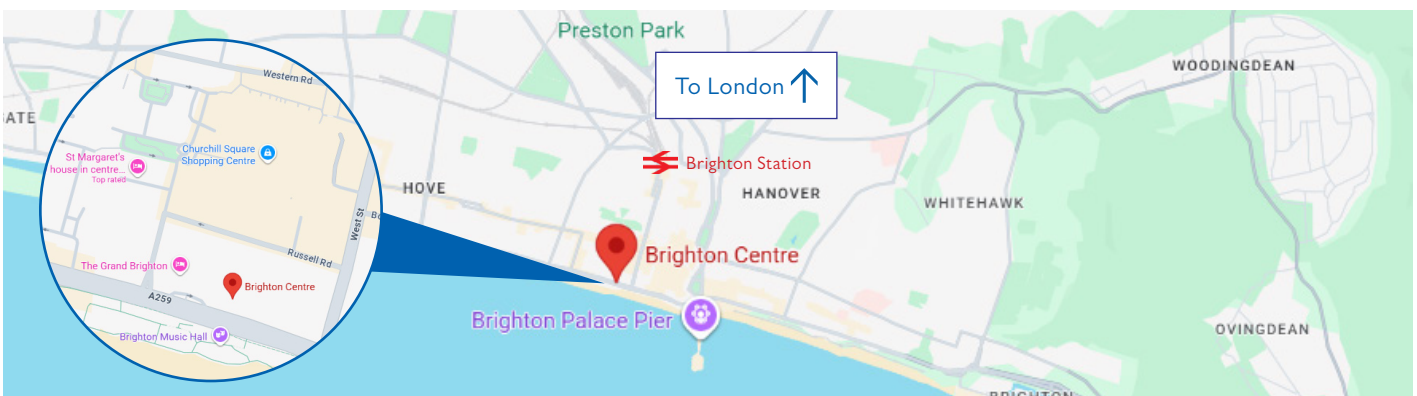
## Parking

There are no parking spaces at the venue. There are car parking options nearby but please be aware that parking in Brighton is at a premium. Information on Brighton's car parks can be found on the [Visit Brighton website](#).

For customers who are Blue Badge holders there are lay-bys at the front and back of the venue where you can drop off or pick up. Please note these areas have a 3-hour parking limit. More information about Blue Badge parking in Brighton is [available on the council's website](#).

## Accessibility

Accessibility at the venue includes lifts, wheelchair seating and hearing loops in the auditorium, accessible toilets and changing places. Details on accessibility and medical requirements should be submitted in the registration form. [Find out more about the venue's accessibility here](#).





# What's on?

## **Main Conference (in-person and online attendance)**

Join us in person or online to hear keynote addresses, updates on RBL's work with beneficiaries, the Poppy Appeal, membership activities and take part in the Membership Forum. Branch delegates can vote on motions submitted by their fellow branches.

## **National Membership Awards Ceremony (in-person and online attendance)**

Help us to celebrate achievements, comradeship, community support and collaboration. Applaud your fellow members, branches, districts/counties and clubs when they receive their awards. See page 9 and the letter accompanying this circular for further information on each award and how to follow our easy nomination and application process.

## **Act of Remembrance (in-person only)**

There will be an act of Remembrance at Annual Conference; further information will be available in the March Circular and Delegate Pack.

## **Nominations to the National Conference Committee**

A vacancy for an elected member of the National Conference Committee will become available at the close of Conference. The election for this post will be held during Conference, with the elected member serving for a term of three years. Each County/District and Overseas Branch may nominate one current Member or Life Member to join the Committee. Candidates may not hold a position on either the Board of Trustees or the Membership Council. More details and a nomination form will be shared with County Chairs in December.



## **Entertainment (in-person only)**

Evening entertainment offers a chance to relax after the business of Conference and to join other attendees in a social setting. Details will be shared in the provisional agenda, which will be published in the March Special Circular.

## **Exhibition (in-person only)**

Take this opportunity to chat to RBL staff and partners, and to get answers to your questions. Pick up information from a variety of exhibition stalls and use your membership card for a 15% discount at the Poppy Shop.

## **National and Women's Section Standard Bearers Competitions (in-person only)**

Attend this annual event where our judges seek out the best Standard Bearers from our regional winners.

## **Overseas and Women's Section Forums**

The Overseas Forum and Women's Section Forum both provide opportunities for members to hear updates specific to them and to ask questions. Please note the Overseas Forum is open to both online and in-person attendees, whilst the Women's Section Forum is in-person only.

# Registration and attending Annual Conference



The registration link will be shared in *Central News*, *eNewsletter* and on [the RBL website](#) during the registration period, which opens 15 January. Registration to attend in-person will close midday, 23 March. Registration to attend online will close midday, 6 April. Please note, late registrations may not be accepted.

During registration, details will be collected concerning mobility and medical requirements, and expenses details for voting delegates who are attending in person. On completion of registration, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement.

All delegates and visitors must register online. We regret that we cannot accept applications sent by post or email. For queries regarding delegate registration, please contact your Membership Engagement Officer (MEO). For non-delegate registration queries, please contact [membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk).

## Who can attend?

In-person and online attendance is open to **all members** and their accompanying guests or carers. Voting delegates may attend and vote online. During registration, you will be asked to select your type and mode of attendance.

## Online attendance — an opportunity to come together

If you cannot attend in person, online attendance will be available on the Saturday and Sunday of Conference so that members can watch events taking place in the main auditorium. Online attendees will be able to watch the opening ceremony, speeches, motions, awards, membership forum and closing ceremony. Online attendees will not be able to view the evening entertainment, Women's Section Forum, Standard Bearer competitions and parade.

We encourage online visitors to come together with others who cannot attend in person, to enjoy Annual Conference in camaraderie and friendship.



## Branch delegates

Your branch can play a key role at Annual Conference, acting as the voice of its members in our decision-making process. Following recent changes to compliance requirements, reflected in the amended Rules in the Schedule of the [Royal Charter](#) and updated [Standing Orders of Conference](#), **any branch** can register a branch delegate, submit and vote on motions – regardless of compliance status.

Any member may be nominated as a delegate to represent their branch. Branch delegates may propose and second motions, speak for or against motions, and vote on their branch's behalf. Please note, branch delegates may not be county delegates.

## County delegates

Each County / District Committee is entitled to send **one delegate** to the Annual Conference. This delegate has the right to speak for or against motions but is not entitled to vote.

## Standard Bearers

Any County/District/Branch Standard Bearers can attend and should be funded by their respective County/District/Branch. Standard Bearers will be required from Saturday morning (7.30am) until the close of Annual Conference on Sunday.



# Expenses and Jim Prince Fund

## Expenses

We provide a contribution to branches towards the **travel cost** for sending a **voting delegate** to Annual Conference. Expenses for visitors, county delegates and other membership attendees are not payable from central funds. Please see the table below as a guide. Travel distances will be calculated on a **straight-line basis** (“as the crow flies”) to ensure consistency for all delegates.

Band	Distance between home address and conference venue	Percentage of travel costs reimbursement	Reimbursement amount
A	0–20 miles	N/A	£0
B	21–90 miles	N/A	£30
C	91–160 miles	N/A	£50
D	161–230 miles	N/A	£70
E	231–300 miles	N/A	£90
F	>300 miles	N/A	£110
G (non-mainland UK, Europe)	N/A	50%	Up to £200
H (non-mainland UK, not Europe)	N/A	50%	Up to £350

**Mainland UK branch delegates** should claim their expenses **directly from their branch** with no need to supply an expense form to head office. A proportion of the delegate’s travel costs will be automatically reimbursed from central funds directly to the branch up to 12 weeks after Conference. Please note, **delegates need to attend every session of Annual Conference** on Saturday and Sunday – excluding the evening entertainment, parade and closing ceremony, to be eligible for reimbursement.

**Non-mainland UK and overseas branch delegates** only are required to submit an expense form directly to [membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk) by email as soon as possible after the event. Please put “Annual Conference expenses” in the subject line of your email to ensure it is identified and dealt with promptly. Further details are available in the expense policy [on MAP](#). Please note submissions using an incorrect expense form may not be accepted.

## The Jim Prince Small Branch Fund

For branches unable to send a delegate to Conference, we encourage online attendance to take part and ensure that your branch is represented.

The Jim Prince fund was established to assist in sending a delegate from a small branch to Annual Conference who otherwise could not afford it.

To be eligible, the branch must:

- Have fewer than 100 members.
- Have general funds amounting to less than £1,500.

Branches must formally **apply for the Jim Prince Fund by completing the form [via this link](#)**.

Applications must be submitted along with the delegate registration for the branch.

Applications must be received **by 23 March 2026**.



# Awards



For all awards nominations/applications, please submit the appropriate form accompanying this circular. Nominations for the Sir Clive Johnstone Award should be made using the accompanying separate form, also [available on MAP](#).

When nominating/applying, please refer to the criteria below (p10). You will be asked to submit a supporting statement and may also submit additional supporting evidence such as photos or articles.

Please use one form per award submission. The deadline is **Friday 13th February 2026**. The National Membership Awards Committee or relevant judge(s) will consider all applications and determine winners and (when awarded) runners-up.

Winners and runners-up will be invited to receive their award during the National Membership Awards Ceremony at Annual Conference 2026. Each winning formation or member will be presented with a glass plaque engraved with their name to keep. Where applicable, certificates may be awarded to runners up.

In addition to the awards below, counties, districts and branches can submit nominations for Gold Badges, Life Membership Badges, National Certificates of Appreciation, or the National Chair's Award. To find out more about any of these awards including the application process, please visit [RBL – Awards for Members](#).

### **Haig Cup**

Awarded to a branch (with more than 50 members) that can demonstrate compliancy and which, during the past year, has not only supported its membership and beneficiaries, but also positively promoted the RBL within its community, county/district or the wider country.

*County committee nominates branches.*

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### **Lister Cup**

Awarded to a branch (with up to and including 50 members) that can demonstrate compliancy and which, during the past year, has not only supported its membership and beneficiaries, but also positively promoted the RBL within its county/district or the wider community.

*County committee nominates branches.*

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### **Maurice Challenge Cup**

Awarded to the county/district/section that can demonstrate compliancy and which, during the past year, has not only supported its membership and beneficiaries, but also positively promoted the RBL within its community.

*Membership Council Rep nominates counties.*

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### **Jellicoe Cup**

Awarded to a branch in recognition of its sterling efforts, enthusiasm and determination to further the aims of the RBL by increasing the visibility of the services and actively supporting our Beneficiaries under the Branch Community Support scheme.

*County/district/section nominates branches.*

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### **Churchill Shield**

Awarded to a national branch that can demonstrate compliancy and which, during the past year, has not only supported its membership and beneficiaries, but also positively promoted the RBL within its district or the wider community.

*National Branches District nominates branches.*

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### **Downing Shield**

Awarded to an individual member who is recognised to have played an important part in the delivery of BCS with a view to greatly improving RBL's support to beneficiaries.

*Branch or county/district nominates.*

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### **Lewis Shield**

Awarded to an RBL member with a disability who has provided substantial inspiration for other RBL members.

*Branch nominates with supporting citations from county/district.*

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### **Knox Shield**

Awarded to an organisation or group for its commitment and willingness to work collaboratively with our local membership, greatly increasing awareness of our services provided under BCS.

*Branch or county/district/section nominate.*

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### **McCrae Shield**

The McCrae Shield is awarded to a compliant overseas branch that is at least three years old which, during the past year, has not only supported its membership and beneficiaries, but also positively promoted the Royal British Legion within its district or wider community.

*Nominations are made by the relevant district, MC Rep for Overseas or MEO.*

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### **Ian Hamilton Cup**

Awarded to a club for making significant efforts in furthering the charitable objectives of the RBL, showing good and effective general management and/or significantly developing the club. Please note, only clubs that have a full licence can be nominated.

*Clubs are to be put forward by their county/district. More than one club per county may be nominated.*

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### **Sir Clive Johnstone Award**

Awarded to individuals, groups, or teams from across RBL (volunteers, members or staff) who seek to create, repair or improve unity across RBL. Nominations should be made using the Sir Clive Johnstone Award nomination form.

*Individuals, groups or teams are nominated by members, volunteers or staff.*

## **The National Certificate of Appreciation**

The National Certificate of Appreciation is the highest honour. It may be awarded to a member who has made a conspicuous contribution to the RBL for at least 12 years. Certificates are presented at Annual Conference and are accompanied by a lapel badge inscribed 'For Merit'. To apply or nominate someone for this award, please see the information on the [\*\*RBL website and download the form\*\*](#) from there.





# Main session and deadlines

## Motions to Annual Conference

All motions must be accompanied by a certificate and have the following sections:

- Motion text
- The reason for the motion
- The effect of the motion, if passed
- Main argument in favour of the motion

**New for 2026**, a dedicated course on writing and submitting a motion to Annual Conference is available on the *Discover* learning platform.

[Find out more about accessing Discover here.](#)

Further motions guidance is available from your Membership Engagement Officer (MEO).

## Provisional Agenda

The provisional agenda and motions/motions omissions booklets will be published in March 2026.

## Final Agenda

The final agenda will be published in the Delegate Pack, which will include accepted motions and anticipated order of events. A PDF version of the Delegate Pack will be shared with attendees before Conference.

Item	Deadline date	Deadline time
Certificate for Motions	Friday 13 February 2026	5pm
National Membership Awards (see page 9)	Friday 13 February 2026	5pm
In-person attendance registration	Monday 23 March 2026	12pm midday
Jim Prince Fund (see page 8)	Monday 23 March 2026	12pm midday
Appeals and amendments to motions	Friday 3 April 2026	5pm
Nominations for Conference Committee	Friday 3 April 2026	5pm
Online attendance registration	Monday 6 April 2026	12pm midday
Motions of Urgency	Thursday 7 May 2026	5pm

## Photography, Video & Audio Recording

Official photographers and our Events team may capture images and audio during the event. We process this data under the lawful basis of legitimate interests to document the event, inform our wider membership, and promote RBL activities through internal and external media. Images may be published on the RBL website or in internal communications such as circulars, newsletters, and *Legion* magazine.

If you prefer not to be photographed or recorded, we recommend attending our events online where available.

If your attendance raises privacy concerns that cannot be reasonably accommodated, you may wish to refrain from participating. For more information on how we handle personal data, including your rights and how to contact us, please see our [Privacy Notice](#).

No photography will be allowed inside the main auditorium and during the Standard Bearers' competitions. Visitors will be able to take photographs elsewhere in the venue. Filming/ photography of the parade by use of drones is not permitted.



