



Central News – September 2025

Operational information for County / District and Branch / Section officers only

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Important dates	
4 September 2025	Membership fee increases to £22
24 September 2025	County Chairs' Seminar briefing pack release
30 September 2025	Branch accounts deadline
1 October 2025	Election nomination window opens
31 December 2025	<u>MS1 form</u> deadline

Trustee and Membership Council Elections 2025/6

Are you interested in working with RBL's leadership teams? The 2025-6 election cycle will begin on 1 October 2025 when the nomination window opens. This cycle, four trustee roles are up for election to the Board of Trustees and seven Membership Council Representatives are up for election in the following areas:

- Cheshire and Merseyside
- Manchester and Lancashire
- Northern Ireland
- South East Midlands
- South West Midlands
- West Midlands
- Women's Section

Following a recent change to the Rules in the Schedule of the [Royal Charter](#), **any branch can nominate candidates and vote in national elections** – regardless of compliance status. Election nomination packs will be emailed or posted to branches ready for 1 October, as well as available on the [elections webpage](#) and [on MAP](#).

Please look out for further elections information over the coming weeks. Should you have any questions in the meantime, please contact elections@britishlegion.org.uk.

Remembrance Key Points 2025

A revised Remembrance Key Points document is now available [on MAP](#) and the [RBL website](#). This one-page document provides a useful summary of RBL's position on Remembrance and is intended to help members and communities convey the core messages of Remembrance in their activities, ensuring they are impactful and inclusive.

View or download the document [from MAP](#) or [our website](#).

RBL's position on coloured poppies

Remembrance commemorates the service and sacrifices of HM Armed Forces and their families. The Legion red poppy is a universal symbol of Remembrance and hope, including hope for a peaceful world. Here at the Royal British Legion, we produce only red poppy wreaths, which are available through the Poppy Appeal for anyone wishing to take part in an Act of Remembrance. Importantly, funds raised by the red poppy support our Armed Forces, veterans and their families in their time of need.

The RBL respects the rights and freedoms of groups and individuals to make their own decisions how to observe Remembrance. We understand that some people may wish to lay a different coloured poppy wreath or wear a different coloured poppy at Remembrance, often produced by other charities. We would ask that they consider using the red poppy alongside it as an act of respect for the service and sacrifice of Britain's Armed Forces, veterans, and their families, and we encourage those organising Remembrance services to discuss with all groups how best to meet their needs.

MS1 form and Membership Handbook update

As part of the revised Membership Handbook due in September, we are pleased to report that **the MS1 and MS1a forms have been simplified** following member feedback regarding the length of the forms. Only the following roles now need to sign:

MS1

- Branch Chair
- Branch Vice-Chair
- Branch Secretary
- Branch Treasurer
- Branch Parade Marshal

MS1a

- County Chair
- County Vice-Chair
- County Secretary
- County Treasurer
- County Youth Officer
- County Parade Marshal

The remainder of the committee are required to be listed by name only; however, all committee members must have seen the safeguarding self-declaration form and make a declaration to the Branch Chair and MEO if necessary. The new form will be available in the revised Membership Handbook due out in late September and [on MAP](#). The form should be used from 1 October 2025 for all AGMs or mid-year changes.

We'd like to thank everyone who provided feedback for the upcoming September revision. Once published, feedback can be shared [using this link](#).

Our Strategy to 2035

This October, members are invited to attend online roadshows to hear about our new Strategy; the foundation of which is our Royal Charter and which is focused on the changing needs of the whole Armed Forces community.

Our work is made possible thanks to the tremendous efforts of members, supporters, volunteers and employees. To continue building on our success, we will need to work even better together so that the RBL can go from strength to strength and continue delivering support for life to those who need us.

Members will play a vital role in our strategy's success. To find out more about "Our Strategy to 2035" you are invited to come along to one of our virtual roadshows taking place in the autumn. Find the dates and joining links below:

- [8th October 13:00-14:30](#)
- [9th October 09:30-11:00](#)
- [13th October 17:30-19:00](#)

Important Lloyds account changes reminder

Following our email last month, we'd like to remind any RBL Branches and Counties with **existing Lloyds accounts** or wishing to **open a new Lloyds account** of the changes Lloyds is making to its charity bank account offering.

You may receive a letter that looks like [the example found here](#). Any existing *Lloyds Treasurer Accounts* would normally have now automatically changed to a **Community Account**, however these would incur monthly charges. By special arrangement, Lloyds has agreed RBL branches can have a **Charity Account** instead, which does not incur a monthly fee.

Find out more about these changes, including what action you may need to take and the implications of these new Charity Accounts [by clicking here](#).

Membership fee increase

We would like to take this opportunity to kindly remind branch and county officers that the £2 fee increase for 2025 comes into effect on **Thursday 4 September 2025**. New members and those renewing from that date will pay £22. The change will take place automatically at renewal.

Please ensure that your formation's websites are amended in time to reflect the new fee. If you require assistance with this, please contact your regional inbox / MEO. For any branch that collects

fees on behalf of members (consolidated payments), please ensure you refer to the [consolidated payment guidance](#) on MAP and collect the correct new membership fee amount.

The fee increase follows the Motion passed at Annual Conference 2024. If you or local members would like to know more about these changes, please visit rbl.org.uk/membershipfees.

If you have any questions or concerns about the fee increase, please reach out to us at membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk or call us on: UK: 0800 307 7773 (free); Republic of Ireland: 1800 911 936 (free); Overseas: +44 (0)207 191 1091 (full rate)

New Motions for Annual Conference course

We're pleased to announce that a new training course on proposing motions to Annual Conference is now available on Discover.

The course covers:

- What happens at Annual Conference?
- What is a motion?
- How to write a motion
- The timeline of how a motion goes from an idea to being heard at Annual Conference
- Overview of some past motions

This course is an eLearning module that is housed on RBL's learning platform Discover. You can self-enrol on the course and members do not need an RBL.Community account to do so. [Find out more about accessing Discover here](#).

Update to Standing Orders of Conference

Following changes approved by the Board of Trustees to remove the definition of 'Voting Branches' to the Rules in the Schedule of the [Royal Charter](#), **all branches** can now nominate and vote in National elections and send delegates to Annual Conference. To reflect this, the Standing Orders of [Annual] Conference will be updated.

These updates are included in the [new motions training course](#), now available on Discover for self-enrolment. A copy of the revised Standing Orders will be published on the RBL website and MAP alongside the October Circular.

Photography notice for county and branch events

Further to requests for appropriate photography notifications for county and branch events, RBL's Data Protection and Legal teams have provided wording for formations to include on event registration notices and / or at events where photography will be taken for sharing on communication channels, including social media. The wording and instructions for use can be found [here on MAP](#).

RBL face-to-face fundraising

Face-to-face fundraising is an essential part of how RBL engages with new supporters. Professional fundraisers visit designated locations around the UK to help spread knowledge of RBL's work and ask members of the public to consider supporting RBL by Direct Debit or the Poppy Lottery. Branch and County officers can find out if fundraisers are due to be in their area by checking the weekly site list [uploaded to MAP](#) every Friday. Find out more about our face-to-face fundraising [here](#).

Branch Annual Returns

As a reminder, the deadline for branches to submit their annual accounts is 30 September 2025. All branches should have received their year-end Accounts Pack by post or email in early July. Alternatively, the pack is available [here on MAP](#).

If you have any questions about branch accounts, please head over to the 2025 Branch Accounts FAQs, [available here on MAP](#).

County and Branch Toolkit feedback

Earlier this year we launched our new [County and Branch Toolkit on MAP](#). This collection of resources is designed to be useful, easy to use and make the running of RBL counties and branches easier. We are keen to get your feedback on the Toolkit – whether you've used just one or two items or found them all helpful, please [share your thoughts via this short feedback form](#).

Allocation of RBL.Community accounts

Further to the rollout of the RBL.Community emails, we would like to thank everyone who has applied for an account and is also engaging with MAP.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that your email has been allocated to you and should not be shared or passed on when you step down. Should you no longer require the account, please contact your MEO. Members stepping into post should also contact their MEO for a new email account to be allocated to them. Thank you.

Back from the Brink – Downpatrick Branch

In 2022, Downpatrick Branch, NI, closed its doors for what was believed to be the final time. With few new recruits, it had struggled. In 2020, it had met just once – to organise a Remembrance parade at which 12 members walked to lay nine wreaths. By 2022, despite a callout in the local press, a “make or break night” attracted only five people – and no new members.

“We said our goodbyes and closed the door,” says Keith Straney, now Branch Chair. But he could see the decision had deeply affected then-Chair Andy Campbell. “It was annoying me that we had let this go. What also got me was the look on the Chairman's face when we had to close the doors.”

Keith later phoned Andy, saying he wanted to try again. “Andy was over the moon,” he says. Taking to his phone, he called friends and local lodge groups. If people were interested in joining, he put through their membership straight away. At the next branch meeting, 17 people turned up.

“Andy was delighted - as were the remaining members,” he says. The branch filled all its positions, with Keith as Chair and Andy as President.

“Every time I saw someone I knew, I asked if they fancied joining – they were probably sick of seeing me!” says Keith. Yet the effort paid off. In 2024, Downpatrick Branch received a cup for the most increased membership; and more than 100 people took part in the Remembrance parade with 22 wreaths laid.

With the help of their MEO, the branch also recovered funds that were thought lost – around £40k, which helped to get the branch back on its feet.

Sadly, in April 2024, Andy Campbell passed away. “Andy had trained me up when I got the Chairman's job,” says Keith. “Keeping me right, letting me sort problems out, on the phone most nights. He passed away knowing the Downpatrick Branch was in good hands and was going strong.” By July 2025, the branch had 43 members and Keith says he is working on signing up some more.

For other branches looking for the motivation to keep going, Keith says: “Think of all those that have been in the branch over the years that are no longer here [and] think of all those that gave their today for our tomorrow.”

Thank you for reading! The next edition of Central News is due to be published Tuesday 7 October.