

Minutes for the Annual General Meeting of
The Royal British Legion Newent & District Branch:
Memorial Hall - 27 October 2022

Attendees	Post
Richard Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Vice Chairman/Branch Community Support Officer/Youth Liaison Officer
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Simon Mason	Padre
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Graham Barton	Padre Marshal
Rick Axon	Entertainments & Bar Member
Mary Curtis	
Colin Thomson	Local Poppy Appeal Organiser
Sue Colborne	
Elaine Balding	
Susan Urch	
Pat Price	
John Price	
Dave Pollock	
Colin Calcutt	
Item	Action
<u>1. Act of Remembrance.</u> The Chairman opened the meeting at 1900 hours and asked that we spare a thought for those who could not be with us due to ill health especially Sean Gaunt and to friends of Fred Sandbach who passed away during the past month. He then read the names to the memory of the fallen from the Parish of Newent during WWI & II for the month of November & December followed by the exhortation.	
<u>2. Apologies for Absence.</u> Apologies had been received from Adrian Dover, Tom Heseltine & Helen Powell.	
<u>3. Chairman's Opening Remarks.</u> The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed his thanks for the excellent turn out.	
<u>4. Adoption of Minutes from the previous AGM.</u> The minutes from the AGM held on 28 October 2021 were examined for completeness and accuracy, they were then proposed by RA and seconded by SC that they be accepted as a true record, the motion was passed unanimously.	
<u>5. Matters arising from previous minutes.</u> Item 10. The name of the Deputy Secretary should have read: Ms Sue Colborne, there were no other matters arising.	
<u>6. Chairman's Report.</u> The Chairman's Report can be found at Annex A.	
<u>7. Individual Officers Reports.</u>	

7.a. Vice Chairman/Branch Community Support/ Youth Liaison. The Vice Chairman/BCSO /Youth Liaison Report can be seen at Annex B.

7.b. Branch Padre Report.

I want to begin with words of thanks. Our Chair will no doubt offer such words to other officers of the branch and its committee. I want to thank him together with our Deputy Chair for all they've done on our behalf.

It is important for us to note and celebrate, the respect and high regard with which the branch is held within our wider community. This has been seen throughout this year, in particular during key moments of our national life with the loss of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III.

When we hear all that is achieved it, I'm sure you will agree, this is clearly a cause for thanks.

For the future, we look forward to continuing and growing collaboration with those groups and individuals across Newent and the Area in forthcoming services and Acts of Remembrance.

7.c. Parade Marshal Report.

This has been an unusual year to say the least. As well as the well-attended Remembrance Parade in November 2021, there was a special parade to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The big difference with this parade was that it was done in reverse order i.e. from the Church back down to the main car park.

Thanks go to Members of the Branch and all the uniformed and civilian groups who supported these parades and ensured that they ran smoothly.

7.d. Entertainments & Bar Member Report.

The Entertainments and Bar Member stated that it was a difficult year with many factors contributing to some of the planned events not going ahead, however he did inform all concerned that the planned social in Cobblers would be going ahead on Thursday 24 November 2022. It was suggested that our branch meeting could take place in Cobblers. The Chairman volunteered to approach Cobblers to see if the back room could be reserved for this activity.

He then went on to state that the Branch Christmas meal would be at the Alma in Linton on 14 December 2022 commencing at 7pm, the Menu for the meal will be available mid-November when it will be sent out to members.

Remaining Officers. There were no more officer reports.

8. Presentation and Adoption of Accounts. The Treasurer presented the branch accounts for the year end 30 June 2022. It

was proposed by EB and seconded by MC that the accounts be adopted for this year, the motion was carried unanimously. It was also discussed that in order for branch members to get a fuller picture of the branch accounts, they should be sent out to members with the AGM convening notice. This was agreed by all present.	Secretary
--	-----------

9. Election and Committee Members. It was proposed by KU and seconded by GB that MC take over the role of Secretary. This was agreed unanimously. Therefore, the branch Committee for the next 12 months are as follows:

Position	Name
Chairman	Mr Richard Balding
Deputy Chairman	Mr Keith Urch
Secretary	Mrs Mary Curtis
Treasurer	Mrs Helen Axon
Branch Community Support	Mr Keith Urch
Parade Marshal	Mr Graham Barton
Entertainments	Mr Rick Axon
Meetings Bar Member	Mr Rick Axon
Padre	Rev Simon Mason
Deputy Padre	Rev Pat Phillips

10. Nominations to National Office.
There were no Nominations to National Office.

11. Motions and Charter Motions for the Annual Meeting of the County Conference.
There were no Charter Motions.

12. Appointment of Delegates to the Annual Meeting of the County Conference and Annual Conference.
There were no volunteers at this stage.

13. Special Items.

13.a. Poppy Appeal Organiser. The local Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) informed the meeting that the Poppy Appeal (PA) this year has raised £12,431.65, the PAO was congratulated on such an incredible total in such difficult circumstances. He then went on to explain some of the difficulties faced this year with some of the local PA collectors retiring but others well in to their 80/90s still 'soldiering' on, but he has got 2 new collectors from this year which will help.

He then gave us an update on the CWGC project to erect a gravestone to honour Private Percy Griffin Williams as reported in August's minutes.

He mentioned that he will be having a stall under the Market House this Saturday (29/10/2022) and 5 November 2022, CC from the branch has volunteered to support this event, no other volunteers this year are required.

<p>The PAO finished by thanking all the shops and the local PA collectors for all their hard work this year.</p> <p>The Chairman then passed across the Knitted Poppies that were donated from Tibberton Show, which could be added to his list of Poppy Appeal merchandise on the stall.</p> <p><u>13.b. Remembrance Parade & Service.</u></p> <p>13.b.i. 11 Nov 2022 – School Service. The Padre stated that the new head of Newent Community School was a supporter of Remembrancetide and therefore the service at the school will be going ahead as per previous years. Once the Branch had received the Invitation to attend the service the membership would be informed.</p> <p>13.b.ii. 13 Nov 2022 – Parade and Service. The Padre mentioned that the Parade and Service was going ahead as previously published, he then went on to give the details of the day.</p>	
<p><u>14. Any Other Business</u></p> <p>14.a. Recruitment Difficulties. The Parade Marshal highlighted how difficult it currently is to keep people active in the various committee roles, he stated that one of the Household Divisions which has over 1000 members, at a recent meeting only 2 members attended.</p>	
<p><u>11 Date of Next Monthly Meeting.</u> The Meeting closed at 2020 hours. The next monthly meeting will take place on 24 November 2022 Starting at 1900 hours.</p>	All

Agenda for The Newent & District Branch Royal British Legion

Committee Meeting 24 November 2022

1. Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Chairman’s Opening Remarks.
4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes
5. Reports by Officers.
6. Any Other Business.
7. Date of Next Meeting.

Newent and District Branch TRBL
Annual General Meeting - 27 October 2022
Chairman's Report

Introduction

It would be very amiss of me to start my report without a tribute to both Prince Phillip who died on the 9 April 2021 and to our patron Queen Elizabeth II who passed away in Balmoral on 8 September 2022, they were lifelong supporters of the Royal British Legion and will be sadly missed by the whole country, however I'm sure like me we wish King Charles III a long and prosperous reign.

Welfare

Keith has again delivered a stellar year on the welfare front, he continues to provide support to a wide range of beneficiaries, whether that's with simple phone calls to check on their health, lifts where required or with more complex issues involving the Royal British Legion welfare team, Gloucestershire County Council or Forest of Dean District Council, nothing is too much bother, obviously Keith is always first on my list when it comes to thank you's and this year is no different. However, I would really like to see Keith receive some help as well, so if anyone feels they have the time to spare a couple of hours a month to give Keith a sounding board or as an extra set of eyes and ears to spot issues or potential issues please let us know.

Membership

As is the case most years the membership numbers have fluctuated, we've had several new members and we've unfortunately lost some members, at the moment the membership stands at 43 which is 2 lower than last year. In order to maintain the 'status Quo' for next year recruitment will need to be at least 10%, however, with the ever-increasing age demographic of our members a more realistic target of 20% would be a better target, with an emphasis on bringing in a younger group to become more actively involved in the branch and therefore future proofing the continuing development of the branch.

Affiliations

The branch has had a growth year with regards to fostering the affiliations gained over the past couple of years, I believe the branch now has an excellent working relationship with both Newent Town Council and the Air Cadets, with good connections on-going with Newent Community School and the local Girl Guiding movement. It is my intention to continue the excellent work achieved by your committee over the coming year and to expand the branches affiliations and liaisons to the wider Newent voluntary and young people's activity groups, but this can only be achieved by every member taking an active role in promoting and pushing the Royal British Legion forward in to the community.

Finances

The branch bank balance remains healthy with very little movement throughout the year. The branch has a small amount available for recognised good causes, so if anyone has any ideas or suggestions on future branch projects, please let anyone of the committee know.

Poppy Appeal

Our local Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) Colin will be giving us his report later in the meeting, where he will be setting out some of the incredible successes, he achieved during yet another unusual and challenging year, my heartfelt thanks go to Colin for all his hard work to make 2021/2022 such a fantastic year.

Other Activities

Some of the other activities the branch has been involved in this year include but are not limited to:

On 12 March 2022 several members of the branch helped out at a fundraiser raising money for displaced families affected by the war in Ukraine, the fundraiser which was held at short notice by both Newent Town Council and the Memorial Hall raised a magnificent £1,500.

The branch was asked by NTC to contribute in both the planning and execution of Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee which took place over the extended bank holiday of 2 – 5 June 2022, the program of events organised included: raising of the union flag and proclamation, a party in the Memorial Hall, the Picnic by the lake and a Parade including an open-air service. All the events were extremely well attended and were very successful in bringing the whole community together.

The Tewkesbury, West Cheltenham, Newent and Staunton (TWNS) NHS wellbeing team also invited the Branch to a Health & Wellbeing Event in the Glebe Chapel Hub (Old Good News Centre) on 2 September 2022, where 2 branch members stood for 3 hours showcasing the RBL support available to beneficiaries, this also enabled the branch to foster good relations with local organisations.

And the branch has been actively supporting the efforts of the Dymock War Memorial restoration project by selling raffle tickets and publicising their fundraising events.

Thank You's

Our branch prides itself on the support it gives not only to serving and ex-armed forces personal but to the local community as a whole, this is largely due to the unselfishness and dedication of our long serving Branch Community Support Officer as mentioned earlier, I would also like to extend my thanks to Newent Town Council and the Veteran's representative for all the support they have given the branch over the previous year, I believe we have the makings of a very good working relationship.

Our Treasurer took over the running of the accounts at short notice and at a very difficult time and got up to speed very quickly in order to keep the branch finances on the straight and narrow, so a big thank you there, also having a difficult year is our Entertainments and Bar Member, who has coped admirably with the changing circumstances, thanks Rick. The Parade Marshal has put in an epic shift over the year with not only supporting the branch on Parade etiquette but Parading the Standard where required, thank you Graham. I would also like to give a big thank you to our Branch Padre Simon, who continues to support the branch 100% in every endeavour we take on, he's always there for impartial advice and moral support and always has an alternative solution when things don't go quite to plan, and of course we can always call upon Padre Pat to offer support and red wine when the going gets tough.

So far, I have thanked the branch committee for their support over the past year, but I would be amiss if I didn't mention the support, I've received from Colin C at any and all 'pop-up' events this year, he has been a constant and I wish him well with his future endeavours, I for one will be sorry to see him go. Elaine has been a constant support to myself during my tenure as Chairman as both Deputy Secretary and Raffle Coordinator, but after much deliberation she has finally put her health first and decided to take things easy, so from a personal point of view a big thank you to her.

Last but not least to all our members, whether they are able to make events and meetings or not, it always lovely to see so many of you turn out, this is such valuable support mechanism for such a small branch, so thank you.

Richard Balding
Chairman
Newent & District Branch
The Royal British Legion

AGM - 2021/2022 Annual Report from The Branch Community Officer
Report from the Branch Community Officer.

Newent RBL 2022 Branch AGM BCS Report

This year we were saddened to report and record the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, our Patron of many years.

The Branch recorded this by the issue of a Loyal Message, Commemorate Services and the Proclamation announcing Charles III as our King - God Save The King.

Vice Chairman/Branch Community Support/Youth Liaison.

I express my sincere thanks to my Branch colleagues for their continued support during what has been an extremely unusual and difficult year for many as we have moved out of various periods of restraint imposed by the COVID pandemic into a more open community environment. Thanks must also go to those manning the Veteran's Gateway and the other local District and County Council community support organisations.

As in previous years, my report covers three main areas, all of which are encompassed within the role of Branch Community Support and Welfare Officer.

BRANCH MEMBERSHIP

Members may recall that membership numbers have fluctuated significantly over the past years from 56 members to 41 members, rising to 43 and then falling to a low of 39 members during last year but with everyone's support, membership has stabilised at 42 members, with a further number of renewals pending.

The Branch is justifiably proud of its membership, especially recognising that many of the UK's smaller branches have now closed or amalgamated with other regional branches.

BRANCH WELFARE

It is considered useful that we measure this year's summary data against that of previous COVID related periods.

During the years 2019/2020, a total of 71 welfare visits were made to members and their families, with a further 138 contacts of support being made through the Telephone Buddy network. This represented a significant increase from previous years, reflecting the need to support our colleagues and their families.

The 2020/2021 period presented a totally different picture with an increase in need for supporting services, focused around health and mobility with a far lesser request for advice on financial matters. In summary, the Branch data for this period in accordance with the revised RBL National Reporting System was as follows:

Total Number of Welfare Visits (including those at distance)	26 visits
Beneficiary visits:	22
Branch Community Supporters:	28
Total Welfare Expenditure was:	NIL

Total Telephone Buddy calls made:	43
Beneficiaries called:	22

The 2021/2022 Reporting Period

The current reporting period 2021/2022 presents yet another different picture a summary of which follows:

Total Number of Welfare Visits (including those at distance)	60 visits
Beneficiary visits:	24
Branch Community Supporters:	36
Total Welfare Expenditure was:	NIL
Total Telephone Buddy calls made:	67
Beneficiaries called:	26

Assistance has also been provided to local, District and County organisations in support of arranging tributes to the late Fred Sandbach, member of REME who recently passed away in Highfields Nursing Home, Newent.

NOTE: Details of his funeral have yet to be announced.

YOUTH LIAISON AND BRANCH AFFILIATIONS

Regular communications have continued to be maintained with local youth organisations, schools and community organisations. Despite a number of community events being postponed or cancelled last year, commemorative events did occur.

Please note that this year's Commemorative Service at Newent Community School is scheduled to occur on Friday, 11th November: all members are welcome.

The Branch continues to support the family wishes of the late John Edward Whitehorn having established a youth award in his honour, albeit we still await receipt of nominations for this year. Interest in Affiliation continues but unfortunately with the ongoing changes in County structures your representatives have not been as proactive as they would have wished. It is hoped that by this time next year we will be able to present a more uplifting report.

TRBL finally issued Branch process and procedures for BCS training: your Chairman and BCS Representative attended the introductory course and have recently completed all training modules thereby formally classifying the Newent Branch as a fully qualified provider of BCS services.

Sales of the Newent Local History Society's book highlighting the great loss that Newent and District families had suffered in both World Wars, "We Will Remember Them", continues. A further three sales by our Branch this year has increased general NLHS funds.

Future works on Newent's War Memorial, unfortunately delayed due to certain ongoing restrictions, has recommenced. Community support has also been provided to Dymock's War Memorial Committee and into the research of one of Oxenhall's fallen WW1 soldiers.

RECOGNITION

Special thanks are recorded to the following: Newent Memorial Hall Committee, Members of the Newent Local History Society, Local Businesses, Schools and other Community Groups for their continuing support and raising funds for both The Branch and The Poppy Appeal, the focus of which will be totally different this year as opposed to previous years.

However, we must remember that the ongoing success of the Branch is due to its Committee, Branch Members, the many other unsung heroes of the Newent Branch of the Royal British Legion and local community, without whose support the Royal British Legion would not be the success that it is today.

Keith Urch
Branch Community Support Representative,
Newent Branch BR3063
Royal British Legion