

**Minutes from: Newent & District Branch of The Royal British Legion.**

**Held 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023 Cobblers.**

<b><u>Attendees</u></b>	<b><u>Post</u></b>
Keith Urch	Deputy Chairman, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership Secretary
Mary Curtis	Secretary
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Simon Mason	Pardre
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal
Rick Axon	Bar, Entertainment Member
Sue Urch	
Colin Calcutt	
Colin Thompson	Poppy Appeal Organiser
Sue Thompson	Guest
Adrian Dover	

**1. Act of Remembrance.**

The Vice Chairman opened the meeting at 1901 hours and asked to think of the people who couldn't be with us due to ill health. He then went on to hold a silence to remember the members of the Parish who lost their lives during WW1 and WW2.

**2. Apologies for Absence.**

Richard & Elaine Balding, Colin & Sue Britt, Jon & Viv Mailes, Pat & John Price, Sue Colbourne, Andrew Woodruff, Julia Gooch, David Pollock, Tom Heseltine, Terry Weaver, Pat Phillips.

**3. Chairman's Report.**

**Introduction.**

My report this month covers both June and July, and begins with:

**Innsworth Military Wives Concert – 25 June 2023**

I am starting my report off with the fabulous Innsworth Military Wives Choir Concert, which took place on 25 June 2023. For those of you who managed to make the event, I think we can all say it was an excellent afternoon performance, from the conductor (Adrian) who was extremely funny to the ladies of the Choir who radiated fun and professionalism and delivered a brilliant performance. I've had so many people approach and say how much they enjoyed it, but none of this could have gone ahead without the sterling efforts from Graham & Rick who organised the event, Pat & John, Colin and Helen for helping out on the day with the "Door Security", Teas, Coffee and Squash supplies and of course to everyone who donated Cakes, which of course went down well. We had a great turnout around the 80 mark and

all the profits from the tickets sales and “on the day” donations will go towards this year’s Poppy Appeal. Once again thanks to everyone who supported this event.

### **Armed Forces Day Flag Raising – 19 June 2023.**

Newent Town Council (NTC) invited the Branch along with the Standard to be present at this years Armed Forces Day Flag Raising, unfortunately I was unable to attend but our Deputy Chairman, Parade Marshal (with Standard) and Gp Capt Annie Reid from County and Chair of the National Conference Committee were in attendance.

### **Dymock War Memorial Unveiling – 15 July 2023.**

Dymock War memorial restoration team asked the Branch if the Standard was available to attend the Dymock War Memorial Restoration Unveiling event on 15 July 2023, Graham volunteered to carry and present the Branch Standard at the event, your Deputy Chairman volunteered to represent the Branch in my absence. I’m sure both Keith and Graham will let you know how the day went, but I would like to add my personal thanks to both Graham and Keith for once again supporting and volunteering to attend this event on behalf of the Branch.

### **Branch Membership 2023.**

Branch membership is fluctuating on a month by month basis, Keith will give you this month’s numbers during his report. I have been having some discussions with Linda from Manna Creative about holding monthly Veterans Coffee mornings. This would have multiple aims; to bring together local veterans in safe and friendly environment, to give them the chance to chat with like-minded people and to receive help if required and I hope as a stepping stone to RBL Branch Membership if this also meets their needs. We hoped to get things off the ground in July, but due to personal issues this was not possible, however, we are back on track to launch for August time, Linda has suggested the launch take place one evening and would be in the form of drinks and nibbles followed thereafter by monthly coffee mornings.

If members were free to support the opening and follow-on coffee mornings it would help to get things started, also if anyone has ideas on a catchy name for the gatherings or a logo this would also help. Ideas of any kind are always welcome.

### **Pure Music Quiz Night – 27 August 2023.**

Cobblers have approached me with an idea to hosting a Music Quiz night in aid of the Poppy Appeal, obviously I’ve said fantastic idea, the initial premise would be to have teams of 4 people paying £5 per person. They are keen to use a ‘quiz master’ they have used before who charges a fee, and there will be a cash prize but any profit would be donated to the Poppy Appeal, the date will be 27 August 2023 starting at 7pm. Note: after minute change the start will be 6pm.

I think this is a fantastic gesture which I think we should support as much a possible. I will be around on 27<sup>th</sup> August so would be interested in making up a team, but if we could get 2 teams that would show a level of backing for their continued support for our Branch and the wider RBL.

### **Gloucestershire County Committee**

If you read the special bulletin, I sent out earlier this month, you will have seen that the Gloucestershire County Committee has been put under special measure; the information received as:

**“As of the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 2023 the County of Gloucestershire was placed into Membership Council administration. As MC Representative I met with the Couty Chairman to discuss the process.**

**John Moloney had stepped down and Garry Mills has been asked to stand in as Membership Council Interim County Chairman which he has duly accepted. There will an election in due course for this position.**

**This action is in no way John Moloney’s fault but is historical, please there should be no blame culture.**

**I would like all Branches to support Garry in forming a new County Committee and in forming a new start for Gloucestershire in Branch networking, development training, two key actions to support your Branches and County. The sooner we can achieve this the sooner we can take the County out of administration.**

**Once again please support Garry in his efforts for supporting you the Members in bringing the County together.”**

So, if anyone is interested in getting involved at a county level, let me know.

#### **Finally**

Don’t forget that as normal if anyone needs help in any way at all please do not hesitate to get in contact, and if we can help, we will.

#### **4. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.**

During the Chairman’s report he spoke of excursions the Cinderford RBL were organising but there has not been any feed back from them.

Chairman’s Report:

GIN Distillery Tour date – Should have been 12/08/2023 not 12/0/2023. Innsworth Military Wives Concert – The Wye Inn having closed its doors, not closed it’s doors.

Reports by Officers – Sub section numbers not in correct order.

Previous minutes were proposed by RA and Seconded by CC and accepted as a true and accurate record.

#### **5. Reports by Officers.**

##### **5.a Vice Chair/ BCSO/ Youth Liaison.**

Here we are in July and many things have occurred in the past month.

Unfortunately, on the veteran and support side, this particular month has been busier than normal with a greater number of our Branch Members suffering from ill health. As a close-knit Branch, we have all provided various aspects of support to each other which in itself is credit to the welfare of our much valued members and their families.

##### **Deputy Chairman/ Membership/ Youth Liaison/ Branch Community Support (BCS)**

We remember those veterans, friends and Branch colleagues suffering ill health, or experiencing difficulties that are unable to be present this evening: please remember that we are here to assist and support you; you only need to contact one of your Committee Members.

### **Membership, Branch Community Support #representative and Youth Liaison Officer.**

A new call has been published from TRBL seeking BCS Representatives, on-line courses are available: see your Branch Chairman or BCS Representative for further details. We are currently fortunate in this respect as the Branch is fully compliant and registered with TRBL HQ and County enabling it to respond to all BCS matters.

### **Welfare and Membership.**

#### **Welfare.**

The Branch continues to aid and support its members and veterans, initially by signposting them to the National RBL Helpline and by interaction with local community and national organisations.

Members are reminded The National RBL Helpline telephone number is: 0808 802 8080

[https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/127/~the-royal-british-legion](https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/127/~the-royal-british-legion)

Please be assured that we will always continue to utilise our local knowledge and contacts to support our members and veterans.

#### **Branch Membership.**

In accordance with TRBL records, current Branch Membership remains at 36 members,

#### **Branch Statistics.**

The Branch has continued to provide support to Members and veterans this period.

In the event that members identify a comrade in need, they are encouraged to contact a Committee Member or BCS Representative at the earliest convenience. All communications are confidential.

**Branch Statistics** for this period are therefore as follows:

Total Number of Welfare visits 6

How any beneficiaries visited 4

How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters) 6

Total Welfare Expenditure NIL (see Note 1)

Telephone Buddies:

Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive 15

Telephone – How many Beneficiaries called 8

Telephone – How many telephone buddies 6

**Notes:**

1. Your Branch still awaits the outcome of the RBLHQ review of our recent “Crisis Grant” to one of our Veterans. Recognising the current demise of The Gloucestershire County Branch, it is considered unlikely that this matter will be progressed further.
2. A small number of email and telephone communications were made to TRBL HQ staff during this period seeking advice and support to our members.

### **Community, Youth and Veteran Activities.**

#### **1. The Buchanan Trust.**

We have again contacted The Charity’s Veterans Support Manager, Samantha Brittain and have pleasure in informing you that she will be visiting the Branch, providing us with an overview of The Trust’s activities in the Autumn: more information will be published in due course.

<https://www.buchanan-trust.org.uk>

#### **2. Other Matters.**

With the main event of the RBL Annual Conference over, we now discover from TRBL HQ that our long-serving Director General of some 7 years, Charles Byrne will be stepping down later this year. Charles will remain in the post until the end of November, seeing TRBL through both this year’s Poppy Appeal and Remembrance events. More information has been forwarded to all Branch Members.

In conjunction with Graham, our Branch Standard Bearer, we had pleasure in representing The Branch at the inauguration of the Dymock War Memorial following the addition of several names, missing from the time at which it was originally erected: photographs will be following in due course.

Further information to be found in Graham’s report.

Activities continue on works to upgrade Newent’s War Memorial and incorporate those names originally omitted. The tender document has been finalised and agreed by all the connected parties and a list of suitable organisations agreed.

A number of the Newent Local History Society (NLHS) publications relating to the research of names of those on Newent’s War Memorial “We Will Remember Them” remains available.

Members are reminded that the HMG and Services grants continue to remain available for those suffering hardship.

Liaison continues with Newent’s Town Council, its school, youth and community organisations, the aim of which is to promote TRBL and its specific activities in and around Newent.

The process for TRBL Branch Affiliation continues to be reviewed by TRBL HQ.

#### **3. TRBL HQ, County Liaison and Branch Communications (OS365)**

With the main event of the RBL’s Annual Conference over, we now discover from TRBL HQ that our long-serving Director General of some 7 years, Charles Byrne will be stepping down later this year. Charles will remain in post until the end of November, seeing TRBL through both this year’s Poppy Appeal and Remembrance events.

For further matters relating to other specific HQ/County/Branch communications and local activities see your Chairman's and other Representative Reports.

### **Forthcoming Date for TRBL Diary**

Newent's Civic and TRBL Community Service of Remembrance – Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> November.

Next year TRBL Conference will be held at the ICC in Newport, Wales during 10/12<sup>th</sup> May – more information as time progresses

### **5.b. Treasurer's Report**

At the end of June, the balance of the current account was £1286.41. This includes £18.50 from HQ for Branch Subs. The other transactions relate to the Military Wives Concert. Ticket sales £607.50. This includes a donation from GB of £30. This was compensation from his bank for an error administering his cheque. Expenses £285. This was for the choir themselves plus Hall hire. Cheque to be paid to the Poppy Appeal Fund £322.50. There may be more collected from buckets at the event. Some of transactions from the Concert will show on next month's statement.

Incidentally, the statements are now coming through with a reference, for example, a payment from the Jim Prince Fund will state that, and payments from RBL will state that also. Previously the Treasurer has had to guess where the money had come from and what it related to.

June 30<sup>th</sup> is the end of the financial year for RBL Branches. The accounts have been submitted to the MEO using Lomas. There is much more paperwork this year, however. We are now required to present the accounts to Committee; agree and sign off by Chairman (Deputy) and Secretary, returning the signed copies to the MEO for approval.

### **5.c. Parade Marshal.**

GB reported about the Unveiling of Dymock's War Memorial Service. The church service was good, and it was busy. They did have a challenge with the Standards outside by the memorial as it was rather windy.

GB also informed us that with the money raised by the Dymock War Memorial team covered all the cost and cleaning the Memorial for every 3 years.

GB has also spoken to the Newent Town Council (NTC) Clark about the Remembrance Service, there is meeting planned 10<sup>th</sup> August at Newent Town Council Offices.

### **5.d. Bar & Entertainments Member.**

Proposed Branch Events 2023.

August	No Events Planned – Summer Holidays
September	No Events Planned
October	Cheese and Wine after AGM
November	Social at Cobblers
December	Branch Christmas Meal (Alma Inn)

### **5.e. P.A.O**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1015hrs at Oxenhall Church there is going to be a dedication of headstone to Pte Percy Griffin Williams. Percy's former regiment, the Welsh Horse will be represented together with members of CWGC, Percy's family and our Chairman, Deputy and Standard Bearer will be in attendance.

### **5.f. Padre.**

SM looking forward to catching up after his time off.

SM is also working on pulling funds for people in need.

### **6. Any Other Business.**

**6.a. Armistice Day** – There is small service to be held at the War Memorial on 11<sup>th</sup> November

**6.b. Memorial Hall Contribution** – SU proposed that the Branch pay £100 contribution to the Memorial Hall in lieu of rent.

**Decision:** RA seconded and all in favour.

**6.c. Aden Veterans Christmas lunch** – GB informed us that the Aden Veterans are having Christmas lunch on 6<sup>th</sup> December at Robinswood Country Club and they would be delighted if any of us would like to attend. Details to be circulated.

**6.d. Aden Veteran Books** – GB & KU spoke about an Aden Veteran who has written some books about the subject please find attach a promotion about them.

### **7. Date of Next Meeting.**

The meeting closed at 1957 hours with the next meeting taking place 24<sup>th</sup> August at 7pm at Newent Memorial Hall.

### **Agenda for Meeting to Newent and District Royal British Legion Branch on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023.**

1. Welcome and Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.
5. Reports by Officers.
6. Any Other Business.
7. Date of Next Meeting.