

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

Meeting Held 28 September 2023 in the Memorial Hall.

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richard Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Deputy Chairman/ BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership Secretary
Mary Curtis	Secretary
Simon Mason	Padre
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal
David Pollock	Raffle Coordinator
Elaine Balding	
Sue Urch	
Jim Gardiner	Guest
Gordon Thorogood	Guest
Jan Sologub	Guest

1. Act of Remembrance.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1900 hours and asked us to think about the people who couldn't be with us due to ill health, including Helen & Rick and Pat. He went on to read the name of the fallen from the Parish of Newent who lost their lives during WW1 and WW2 during the month of October and concluded with the act of Remembrance.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Colin & Susanne Britt, John & Pat Price, Helen & Rick Axon, Viv & Jon Miles, Adrian Dover & Tom Heseltine.

3. Chairman's Report.

Introduction.

A short report this month and mainly for information:

Poppy Appeal Music Quiz Night – Cobblers 27 August 2023.

As mentioned in last month's meeting a Music Quiz Night was held in Cobblers on 27 August in aid of The Poppy Appeal, the Branch heroically put in a team and was pleasantly surprised not to finish last, it was a fun evening and our team Rick, Helen, Adrian and Padre Pat kept a cool head under immense pressure not least the fact that we did not know any of the answers! My thanks go to the 'team' and to Cobblers for staging the event and raising approximately £135 for the Poppy Appeal.

Health and Wellbeing Event – 3 November 2023.

I receive the following email from Beverley Paxton, NHS Health & Wellbeing Coach;

“Following on from the success of last year’s Health and Wellbeing event which we held for our Newent & Staunton patients in and around the local area. We have decided to hold another which we hope will benefit the local community.

The event is aimed at bringing as many local support networks together & invite the local community to come along to gain support & advice many of them may require.

We would like to invite you to attend to advise & support the local community. The event itself will be on Friday 3rd November at Newent Community Centre (Glebe Chapel), Ross Road, Newent 10am – 2.00pm. The venue will be open from 9.30am for set up”

I am currently available to attend but would welcome some company on the day, please let me know. Both GB and DP volunteered to help on the day.

Veterans Coffee Mornings.

The Veterans Coffee Morning Launch was a great success with approximately 15 attendees including our Town Council Veterans Representative and the New Newent Town Council Mayor. Several new contacts were made and I hope to see the Coffee Mornings grow into an informative and eventful addition to the local community. I would like to thank Linda and Sandra for everything they have done to enable this event to come into fruition.

The First actual coffee morning took place on Tuesday 26 September 2023 and was attended by 12 local residents all of whom had interesting stories to tell, so my thanks to everyone who turned up to support and let’s hope it goes from strength to strength. But I would still ask you to advertise the Coffee Mornings around your friends and families to get the word out.

Gloucester County Formation.

Some good news from County Point of view, it looks as though they have managed to get several volunteers to get the County office on an “even keel”, Garry Mills will continue as Chairman and Roy Roberts will be the new vice Chairman. Good luck to both for the coming year.

County Breifing Day – 7 October 2023 at Hardwicke RBL Club.

We’ve been informed that the County Breifing day will take place at the Hardwicke RBL club on Saturday 7 October 2023 starting at 11am, unfortunately I am away so would appreciate a volunteer from the Branch to attend. Unfortunately, no volunteers were available to attend.

Newent & District Branch AGM – 26 October 2023.

By now you should all have seen the Convening Notice for the Newent & District Branch AGM, this is mandatory function from the Royal British Legion constitution, it is basically a notice of intent to hold the AGM and some basic instructions on how to play your part in nominating, seconding and voting candidates to the Branch committee. Obviously with such a small Branch this is not very onerous, however, one important must be filled in order for the Branch to survive and that is the Secretary post which is probably the most pivotal post on the committee. So please if you know of anyone who would be willing to take on this important position, please let me know. I will of course offer as much help to any candidate as is required.

Branch Membership 2023.

Membership continues to be stable at the present time. But with such a low number of members, if anyone has any ideas on how to attract or recruit new members, I would love the opportunity to discuss any proposals.

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.

The following items were picked up from last month's meeting:

- In Item 1. Saun Gaunt should have been spelt Sean Gaunt.
- Top of page 2 the date was wrong it was meant to be 10th August 2023 not 10th July 2023.
- 6.c. Publicity Posters – GB has only the draft copy but has now seen the finished poster.

The Minutes of the last meeting were then agreed as a true and accurate record with a proposal from GB, seconded by PP and agreed unanimously.

5.Reports by Officers.

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

As a close-knit Branch, we continue to provide various levels of support to each other, whether near or far, 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, Branch and former colleagues suffering ill health 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.

Your BCS representatives have been requested to update their BCS DBS training in anticipation of significant changes to TRBL BCS and Veteran Support Process.

These changes are currently being instigated and anticipated to be rolled out by January 2024 – more information available upon request.

Welfare and Membership.

Welfare

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

Members are reminded that The National RBL Helpline telephone number is: 0808 802 08080

And the Veteran's Gateway:

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.

Members may recall my previous communication regarding proposed changes to the Veteran Services, planned for next year: more information upon request and when TRBL finalise their proposals.

Branch Membership

In accordance with TRBL records, current Branch Membership stands at 35 members, albeit we are expecting a nominal increase following the excellent launch of the Veterans Coffee Morning c/o Linda at Manna Creative.

Having welcomed our new member, Pauline Warren to The Branch we look forward to seeing her at forthcoming meetings

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: 10
- How many beneficiaries visited: 6
- How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters) 4
- Total Welfare Expenditure NIL (See Note 1)
- Telephone Buddies:
- Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive 12
- Telephone – How many beneficiaries called: 6
- Telephone – How many telephone buddies: 8

Community, Youth and Veteran Liaison Activities.

Service of Dedication of Headstone of Pte Percy Griffin Williams at Oxenhall PC on Tuesday 22nd August.

In conjunction with Oxenhall Parish Church and supported by our PAO, Colin Thomson, The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) have prepared and placed a headstone in The Churchyard in his memory.

This was a unique event for the Branch and a memorable event. Photographs showing the Service of Dedication at Oxenhall PC are available.

Percy's former regiment, the Welsh Horse was represented together with members of the CWGC, Percy's family and our Chairman, Deputy and Standard Bearer, Graham Barton were attendance. Many thanks to David P for acting as photographer.

Further to this event, St Anne's Church are presenting a talk on the work of the CWGC on Thursdays, 19th October, commencing at 7.00pm: poster available, pre-booking is essential via contacting Lizzie James.

The Buchanan Trust.

A reminder – The Charity's Veterans Support Manager, Samantha Brittain will be visiting the Branch, providing us with an overview of The Trust's activities.

It is anticipated that Samantha is still aiming to visit the Branch before the end of the year: more information will be published in due course once a date is finalised. <https://www.buchanan-trust.org.uk>

Health and Wellbeing Event – 3rd November

The Branch has been invited to attend this session, as it did last year being held at Newent's Ross Road Community Centre between the hours of 10am and 2pm.

Your support is appreciated – more information is available from your Chairman.

Other Matters.

Activities continue on works to upgrade Newent's War Memorial and incorporate those names originally omitted. Following further discussions with The Diocese, GCC and FoDCC, the tender document has been finalised and being issued.

Members are reminded at HMG and Service grants continue to remain available for those suffering hardship.

Liaison continues with Newent's Town Council, its schools, 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 remains ongoing by TRBL HQ: further updates are expected shortly.

TRBL HQ, County Liaison and Branch Communications (OS365)

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

Forthcoming Dates for TRBL Branch Diary

Health and Wellbeing Event, 3rd November, 10am to 2pm at Newent's Community Centre, Ross Road.

Aden Veterans Christmas Lunch being held on 6th December at Robinswood Hotel – Booking essential via our Parade Marshal, Graham.

Newent Community School & Sixth Form Centre Memorial Service is scheduled to occur on Friday 10th November at The School in Watery Lane.

A short Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, 11th November at 11am at the War Memorial in the grounds of St Mary's Church.

Newent's Annual Civic and TRBL Community Service of Remembrance – Sunday 12th November, St Mary's Church.

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

In the meantime, stay safe, we will look forward to seeing you in October.

5.b. Treasurer's Report.

There have been no transactions this month. The current account balance stands at £951.91

5.c. Padre's Report.

SM has a meeting with Newent Town Council (NTC) for Remembrance Service to be held on 12th November. Also, there is to be a slimmed down act of Remembrance on Saturday 11th November.

SM also said about the Remembrance Service to be held at Newent Community School on Friday 10th November.

SM thought it would be nice to highlight and acknowledge members who have served and incorporate in the Remembrance Service on 12th November. He asked the Chairman if a questionnaire could be sent around to members in order to find out the individual Service, Branch and Regiment. **Action:** The Chairman agreed to send out the questionnaire to the Branch Membership, collate it and then send back to the Padre.

5.d. Bar & Entertainments Member.

Proposed Branch Events 2023

October	Cheese and Wine after AGM (Memorial Hall)
November	Branch Meeting and Social in Cobblers
December	21 st December 19:00 – Branch Christmas Meal. Menu and prices to follow.

5.e. Raffle Coordinator.

DP would like to thank everyone for their kind words about the photos he took at Oxenhall. He has also offered to take photos at the Remembrance Service on 12th November. This was gratefully accepted.

6.Any Other Business.

6.a. Padre Pat.

PP brought in a mug that was decorated with a historical record of The Gloucestershire Regiment. **Action:** GB is going to see if the Soldiers of Gloucester Regiment are interested in this historical mug.

6.b. Parde Marshal

Aden Veterans Christmas Lunch.

GB currently has 8 Branch members down to attend. He requires payment by 13th October. Menu attached to separate email, food choices to be given to him.

GB asked if an Invite could be sent to the Air Cadets for volunteer Standard Bearer and Bugler. **Action:** The Chairman volunteered to email the Air Cadets.

After such successful launch of the Veterans Coffee Mornings, for which Manna Creative provided snacks & wine free of charge, GB proposed that a fee of £40 is paid to Manna Creative Coffee and Crafts to cover some of the Veterans Coffee Morning publicity. **Action:** After some discussion SU seconded the proposal with the vote carried unanimously.

6.c. Chairman.

RB wanted to show the Branches appreciation to a member who does so much for the Branch in so many ways in his different roles. So, with everyone's agreement he presented KU with a certificate of appreciation from the Branch.

The Chairman stated that the Branches current mobile Notice Board is too big for small venues, so asked if any Branch members knew where we could obtain a smaller information board. **Action:** SM & GB volunteered to look at St Mary's to see if they have one that is surplus to requirements.

The Chairman asked if someone could distribute some Branch Publicity Posters to the traders around town. **Action:** KU volunteered to distribute the posters.

6.d. Padre

The Padre mentioned that the Newent History Society would like to donate some 'We will Remember Them' Books, which highlights the List of the fallen from Newent and their military history where known. SM thought it could be used for promotional reasons in order to promote the History Society and Newent & District Branch TRBL. Everyone present agreed this was an excellent gesture and a good idea.

The Padre informed all that the proposed Maildrop is on hold for the moment – there is a bigger plan on offering for the New Year.

6.e. Veterans ID Card Phase II

KU informed all present that the next phase of the Veterans ID Card was underway.

7.Date of Next Meeting.

The Meeting closed at 2012 hours, the next meeting is the AGM which being held at Newent Memorial Hall on 23 November 2023 starting at 1900 hours.

Newent & District Branch – The Royal British Legion

Annual General Meeting – 26 October 2023

Agenda

1. Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Chairman's opening remarks.
4. Adoption of Minutes of previous AGM.
5. Matters arising from previous minutes.
6. Chairman's report.
7. Individual Officers' reports.
 - a. Deputy Chair, Welfare, Community Liaison
 - b. Padre
 - c. Parade Marshal
 - d. Entertainment & Bar Member
 - e. Raffle Co-Ordinator
 - f. Secretary
8. Presentation and adoption of accounts.
9. Election of Officers and Committee Members.
10. Nominations to National Office.
11. Motions and Charter Motions for the Annual Meeting of the County Conference.
12. Appointment of Delegates to the Annual Meeting of the County Conference and Annual Conference.
13. Special Items:
 - a. Remembrance Parade & Services
 - i. 10 Nov 2023 – School Service (Padre)
 - ii. 11 Nov 2023 – Small Service at War Memorial
 - iii. 12 Nov 2023 – Parade & Service (Parade Marshal & Padre)