

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

### **Meeting Held 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 in Newent Memorial Hall.**

<b><u>Attendees</u></b>	<b><u>Post</u></b>
Keith Urch	Deputy Chairman, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership Secretary
David Sass	Secretary
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal
Rev Simon Mason	Padre
Rev Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Sue Urch	
Dave Pollock	Raffle Coordinator
Adrian Dover	
John Miles	
Jan Sologub	

#### **1 Act of Remembrance.**

The Deputy Chairman opened the meeting at 1900 hours and asked for all Members present to take a few moments to think of all those who could not be with us tonight due to ill health. He then made a general statement of Remembrance and concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

#### **2 Apologies for Absence.**

Richie Balding, Elaine Balding, Gordon Thorogood, Colin Calcutt, Jim Gardiner, Terry Weaver, Susanne Britt, Colin Britt, Mary Curtis, Jim Gardiner, Rick Axon, Tim Heseltine, Pat Price, John Price, Viv Miles,. and Susan Urch

#### **3 Chairman's Report.** Presented by Deputy Chairman Keith Urch

First of all sorry I couldn't be there tonight but I was forced to go on holiday again? It's been a very quiet month relatively speaking so my report is very short this time:

##### **3.1 County Annual General Meeting and Conference – 27 January 2024**

As mentioned last month, the County AGM & Conference went ahead on the 27<sup>th</sup> January at the Tuffley Community Association building, your Deputy Chairman and myself attended and had a rip-roaring time! I'll give you a few highlights but I'm sure Keith will fill you in with the rest of the story during his report:

- Approximately half of the County Branches sent Voting delegates (21), which is a very good result and there were approximately 30-35 visitors making it an impressive turnout.
- There were a couple of speakers: Cllr Richard Cook, leader of Gloucester City Council and a representative talking about a Kosovo initiative entitled Kosovo 25. Keith has the leaflet and I'm sure will give you some background information during his report.
- The Poppy Appeal Manager let us know that although the 'count' was not yet complete the totals for 22/23 stood at (North Gloucestershire) £624,840 and (South Gloucestershire) £227,473 and those figures are expected to rise in the final figures.

- The Poppy Appeal as a whole, last year (22/23) made £47.4 Million and this year so far has made £42.8 Million.

The rest of the AGM & Conference went as usual, with several attendees stepping up to take on a role in the County Committee. My impressions are that there is a good chance the County will be taken out of administration after the qualifying period, which can only be a good thing, but if anyone would like to take on a County role then let me know and I'll put you forward.

### **3.2 Cobblers Poppy Appeal Fundraising**

On Tuesday 13 February 2024, Cobblers held a fund raising event in aid of the Poppy Appeal. Unfortunately, I didn't know about it until the day, so could not get out suitable warnings to the Branch. However, it was a good evening and took the form of a Pancake evening which involved eating pancakes and making a donation to the Poppy Appeal. I did see some members there including but not limited to Padre Pat, Adrian, Jon and Viv and our local Poppy Appeal Organiser Colin. Sorry if I've missed anybody out, it was a busy night and I was sat in the 'Snug'. My thanks go to Graham for hosting and to Simon for all his efforts in Cooking.

### **3.3 Veteran's Coffee Morning – 27 February 2024**

Keith has again volunteered to run next week's Veterans Coffee morning in my continued absence, so please support if you are available.

As I said my report this month is short and very sweet but if anyone needs to discuss anything please 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.

I look forward to seeing you all next month.

Regards and best wishes

**Richard Balding**

Chairman

Newent & District Branch (BR3063) TRBL

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

Previous minutes were proposed by Graham Barton and seconded by Adrian Dover and accepted as a true and accurate record.

There were no outstanding matters

## **Reports by Officers.**

### **5 Branch Community Support (BCS) Report for February 2024**

Your Chairman and I attended TRBL Gloucestershire AGM at Tuffley Community Centre on Saturday, 27th January 2024.

As we move into another period of change, we are pleased to record that the County is moving out of special measures and there are signs of further changes in structure and staffing at TRBL HQ. Updates will be posted to everyone as time progresses.

Colin C has now moved to Derbyshire and we wish him well in his new surroundings: his contact details are available to Members upon request.

We remember those veterans, friends and Branch colleagues that are unable to be present this evening: please remember that we are here to assist and support both veterans and their families; you only need to contact one of your Committee Members.

## **6 Branch Welfare, Membership, Statistics, Community Support and Youth Liaison.**

As mentioned in my brief introduction, there continue to be many planned changes within TRBL HQ and the BCS sphere in particular.

You are encouraged to “watch this space” for further details.

## **7.Branch 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.

During this period we have provided support to two local veterans, neither of whom are currently Branch Members and have been asked by our MEO to support two other veterans as part of the RBL Telephone Buddy Network.

It was previously mentioned that the way in which veterans are to contact the RBL National RBL Helpline is to change.

However, this is unlikely to occur in the coming weeks so all contact routes remain as at present:

RBL National RBL Helpline remains as: 0808 802 8080.and The Veteran’s Gateway:  
<https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk>

## **8 Veteran Liaison and Support Grants**

We have recently welcomed a number of new veterans to our Newent community and willingly offer our support to those in need.

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

## **9 Branch Membership**

In accordance with TRBL records, current Branch Membership remains stable at 39 members.

The Branch welcomes new members and encourages them to attend forthcoming events, especially our Branch Coffee Mornings on the last Tuesday of the month.

## **10 Branch Statistics**

The Branch has continued to provide support to its current Members and new veterans moving into our community.

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 4

How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters) 4

Total Welfare Expenditure NIL (see Note 1)

Telephone Buddies:

Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive 25

Telephone – How many beneficiaries called 6

Telephone – How many telephone buddies: 4

## **11 Branch Community Support and Youth Liaison Activities**

### **1. Community and Youth Liaison**

Your Branch Representatives continue to liaise with the many varied groups and youth organisations within our community.

The process for TRBL Branch Affiliation continues to be addressed by TRBL HQ: while further updates will be available in due course, the Branch will continue to progress this important area, highlighting the benefits of TRBL within our community.

## **12 Newent War Memorial**

Activities continue works to upgrade Newent's War Memorial and incorporate those names originally omitted.

The current phase of the project is to secure suitable funding to enable cleaning to commence, (provisionally planned for the end of March), leading to completion of the Memorial's restoration prior to our planned November 2024 events.

Further donations will be welcome as we strive to seek additional grant aid from local, County and National organisations.

## **13 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's and other Branch Representative Reports.

## **14 Forthcoming Dates for TRBL Diary**

The 2024 RBL Conference will be held at the ICC in Newport, Wales during the weekend of 10th/12th May .

Following recent discussions your Chairman and Deputy have agreed that it would be equally advantageous to attend The Conference virtually than expend additional costs. However the Branch will still be able to play a pivotal role in deciding the outcome of Conference Motions and retain the opportunity to highlight any concerns that it may have.

**Keith Urch**

BCS Representative  
Newent and District Branch BR3063

## **15 Treasurer's Report**

There have been no transactions this month. The current account balance is £996.91

Helen Axon

**Treasurer**

## **16 Bar & Entertainments Member.**

Proposed Branch Events 2024 as reported at last meeting – Rick Axon not present at this meeting :-

October 24th, 19:00 – AGM - Cheese and Wine

November 28th, 19:00 – Branch Meeting and Social in Cobblers.

December – Branch Christmas Meal.

NOTE: There is a possibility of inviting the Innsworth Military Wives Choir to perform later on in the year, Entertainments Member to keep members informed.

## **17 Any Other Business.**

### **17.1 New RBL Membership Form**

David Sass announced that a new RBL Membership Form had been introduced. Older versions would not be accepted on membership applications.

He suggested that this be printed and carried to the next RBL coffee morning at Manna in Newent.

### **17.2 Remembrance Sunday Service**

Rev Simon Mason suggested that this could be an occasion to rededicate the revised War Memorial in the grounds of St Mary's Church

### **17.3 Onion Day**

Rev Simon Mason informed the meeting that there was a planned event on September 14 and there may be stalls outside St Mary's Church.

### **17.4 Cobblers Micro Pub Donation from Pancake Day Event**

The event raised £170 and the Landlord of the pub had doubled it to donate to The Poppy Appeal.

### **17.5 D Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Flag**

David Sass the Secretary informed the meeting that a new Flag to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D Day was available. As he is a member of Newent Town Council he would request they purchase it and raise it at 7am on June 6, the start time of the beach landings. Members discussed this and suggested that the Union Flag be raised at St Mary's Church that day.

## **18 Date of Next Meeting.**

The meeting closed at 1937 hours with the next meeting taking place 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm in Newent, venue to be confirmed.

A suggestion was the Church Room at St Mary's Church and Simon Mason said he would email to confirm the availability after he checked the Church diary.

## **Agenda for Meeting to Newent and District Royal British Legion Branch on 21 March 2024.**

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.