

Royal British Legion Oxfordshire August 2025



August 2025

(This Newsletter is produced quarterly Apr, Aug, Dec annually)

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Change of RBL National Chair with Oxfordshire Links

A heartfelt thank you to Jason Coward as he stepped down in May as National Chair of the Royal British Legion after three years of dedicated service.

Jason's leadership has been marked by strength, compassion, and unwavering commitment to our community and values. We are deeply grateful for all he has done during his time in the role.

The new National Chair is our very County's own Lynda Atkins. Lynda is well known within the County and far wider as she was a previous County Chair and of late prior to her new appointment was Oxfordshire Vice Lord Lieutenant. In this latter role Lynda helped forge closer links between the County's RBL presence with the Lord Lieutenants Office, something that has gone from strength to strength. A Royal Air Force and Army veteran Lynda brings a wealth of experience and a deep understanding of the Legion's mission, and we look forward to all that lies ahead under her guidance.

The County wish Jason all the very best for the future – and every success to Lynda as she begins this important new chapter.



Message from the Interim County Chair - Fiona Lovesey

The resignation of the County Chair - Steve Kingsford - for personal reasons has resulted in the Membership Council Representative and the County Committee asking me to step up as an Interim Chair. You may recall that I held the role of County Chair previously when Lynda Atkins stepped down and before Pete Eldridge took over from me. I would have worked with a number of Branches over that period and as Vice Chair. Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to wish Steve Kingsford and his family best wishes for the future and thank him for his support of the RBL in his short tenure as County Chair. Steve's departure means that I can only fulfil this appointment on an interim basis due to my full employment status as a Operating Theatre Manager so I will not be able to commit to the full duties and I am seeking support from members of the Committee during this transitional period. I am however setting five clear objectives for the County:

- Completion of the Branch FYE account submissions, this may need Committee members assisting the Treasurer in following up with the MEO Branches that have not completed. The FYE was 30 Jun however Branches have until 30 Sep 25 to submit however, it is imperative that the Committee strives to maintain last year's achievement. I propose the division of County Branches and CSB between the County Committee members to forge a liaison with them and moreover help drive the successful completion of the Annual Accounts and the forthcoming MS season returns. Having a named Committee members may also increase the liaison and assisted offered to Branches.
- For the Committee to work with Branches to ensure that the requirements of the Annual General Meeting and in particular completion of the MS1/MSCSB and the MS1b are completed and submitted by 30 Dec 25. To achieve this I am setting up County Liaison Officers out of the existing County Committee Members. The role of the County Liaison Officer is to reach out to Branches and CSB to help and guide them through the mandatory reporting (you will see in this newsletter articles on the Annual Financial Report to be submitted by 30 Sep 25 and the MS1/MSCSB and

MS1b Standard Bearer submission due by the 30 Dec25. In addition to this assistance the Liaison Officers will provide a crucial link between Branches and CSBs with the County Committee. Please see the article in the newsletter that details who your County Liaison Officer will be and how to reach out to them.

- Continue the review of the CSB compliance and determine if the CSB continues to be viable. Several of the CSBs have failed to respond these need to be investigated urgently to see that they are active and compliant – if not steps need to be taken to resolve this. **At present we have received 6 CSB responses and they have passed their review and have been approved to operate for a further 3-years.** There are however a further 6 that have failed to respond - these are Cassington, Headington, Kidlington, North Leigh, Peppard and Yarnton. These CSBs will be the main focus of the Liaison Officers; any failure to ensure compliance of the mandatory requirements as a CSB could result in the County closing the Branch.
- Significant outcomes need to be demonstrated from County Training and Recruitment; in addition to the appointment of a County Chair, the County needs to be seen to be active in the recruitment and recruitment support for County and Branches across Oxfordshire. Training is another area that we need to improve, the County Committee Members need to have completed County Management Course and role specific training. This is imperative with the increased pressures being placed on the Committee and will enhance Committee Members knowledge and be in a better position to support the membership. Furthermore, we need to have an active training programme that supports Branches.
- The appointment of a County Chair; the Committee needs to identify and promote this need with Branches to seek a suitable candidate.

If we are determined as a committee to focus on and deliver the points above, then we will achieve many of the requirements of the County Plan and ensure that Oxfordshire remains compliant and not at risk.

I hope I can count of your support during my tenure and help me and the County Committee in making these improvements.

Fiona Lovesey



Oxfordshire County Committee

County Committee Members

County President

Mrs Ann Mid-Winter Oxfordshire.President@RBL.Community

County Chair

Vacant - Interim Chair -Mrs Fiona Lovesey Oxfordshire.Chair@RBL.Community

County Vice Chair

Interim Vice Chair - Mr Tjark Andrews Oxfordshire.ViceChair@RBL.Community

County Secretary

Mr Rob Lovesey Oxfordshire.Secretary@RBL.Community

County Treasurer

Mr Andrew Bowes Oxfordshire.Treasurer@RBL.Community

County Parade Marshal

Mr Peter Clarke Oxfordshire.ParadeMarshal@RBL.Community

County Training Officer

Mr Derek Bradshaw Oxfordshire.CTO@RBL.Community

County Recruitment Officer

Mr Brian Leach Oxfordshire.Recruitment@RBL.Community

County Community Support Co-ordinator

Vacant

Oxfordshire Club Liaison Officer

Vacant

County Standard Bearer

Mr Tjark Andrews Oxfordshire.StdBearer@RBL.Community



Legion Staff

Membership Engagement Manager (MEM)

Mr Chris Jones Central.MEM@RBL.Community

Membership Engagement Officer (MEO)

Ms Lebo Nyoni Oxfordshireshire.MEO@RBL.Community

Poppy Appeal Manager (Oxfordshire)

Mr Yanto Evans YEvans@britishlegion.org.uk

Calling Notice for County Chair Position and Interim Appointment of Vice Chair



Appointment of Interim County Chair

In light of the County Chair Steve Kingsford resigning the Membership Council Representative Hugh Ashton-Moore proposed to the County Committee that the Vice Chair Fiona Lovesey be elected by the County Committee in accordance with the Membership Handbook to fill the role on an interim measure. The caveat to this appointment is that due to her employment status she will not be able to commit to fulfil the full duties and is seeking support from members of the Committee during this transitional period. This was approved by the County Committee at the 20 Jul 25 meeting.

Appointment of Interim Vice Chair

With Fiona Lovesey stepping up to fill the County Chair role on an interim basis, Committee Member and County Standard Bearer Tjark Andrews, has been appointed via the County Committee meeting held on the 20 Jul 25. This too is an interim appointment to ensure continuity and to help with succession planning. This appointment will be until the Annual County Conference scheduled on 31 Jan 26, when County Elections will take place for County Chair.

Calling Notice and Election of County Chair

All Branches and CSBs would have by now received the Calling Notice from the Membership Engagement Officer (MEO) Lebo Nyoni. What does this mean? A "RBL Calling Notice" typically refers to a notification from The Royal British Legion (RBL) related to a Branch or County, in this case for the election of a County Chair. Branches are required to discuss the Calling Notice at the earliest opportunity at their respective Branch meeting; calling on any member to be nominated by a Branch for consideration for the role. A branch

are to sponsor the nomination to the MEO with all nominations put to compliant Branches for a vote on appointment. Where there is only one nomination then that candidate will be considered in isolation. You are there requested to place before your membership the Calling Notice and seek any nominations.

County Chair Terms of Reference

To aid anyone considering this worth while role of managing a National Charity in your local County, detailed below is the extracted Terms of Reference (TORs) from the Membership Handbook.

County Chair

The County Chair is the most senior elected Officer of the County Committee and is elected by postal ballot to chair the County Committee for a tenure of three years.

The County Chair is expected to show strong leadership, management, and diplomatic skills by ensuring that a close bond and liaison is maintained between the branch membership and County Committee along with building and maintaining a good working relationship with RBL staff.

They should abide by decisions made by the Membership Council and Board of Trustees but also be prepared to voice the views and concerns of the Membership within their County through the Membership Council Representative.

The County Chair plays a key role in the public relations of the RBL and, as such they should be capable of representing the RBL at all levels within the County.

The County Chair is responsible for directing all County activities, and the effective management and running of the County.

1. The County Chair must ensure that all County Committee members and branches are aware of, and adhere to the RBL vision, values and code of behaviour for working together, and the effective management and running of the County.
2. The County Chair should possess good basic I.T. skills and be able to access the MAP in Microsoft Office 365 (O365), use email and be familiar with social media platforms that the RBL, County and branches may use.
3. The County Chair must be conversant and compliant with the current Royal Charter, the Membership Handbook and policies and procedures, which are all located in the MAP on Microsoft Office 365 (O365).
4. Ensure that all positions on County Committee are filled and Role Descriptions and Terms of Reference (TORs) are issued. Any training requirement is to be discussed and arranged through the County Training Officer and/or the MEO.

5. Ensure that all members of the County Committee are aware of their responsibilities as outlined within the current Royal Charter, the Membership Handbook and all other relevant policies and procedures.
 6. Ensure that those who hold specialist appointments that are subject to the RBL's screening programme detailed within the RBL's Safeguarding Policy are aware of the tasks that must be undertaken prior to taking up their duties.
 7. The County Chair must build and maintain a strong relationship with the MEO to ensure effective administration of the County.
 8. With the assistance of the County Committee, develop and implement the County three-year plan.
 9. Work closely with the County Treasurer ensuring that the budget is in place to implement all planned activities.
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10. Brief Committee members on on-going issues at County and National level and ensure that branches are kept informed where appropriate.
 11. Be responsible for chairing the Annual Meeting of the County Conference, where they must exercise their authority and leadership on Conference matters. The County Chair must be strict in their interpretation of the Royal Charter and County byelaws whilst taking into account the views of the delegates.
 12. In order to establish good communication links with the membership, visit all formations within the County, for example as a guest speaker, to settle disputes or as a social visit to maintain contact.
 13. Work closely with the MEO and the Membership Council representative, giving them their full support, whilst ensuring their actions have the support of the County Committee.
 14. Support or reject applications for RBL Awards for Meritorious Service.
 15. Consult with the County President concerning all recommendations to the National President for National Honours.
 16. Make recommendations for RBL Club licence issue or withdrawal or issue of a conditional licence following consultation with the Regional Clubs Relationship Manager and County Committee.
 17. With the support of the County Committee recommend additions to byelaws for the governance of the County in accordance with the terms of the current Royal Charter and Membership Handbook
 18. Appoint and sit on any necessary sub-Committees.

19. Encourage the membership to be active in the Poppy Appeal, assist with benevolent work and develop an engaged Membership.

20. The county chair is responsible for implementing recommendations arising from investigations and audits conducted by the Audit, Compliance and Investigations team

Annual Branch Financial Submission (Mandatory) - Andrew Bowes County Treasurer

Branch Compliance

During the membership year, there are two key dates for which Branch Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers need to prepare and that have an important role in ensuring your branch is compliant, these are 30 Sep for Branch Accounts submission and 31 Dec for MS1, MS1b (Standard Bearer) and MS1CSB submissions. With the end of the Financial Year at an end on 30 Jun 25, all Branches (not CSBs, this is undertaken by the County Treasurer) are mandated to submit their Annual Branch Submission with the **30th of September** as the cut-off date for your submission of Branch Annual Accounts.

Annual Branch Accounts Return

In order to streamline the year end audit and to reduce pressure on Branch treasurers close to the Poppy Appeal, the accounting period year end is now 30 June. Your return should be submitted by 30 September each year, at the latest, as stipulated in the Royal Charter. Do not wait until September to complete and file your Annual Branch Return; it is good governance to complete and submit as early as possible. Note: the submission of Annual Branch Accounts Returns is MANDATORY. CSBs will be completed and filed by the County Treasurer. If you are unsure on completion or submission please contact the County Treasurer (Andrew Bowes) on Oxfordshire.Treasurer@RBL.Community.

An Effective Branches should:

- attend branch accounts sessions alongside the Independent Examiner and MEO to ensure collaborative and supportive working.
- engage, through the Branch Treasurer, with the MEO who has oversight of submissions.
- through the Branch Chair, have oversight of the branch return.
- encourage Branch Treasurers to undertake necessary training ahead of time.
- encourage the use of the advanced accounts pack.
- keep branch accounts as a regular agenda item for branch meetings.

The County Committee has collective responsibility to ensure maximum compliance in its area. The County Committee will communicate with the Branch Chair, who leads on this at

Branch level in close collaboration with the Branch Treasurer. All have a significant part to play when it comes to achieving compliance for the Branch annual accounts return.

Branch officers should be prepared to support the Branch Treasurer where required in the completion of the return. An example of this would be to ensure expenses are submitted on the correct SOP 42 form, with receipts attached for any expenditure claimed. Your MEO is there to support and advise you regarding branch accounts and is a direct link to finance. Queries relating to branch accounts can be sent to ***BranchAccounts@britishlegion.org.uk***.

Best practice would see your Branch submit its return as early as possible, with the 1st of September being a realistic and achievable date. This will provide ample time for the county, branch and MEO to carry out any checks, and request any further information from the branch that may be required.

Oxfordshire.Treasurer@RBL.Community

Andrew



Annual Branch MS1, MS1b and MS1CSB Submission (Mandatory) - Rob Lovesey County Secretary

MS1A and MS1CSB - Mandatory

To ensure and maintain Branch Compliance every Branch and CSB ***must*** complete annually a MS1A or for CSBs the MS1CSB which details the Branch Committee Membership or Points of Contact for CSBs. This is a mandatory requirement for all Branches. ***Note: Branches and CSBs must hold their Annual General Meeting between 01 Oct - 30 Nov annually without exception. This is the time that Branch Committee positions are ratified by the Committee and the MS1A/MS1CSB must be signed and completed. The MS1b(Standard Bearers) must also be completed at this meeting to ensure that the Standard Bearer is covered by the Public Liability Insurance - no completed and submitted MS1b to the MEO and County Secretary then your Standard cannot be paraded.***

In 2024 the MS1A/MS1CSB separated the MS1b(Standard Bearer) Forms, therefore Branches and CSBs must complete the two forms. It is recommended that Branches and CSB submit their completed MS forms two weeks prior to the 31 Dec deadline.

The **31st of December** is the cut-off date for the return of the fully completed MS1 Forms. In addition a Compliant Branch that has submitted their MS1 forms can:

- propose a motion at the county AGM for Annual Conference.
- send delegates to both county and annual conferences.
- apply for county grants.
- vote in elections for the Trustees and the Membership Council.

It is every branch's responsibility to ensure that its members have a voice in shaping the membership for the good and benefit of our Armed Forces community. To summarise, achieving compliance means that your branch can play a full and active role in the governance of RBL membership.

MS1b(Standard Bearer) Return - Mandatory

Standard Bearers are you aware that you are required annually to complete the MS1b Form, you are required to complete your Branch MS1b following your Branch AGM. If not, ***you cannot carry out the duties of your Branch Standard Bearer.*** Branch Compliance under the terms of the Royal Charter and the Membership Handbook requires all Branches including County Supported Branches (CSBs) are to complete and submit the requisite MS1b Form, this ensures that you have read and understood the responsibilities and risks associated with Standard Bearing, including but not limited to:

Standard bearing is a physical activity and so a self declaration that you both physically fit and strong enough to carry a Standard in all reasonable weather conditions. As a Standard Bearer you will be expected to be able to carry a Standard which is 8ft long and up to 3.5kg in weight (in wet or windy weather conditions Standards may become heavier and difficult to hold upright). Some actions such as Dips may put a strain on the back and shoulders. Competitions and Remembrance events may prove demanding and stressful for some.

- Your confirmation if you are in receipt of any disability related allowance or benefit, you will inform the appropriate authorities of your intention to undertake the role of Standard Bearer/Deputy Standard Bearer as this may affect your eligibility status.
- You have no physical conditions or disability that could potentially put me or others at harm whilst performing my duties as a Standard Bearer/Deputy Standard Bearer. If I have, or suspect I have, a health problem which means I may not be able to fulfil all duties required of the role safely, I undertake to inform the appropriate Ceremonial Officer in charge of the competition/Remembrance event.

Additionally, if you have not completed the MS1b you may not be covered by the Public Liability Insurance.

Changes in 2024 separated the MS1a from the MS1b which we know that a number of Branches did not pick up on.

[MS1B Branch Standard Bearer Declaration](#)

On Completion these Forms are to be submitted to the County MEO (Lebo Nyoni - ***Oxfordshire.MEO@RBL.Community***) and the County Secretary (Rob Lovesey) on ***Oxfordshire.Secretary@RBL.Community***.

Rob

Ceremonial Update and County Standard Bearer Competition - Pete Clarke



Hi Everyone,

Welcome to County Parade Marshal Ceremonial update. Standard Bearer (SB) competition, we are going to be holding our own Oxfordshire County Competition in October this year, and as previously mentioned in the last newsletter will be holding the regional Competition next February. The winner of the regional goes on to compete at the National Competition,

the winner of which, carries the National Standard. Training held at Stanton Harcourt Village hall has been going well with a good number of SB's taking part, and the improvement in their drill is plain to see, all Standard Bearers are welcome to take part, and the remaining dates are as follows;

- 07 Sep 25 09:30-11:30hrs
- 05 Oct 25 09:30-11:30hrs

We are gearing up for the County competition (I believe our first in over 20 years) to be held on the 25 Oct 25 at Carterton Community Centre. Please come and support all of our SB's who are taking part.

A further update on the wearing of ceremonial uniform items with the royal cypher is as follows. At present Standard Bearers and Parade Marshals may continue to wear badges and ties with the Edwardian crown, commonly referred to as the Queens crown, but you may now wear the new uniform items including sling badges with the Tudor crown, commonly referred to as the Kings crown. However, you must not wear a mixture of the two. All these items are available from the poppy shop and also through Newton Newton flags. A date has now been given that everyone should be wearing the new items displaying the Tudor crown by, this is by and including the **Festival of Remembrance**. If anyone has any questions, please get in touch via ***oxfordshire.parademarshal@rbl.community***.

Recently the County and some branch Standards along with myself took part in the memorial unveiling to remember Flight Captain Susan Slade, at Upper Risington, an event that was organised by 136Sqn Chipping Norton RAFAC. From start to finish in going from the conception of designing, organising, obtaining various permissions, through to the actual unveiling day, including a fly past of a De Havilland Dragon Rapide and a Hawker Hurricane, the cadets and staff at 136Sqn have done exceptionally well.

As we move towards the end of VE and VJ day ceremonies, our focus will soon shift to remembrance weekend, of which there will be lots going on, as its one of our busiest time of the year, I do ask that all SB's continue to ensure that are correctly dressed as laid out in the Ceremonial Handbook. If you have any questions or require any assistance with this, please do get in touch.

Thanks and until next time

Pete

County Branch Liaison Officers



As you may have read in other articles to this newsletter the Interim County Chair has instigated the role of County Branch Liaison Officers; the Chair announced that County Committee members will become the liaison Officers with Branches and CSBs to assist them with the completion of mandatory annual returns like the FYE Financial Reports, MS1s or MSCSB and MS1b's. The proposed division is as follows:

- **County Chair – Fiona Lovesey (Oxfordshire.Chair@RBL.Community):** Benson and District, Watlington, Thame and Stanton Harcourt
- **County Treasurer – Andrew Bowes (Oxfordshire.Treasurer@RBL.Community):** Bix, Shiplake, Nettlebed, Ramsden, Headington and Standlake & Northmoor
- **County Recruitment Officer - Brian Leach (Oxfordshire.CRO@RBL.Community):** Bicester, Kidlington, Kirtlington, Heyford and Deddington
- **County Training Officer - Derek Bradshaw (Oxfordshire.CTO@RBL.Community):** Littlemore, Yarnton, Eynsham, Cassington and Islip
- **County Parade Marshal – Pete Clarke (Oxfordshire.ParadeMarshal@RBL.Community):** Chipping Norton, Bloxham, Kingham and Banbury
- **County Standard Bearer – Tjark Andrews (Oxfordshire.StdBearer@RBL.Community):** Burford, Bampton, Charlbury, North Leigh and Carterton
- **County Secretary – Rob Lovesey (Oxfordshire.Secretary@RBL.Community):** Dorchester, Henley, Peppard, Wheatley and Chinnor

The Secretary will provide the contact details for each of the Branches both email and phone to those assigned. An email will also be sent to each Branch/CSB informing them of their County Liaison Officer. Each Liaison Officer will be expected to make physical contact with each Branch either through email/phone or Branch visit and are to report any lack of contact to the County Chair. Follow up action will be required to ensure each Branch/CSB is compliant.

Oxfordshire Poppy Appeal Update - Yanto Evans Poppy Appeal Manager



Poppy Appeal Income Update

The National total for the 2024 Appeal currently stands at £42,798,935.51, this is up £1.31m from the 2023 total. A marvellous achievement.

Oxfordshire 2024 Total

The Oxfordshire total so far is £644,297.49 with effect of 16 Jul 25, this is up £45,343.07 from the 2023 appeal which is absolutely fantastic and is only achievable to all the Poppy Appeal Organisers and Collections hard work and dedication. You should be immensely proud of your collective achievement. Digital donations are continuing to increase and the Toucan App is now available so every volunteer can take digital donations for their area on their mobile phones.

Current Relationships and Activities

I will arrange support visits for all new Poppy Appeal Organisers (PAOs) before the 2025 Appeal. Please get in touch if you would like any assistance and support. The portal is now open so you can order your 2025 Appeal stock.

Poppy Appeal Organiser Gaps

The current gaps are:

- Harpsden
- Kidmore End

- Headington

If you know anyone that would like to help with the Poppy Appeal in any of these districts or support their current PAOs around Oxfordshire please contact me on

yeavns@britishlegion.org.uk

General Update/News/Forth Coming Events

Oxfordshire Poppy Appeal Seminar 2025

The Oxfordshire Poppy Appeal Team would like to invite you to attend the Annual Seminar event for PAOs and a special guest speaker. The event will be held on:

- Date: 30 Aug 25
- Timings: 0930hrs Arrival (refreshments will be served), 1000hrs Start of presentations
- Lunch: 1230hrs
- Seminar Ends: 1400hrs
- Location: Islip Village Hall, Church Lane, Islip Kidlington OX5 2TA (parking on site)
- RSVP: ***Please confirm whether you can attend the Seminar by Friday 15 Aug 25 and confirm any dietary requirements.***

The recent VE Day and Armed Forces Day have been very successful with many PAOs holding events for these commemorations. Many thanks for your support.

We have reintroduced the "Mrs H Green Memorial Cup" for the Oxfordshire Poppy Appeal. This will be awarded to the Poppy Appeal District who have increased their donations for that appeal year by the largest percentage and will be presented to the winner at the Oxfordshire Poppy Appeal Seminar (details above).

The results for the 2023/24 Appeal are as follows:

- 1st Place with 97% increase - Marsden (PAO Patrick Carroll)
- 2nd Place with 87% increase - Bix (PAO Joseph Dack)
- 3rd Place with 66% increase - North Stoke (PAO Sam Shears)
- 4th Place with 50% increase - Ramsden (PAO Steve MacLennan)
- 5th Place with 45% increase - Thame (PAO Keith Wallington)

Congratulations to you all for your efforts and to every6 PAO who contributes to the Poppy Appeal, without PAOs there would be no appeal and your support is much appreciated.

Training - "Discover" Portal

All Branch Officers and Committee members should attend training sessions commensurate to their role in the Branch. A useful guide to Branch (and County) Roles including the relevant Terms of Reference can be found at the embedded document.

The County Training Officer (CTO) is Derek Bradshaw and can be contacted Oxfordshire.CTO@RBL.Community

TRAINING NEWS

There is now a great selection of development and management training which members may find beneficial, especially if you are new to an Officer or Committee post in your branch. All these are now available on the Discover Training Portal which everyone can register on and then book those courses you would like to do. Some are on-line only whilst others might need you to attend face-to-face. The following are currently available:

- Branch Management (***mandatory for all Branch Officers***)
- County Management (***mandatory for all County Officers***)
- County Training Officer
- County Recruiting Officer
- Branch Recruiting Advisor
- Branch Treasurer (***mandatory for all Branch Treasurers***)
- LOMAS (recommended for all new users of LOMAS)
- Independent Examiner (mandatory for all IE prior to registration with the County)
- Secretaries Course (Branch and County) (***new***)
- Branch Community Support Branch Community Support Coordinator (***mandatory for all BCS Coordinators***)
- Branch Community Support (BCS) - New Coordinator (***mandatory for all new Coordinators***)
- Branch Community Support Refresher (***to be completed every 2 years by BCS Staff***)
- Informal Resolution
- Outlook Navigation
- Safeguarding Adults (***mandatory for all BCS Staff***)
- Data Protection (***mandatory for all Branch and County Officers***)

For further details including Course Prospectus, guidance on how to register and use Discover, please contact Derek Bradshaw Oxfordshire.CTO@RBL.Community

Keeping in Contact - RBL Community E-Mail Addresses

All County and Branch officers whose role requires access to sensitive information are required to use an RBL-issued email when communicating on behalf of the charity, and to use provided tools for sharing and storing this information.

This is to keep our charity, our members and our beneficiaries safe from cyber crime and identity theft, and to comply with the law.

All qualifying County and Branch officers without access to an RBL.Community email account can now register for an account.

Registering for your account is easy. All you need to do is contact the Membership Engagement Officer (MEO) Oxfordshireshire.MEO@rbl.community who will get you started.

Training support is available from the County Training Officer (CTO) once your account is activated, in addition to using it for communicating on behalf of RBL. You will be able to receive direct RBL communications, access important county and/or branch information, and interact with other branch and county officials around the UK and overseas via the RBL-exclusive social network, Viva Engage.

The following are eligible for accounts at Branch level:

- Chair **(mandatory)**
- Vice Chair
- Secretary **(mandatory)**
- Treasurer **(mandatory)**
- Standard Bearer Branch
- Community Coordinator (BCC)
- Events Mem Sec (subject to review)

This applies also the County Supported Branches and the requirement for the Point of Contacts for have an official email address:

- Point of Contact 1 **(mandatory)**
- Point of Contact 2 **(mandatory)**

To obtain your Branch RBL.Community accounts please email Lebo our Oxfordshire Membership Engagement Officer at

Oxfordshireshire.MEO@rbl.community

Branch Cadet/Youth Group Affiliation

The Royal British Legion actively encourages and facilitates affiliations between its branches and various youth organizations, including cadet forces. These affiliations allow branches to support local youth groups through fundraising, remembrance projects, and by offering mentorship and access to resources like the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program.

- **Branch-Level Affiliation:** RBL Branches can formally affiliate with youth groups, including cadet units, after discussing and agreeing on the terms of the affiliation with the youth organization.
- **Ceremonial Affiliation:** Once an agreement is reached, a formal ceremony may be held to present an Affiliation Certificate, signed by both the Branch and the youth group's leadership.
- **Youth Group Badge:** Affiliated youth organizations may be authorized to wear a special cloth badge on their uniforms, signifying their affiliation with the RBL Branch.
- **Mutual Support:** The affiliation allows for collaboration on fundraising events, remembrance activities, and other community projects.

Affiliation of No 2507 (Bicester) Squadron Royal Air Force Air Cadet with RBL Bicester and District Branch

On the 22 May 24, Bicester and District Branch signed the official affiliation of 2507 Sqn (Bicester) RAFAC cadets as affiliated unit, also presented was a Certificate of Appreciation for the Squadron for their help during the Poppy Appeal.

Branch Chair Brian Leach and Vice Chair Graham Moore both attended and after introductions the Squadron held a formal parade with both Branch and Cadet unit paraded the Branch Standard Bearer a former Air Cadet himself. Also a former Air Cadet Graham then inspected those on Parade and was impressed with the standard of those on parade. The Branch Chair presented the certificate to Commanding Officer of the Squadron. Brian strongly believes in the importance of these affiliations, giving the younger generation the opportunity to understand the vital work of the RBL and allows them to feel connected to a national organization in addition to the cadets.



1 - Bicester and District Branch Chair Brain Leach and the Officer Commanding No 2507 (Bicester) Sqn RAFAC signing the Certificate of Affiliation



2 - Bicester and District Branch Vice Chair Graham Moore inspecting the cadets of No 2507 (Bicester) Sqn RAFAC

Diary Dates



General Branch and County Dates

- **30 Aug 25** Annual Oxfordshire Poppy Appeal Seminar - Islip Village Hall.
- **30 Sep 25** - Last date for submission of Branch Accounts to MEO (although 31st August preferred if at all possible).
- **01 Oct – 30 Nov 25** – Branch Annual General Meetings to be held between these dates. MS1/MS1B/MS1CSB to be completed. (Branches Note: MS1B must be completed in addition to MS1 or MS1CSB otherwise Branch and Standard Bearer not compliant)
- **22 Oct 25** - County Committee Meeting (Teams) - County Committee Members Only

- **31 Dec 25** - Deadline for the submission of all **MS1s or MS1CSBs and MS1Bs** to the MEO and County Secretary by email
- **14 Jan 26** - County Committee Meeting (Teams) – County Committee Members Only
- **31 Jan 26** – 101st Oxfordshire Annual County Conference – Carterton Community Hall

Standard Bearer Training Dates

- 07 Sep 25 Stanton Harcourt Village Hall
- 05 Oct 25 Stanton Harcourt Village Hall

Oxfordshire Standard Bearer Competition

The CPM has announced that Oxfordshire Standard Bearer Competition is to be held on 25 Oct 25 at Carterton Community Centre.

Events

Armed Forces Day Banbury

Members of the Royal British Legion took part in the Banbury Armed Forces Day on the 28 Jun 25 which culminated in a Drumhead Service. Pete Clarke the County Parade Marshal lead the team including Tjark Andrews carrying the Union Flag, Natalie Buxton (Bampton Branch) with the County Standard, Vanessa Page (Banbury Branch), Jacqui Graves (Stanton Harcourt Branch) and David Mannering (Nettlebed and District Branch).

Requalification of the County Parade Marshal

A well felt congratulations to our County Parade Marshal in qualifying once more as an A Grade Parade Marshal. Pete had been the CPM now for a few years and has put in considerable effort and many hours in raising the Standard of the County Standard Bearers and is always ready to help Branches with in their Ceremonial Support. Well done Pete.

Unveiling of a memorial to Flight Captain Eleanor Isabella ‘Susan’ Slade, Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA)

On Sunday 13 Jul 25 the County Parade Marshal Pete Clarke along with the County Standard Bearer Tjark Andrews, Clive Cantwell (Carterton and District), Natalie Buxton (Bampton) and Steve Holland (Chipping Norton) attended a ceremony to unveil a memorial to Flight Captain Eleanor Isabella ‘Susan’ Slade, known as Susan, Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) when her Vickers Wellington bomber crashed in a field near Little Rissington on 13 July 1944. Susan was tasked to fly the aircraft from RAF Little Rissington to a training unit at RAF Wing at

Aylesbury. She took off in a small group but the aircraft veered to the right and crashed in Whaddon Field on Glebe Farm. The remarkable story is a Special Sergeant, who saw the accident, asserted that Susan deliberately steered the Wellington away from Great Rissington village, saving the lives of others. The plane burst into flames and Susan, aged 40, was buried five days later, near her father in Stokenchurch, Buckinghamshire. Royal Air Force Air Cadets 136 Chipping Norton Squadron began efforts to fundraise for a memorial. A memorial to the Air Transport Auxiliary is extremely rare, especially to a female member, as only 15 died in wartime service.

Berkshire County Certificate Award for Oxfordshire County Treasurer Andrew Bowes

At the County Committee Meeting held on 20 Jul 25, the Berkshire County Chair presented the Treasurer Andrew Bowes with a County Certificate for the work he has done in examining the Berkshire County Accounts for many years. This achievement was much appreciated by the Treasurer and further demonstrated the close working liaison the County has with other Counties. The Committee congratulated Andrew in the achieve of this award.



3 - Banbury Armed Forces Day 28 Jun 25



4 - Banbury Armed Forces Day 28 Jun 25 - Drumhead Service



5 - Banbury Armed Forces Day 28 Jun 25 - Drumhead Service



6 - Pete Clarke County Parade Marshal - Requalification as CPM with an A Grade



7 - Standard Bearers from Oxfordshire including the County Standard parading at the unveiling of a memorial to Flight Captain Eleanor Isabella 'Susan' Slade, known as Susan Slade, Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) when her Vickers Wellington bomber crashed in a field on 13 July 1944 Upper Rissington Gloucestershire.



8 - *Flight Captain Slade now has a permanent memorial in Upper Rissington, right next to RAF Little Rissington (Image credit: Jeff Harrison)*



9 - *Oxfordshire Treasurer Andrew Bowes receiving a Berkshire County Certificate Award from the Berkshire County Chair Rosemary Edington in thanks for conducting IE Audits for Berkshire County for many years.*

Roll of Honour



- Late Allen Hacker (Big Hack) former 2624 RAuxAF Regt Sqn RAF Brize Norton – funeral held on 11 Aug 25 at North Oxfordshire Crematorium.

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