



Central News – December 2025

Membership information, updates and engagement

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Important dates

15 January 2026	Annual Conference Registration opens
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Come Together at Membership Townhalls

Following the success of our Membership Strategy Roadshows, we're pleased to announce the return of Membership Townhalls. Commencing in February and **open to all members**, these two-way online events will be hosted by senior membership leaders and offer the chance to find out more about RBL and membership affairs, as well as ask your questions live. Save the dates:

- Friday 6 February, 12.30pm – 2.00pm [[click to join at time of event](#)]
- Monday 20 April, 6.00pm – 7.30pm
- Thursday 23 July, 12.30pm – 2.00pm
- Saturday 17 October, 10.30am – 12.00pm

You can also [pre-submit your questions](#). If you're unable to attend, you can watch the recording afterwards to see the response.

Thank you for your continued support and your tireless recruitment efforts. If you have any questions, please contact membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk

Annual Conference 2025 Registration

We're now only six months away from Annual Conference 2026, 8 – 10 May, Brighton.

Registration opens on 15 January and closes 23 March at 12pm midday for in-person attendees, and 6 April at 12pm midday for online attendees. The registration link will be available on the [Annual Conference webpage](#).

For further information about attending Annual Conference and what to expect next May, please [see the Annual Conference webpage](#).

Could you be our next Trustee or Membership Council Representative?

RBL's elections offer a unique chance to play a crucial role in the organisation's leadership. Time is running out for nominations for **four Trustee roles** and **seven Membership Council Representatives**. Membership Council Representative roles are open in the following areas:

- Cheshire and Merseyside
- Greater Manchester and Lancashire
- Northern Ireland
- South East Midlands
- South West Midlands
- West Midlands
- The Women's Section

If these roles appeal to you, [watch the pre-recorded election briefing](#) and join our [online Q&A session](#) on Monday 8 December. This is a great way to find out more about the roles from those who hold them – you don't need to have been nominated by your branch to attend.

To progress, you'll need to be nominated for a role by your branch before the deadline of **8 January 2026** and will be invited to attend an assessment panel to assess eligibility before advancing to the voting stage. Successful candidates take up their positions in May 2026.

Full details about the roles and election process area available from your branch or [available on our website](#).

Charity Fraud Awareness Week

We're proud to be supporting Charity Fraud Awareness Week. Unfortunately, all charities are susceptible to fraud, theft and cybercrime. While it is only a small minority of people who are dishonest, the threat can come from both outside and within an organisation. We all need to be fraud aware and take steps to protect RBL's funds, people and data.

Where RBL is affected by fraud, it often relates to the theft or misuse of cash or stock items. However, fraud and the methods by which it is committed are continuously evolving and cybercrime is on the increase.

We all have a part to play in relation to the prevention and detection of fraud. If you suspect someone has committed, or is committing fraud or theft, please report it immediately to your Membership Engagement Officer one of the following:

- The Audit Compliance & Investigations Team at AuditComplianceInvestigations@britishlegion.org.uk
- Anonymously via the RBL's whistleblowing service, managed by Navex Global, on <https://britishlegion.ethicspoint.com> or 0800 088 5862.

By reacting to suspicions of fraud you can help the RBL safeguard the money raised for those we support.

Poppy Appeal Thank You

We want to extend a heartfelt **thank you** to all who volunteered for the Poppy Appeal 2025. The Appeal relies on the support of our amazing members and volunteers, and we're so grateful to have delivered such an incredible campaign this year. See our thank you video [here](#).

We're thrilled that this year's London Poppy Day raised an extraordinary £1,478,000. This remarkable achievement is a 14% increase on last year — a milestone that would not have been possible without each and every one of members and volunteers.

Whether you're a seasoned volunteer or you've been inspired by this year's activity, you, your members, friends and family can sign up to volunteer for Poppy Appeal 2026 today!

If you fancy a day volunteering in the capital, save the date for London Poppy Day on 29th October 2026. However, you choose to get involved, you'll be making a difference for the Armed Forces community. [Register for 2026 here](#).

Membership Strategy Roadshows Recap

Once again, we'd like to thank everyone who attended the online Strategy Roadshows in October and November. Membership is crucial to the success of our strategy and these events were a great opportunity for two-way dialogue.

Read a summary of the Roadshow [questions and answers](#), view the slides and [watch the recordings from all four sessions here](#).

RBL Secures Nearly 40% Savings for Clubs

RBL has achieved major cost reductions for RBL clubs following the renewal of its Buildings Insurance Policy on 1 October 2025. After a full review by our insurance broker, we have switched property insurance provider while keeping all existing terms and conditions.

This change has cut premiums for RBL club properties by nearly 40%, delivering substantial savings that will be reflected in each club's individual premium charge. This renewal underlines RBL's commitment to delivering value, reducing costs, and supporting clubs across the organisation.

A summary of the updated cover has been shared with club secretaries. For claims or support, clubs should contact Intact Insurance or our insurance broker, Griffiths & Armour, directly and notify the RBL Insurance Team. Contact details are included in the insurance summary.

Further queries can be directed to:

- Michael Goodwin – MGoodwin@britishlegion.org.uk or 07801 931284
- A.J. Morgan – ajmorgan@britishlegion.org.uk or 07824 530059

Introducing the Gamers Group

We're excited to introduce our new Online Gamers Group, the first of our digital special interest groups. This online community offers members a fresh way to connect, share experiences and game together.

The group will feature online gaming sessions, e-sports and live chat, alongside monthly updates on RBL national activities and key dates. Members can discuss the latest releases and enjoy exclusive content. If you'd like to learn more or join, [visit the group webpage](#).

Special interest groups like this not only bring members together around shared interests but also help attract new members and combat social isolation.

A Moving Musical Tribute in Hampshire

On Sunday 9 November, Farnborough Concert Band of the Royal British Legion proudly supported Fleet's Remembrance Event. Twenty musicians gathered on a surprisingly mild day as the parade set off from All Saints Church, led by Sandhurst and District Corps of Drums. Local military, dignitaries and youth groups joined the procession to Gurkha Square, where more than 1,000 people attended the service, including students from the local secondary schools.

The band performed I Vow to Thee My Country with Hart Male Voice Choir and Shuffletunes Choir before the Act of Remembrance. The Last Post and Reveille were sounded by one of the band's



cornet players. During the wreath laying, music commemorating the various Armed Forces was played, including Elegy on an RAF Theme, Saving Private Ryan, and Brother James Air. The service closed with the National Anthem and the Royal British Legion march. For the first time in memory, the band received a round of applause at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Community Collaboration in the East Midlands

Rushden Branch has a strong relationship with its local community and recently began working with SERVE, an award-winning charity supporting older people, those with disabilities, and their carers. Many of SERVE's beneficiaries are veterans or their families.

Rushden's collaboration with SERVE includes recording members' life stories, with SERVE volunteers visiting homes to capture memories and photographs – whether of a specific event or their overall life. Volunteers visit as many times as possible, both to capture these stories and to act as befriender support, fully DBS-checked.



SERVE's CEO, Tony Gibbs, suggested an idea that was taken forward by RBL's Fundraising Team: a poppy-themed livery for one of SERVE's minibuses. The liveried bus, pictured right, now serves the community and was proudly displayed at Rushden's War Memorial on Armistice Day 2025.

A Poppy Red Sky in Canada

Over 4,000 miles away in Canmore, Canada, the northern lights lit the night sky up in a spectacular red on the night of Remembrance Day.



These photographs were taken by Ian Silk, whose father, Norman, is an RBL member. The display in Canmore, home to a branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, was a very well-timed tribute to Remembrance.

Connect, Remember, Support

In what has been described as its "biggest and proudest moment of the year" Frecheville RBL in Sheffield recently took part in the installation of a permanent memorial to an RAF hero – after first helping to raise the funds to make it happen.

In 1955, 21-year-old Pilot Officer John Alexander Cohen's RAF Gloucester Meteor jet crashed on a training flight. John battled with the controls to guide the aircraft away from nearby houses but tragically died in the explosion.

Although John was not forgotten by the local community, over the years a memorial to his bravery was sadly vandalised and lost.



So, the branch was proud to be at the forefront of a local community group that raised funds for the new permanent memorial, and to be at its installation on the seventieth anniversary of John's selfless act of bravery.

It was a significant moment for a branch that had previously been finding it difficult to remain active. Membership numbers had dropped, as had the number of active members – and then the Branch Committee stepped down.

But with support from MEO Sharon Turton and the former Branch Treasurer stepping up as Branch Chair, a plan was made.

Danielle Reilly, Branch Vice Chair, says enabling members to have a say and to be heard not only encouraged inactive members to start attending meetings again – it also attracted lapsed and new members.

Since then, the branch has worked hard to raise its profile. “If something was happening in the local area, you could almost guarantee that we would be there...shaking our collection bucket for the Royal British Legion,” she says. The branch also forged a good relationship with the city council via Sheffield Council's Armed Forces Champion, who happily was a branch member.

“We look back on a branch that, not so long ago, was having a rough time of it. But we feel that through hard work and optimism we have now turned a corner,” says Danielle. “We might not be back to where we have been in the past or where we want to be in the future, but that future is looking rosy.”



Thank you for reading! The next edition of Central News is due to be published Tuesday 6 January.