

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

28 August 2025 – Memorial Hall

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richard Balding	Chair
Keith Urch	Deputy Chair, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal
Rick Axon	Bar, Entertainment Member
Dave Pollock	Raffle Coordinator
Simon Mason	Padre
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Adrian Dover	Acting Secretary
Tom Heseltine	
Terry Weaver	
Jan Sologub	

1. Act of Remembrance.

The Chair opened the meeting at 19:00 hours and asked everyone to think of the people who couldn't be with us due to ill health or for any other reason. He then read out the names of the members of the Parish of Newent who lost their lives in WW1 and WW2 during the month of September. He concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Colin Britt, John Miles, Viv Miles, Susan Urch, Elaine Balding, Gordon Thorogood, John and Pat Price.

3. Chair's Report

Welcome everyone I hope you are all well, a very short report this month:

3.1. Victory over Japan (VJ) Day 80 – 15 August 2025

On 15 August 2025 Newent celebrated VJ80. The morning consisted of the Flag raising ceremony at the Town Flag Pole conducted by the Town Mayor Sara Hulbert, an excellent speech from Air Marshal Sir David Walker KCVO OBE, a Deputy Lieutenant of the Gloucestershire Lieutenancy. This was followed by a procession led by the Branch Standard, along Broad Street and Church Street to St Mary's Church and the Newent War Memorial, where Mark Dunning Curate, Newent Benefice led a short service and Honorary Padre Pat Phillips said prayers. The whole event was a triumph and thanks have to go to Newent Town Council (especially Julia Gooch – NTC Veterans Rep) for organising, the Deputy Lieutenant and Mayor for contributing, Mark & Pat for the service and to the ladies of St Mary's for serving the Tea/Coffee and cake in the Church rooms afterwards.

3.2. Veterans' Coffee Morning – 23 September 2025

Don't forget that the next Veterans' Coffee Morning will be on 23 September 2025 starting at 10am in Manna Coffee House, everyone is welcome to attend.

3.3. Branch Secretary Vacancy

The Branch is still seeking a permanent Secretary so if anyone would like to take on this essential role please let me know, I will only be too pleased to describe the responsibilities etc. Could everyone please ask their friends and family if they would like to take on this pivotal role.

3.4. 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

Matters arising: item 3.1 – “the Rifles” should read “The Rifles”

With no further matters arising, TH proposed and JS seconded that the Minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record. Passed unanimously.

5. Reports by Officers

5.1 Branch Community Support (BCS)

5.1.1 Welcome. TRBL are currently reminding those of you that have received client surveys via post to complete them and return in the pre-paid envelope.

We continue to progress reconnecting with our many local veterans, serving members of our Armed Forces community and Cadet Units in Newent. We are in the process of renewing our Branch Affiliation with the Newent Branch of the RAFAC, which had apparently lapsed, via Damon Ballinger, Flt Lt RAFAC | OC 186 (Newent) Sqn Air Cadets.

5.1.2 Branch Remembrance. We remember those unable to be present this evening due to various reasons and as usual, offer our support to those in need.

The Branch and Veterans' Coffee Morning on Tuesday again attracted a number of Members, discussing a wide variety of subjects.

5.1.3. Branch Welfare This reporting period has been somewhat quiet, with few requests for advice or support. Aside from the support available via your BCS Representatives, Veterans and Branch Members are encouraged to continue to contact the RBL Helpline services as normal via the national network on 0808 802 8080 and The Veteran's Gateway: <https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk>

5.1.4. Branch Membership. The current Branch Membership remains static at 46 Members: new Members are always encouraged and welcomed.

5.1.5. Branch Statistics We continue to be supportive of our local veterans and others within our surrounding area. The Branch continues to provide support to Branch Members, new veterans moving into our community and an ongoing number via the Telephone Buddy Network.

We would remind Members that you can support others in need by signposting them to TRBL helpline or by reference to the Branch BCS representatives at the earliest convenience.

Please note that all communications are confidential.

Branch Statistics for this period are therefore as follows:

Total Number of Welfare visits 3

How many beneficiaries visited 3

How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters) 2

Total Welfare Expenditure NIL

Telephone Buddies:

Telephone – How many beneficiaries called 3

Telephone – How many telephone buddies: 2

Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive in support of veterans 4

5.1.6. Branch Community Support, Youth Liaison and Community Activities.

Community and Youth Liaison: Friday, 15 August, saw The Branch and Newent's community come together to commemorate VJ Day, the official end to World War 2. A VJ80 flag raising event occurred at the Town Flagpole, followed by a short service at the War Memorial and light refreshments.

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

5.1.7. The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy – Nominations. With the summer holidays almost over, reminders have been sent to all secondary schools and youth organisations serving Newent and its wider community for action during September.

5.1.8. Newent War Memorial and Time Capsule A varied array of items have now been collected for placement in the Time Capsule: sealing of the capsule will take place imminently.

5.1.9. Forthcoming Dates for TRBL Branch Diary Next month's Veterans' and Branch Coffee Morning will be held on Tuesday, 23 September at Manna Coffee House, Newent

For further information please see the reports issued by our Branch Chairman, Branch Entertainment's Officer and Parade Marshal.

5.2. Treasurer's Report There has been no expenditure this month. We have received subs. payments of £8.00 from RBLHQ. The current account balance is £1,085.36.

5.3. Parade Marshal's Report On Friday 15 August the Branch Standard was paraded at the VJ80 flag raising at the town flagpole. It was then marched through the town to the War Memorial for the Service conducted by Rev. Mark Dunning, Curate at Saint Mary's. About fifty people attended the Service.

5.4. Entertainments Officer's Report RA reported that the following events have been arranged:

- Thursday 23 October: Branch AGM at 1900 followed by cheese and wine
- Thursday 27 November: Branch Social at 1900 in the Cobblers
- Thursday 18 December: Christmas Dinner at 1900 in the Alma, Linton.

5.5. Padre's Report Thank you to everyone who was involved in any way with the events around VJ80. On Sunday 31 August the Branch Deputy Padre will be stepping down from active ministry in the church. There will be a Service at St. Mary's, starting at 1030, to mark this occasion and all Members are welcome to attend.

6. Any Other Business

6.1. TW shared his positive experiences of the Forces Covenant recently and urged all Members to make sure that their veteran status is noted at their local surgery. He also said that it is important to mention this at any hospital appointments.

6.2. The Chair gave details about the County Dinner to be held in Gloucester on 1 November – cost is £100.00 per person. See attachment for full details.

6.3. The Chair gave details about the amounts raised so far this year for the Poppy Appeal. Gloucestershire has already raised over £1 million.

6.4. Gloucester Day is on Saturday 6 September. See attachment for full details.

6.5. KU reported that he has had a meeting with the CEO of Gloucestershire Age UK who will, hopefully, visit Newent on a regular basis – possibly using the Library to meet people. KU will keep the Branch informed of any progress.

6.6. Following on from TW's comments re. the Forces Covenant, RA reminded Members that in addition to the Armed Force Discount Card, there is also the Blue Light Card.

6.7. RA asked if a friend who's Father served in the Coldstream Guards and fought at Monte Casino and in North Africa, could march with us at the Remembrance Parade. The Chair said that anyone is more than welcome to join us on the Parade.

6.8. GB asked if anyone had anything they would like raised at the Remembrance Parade meeting that is due to take place with Newent Town Council on 4 September.

6.9. GB asked if there was any further news re. the stolen Poppy boxes. Apparently, the identity of the culprit is known.

6.10. County expect anyone who carries a Branch Standard to attend an annual training day. The next such day is Sunday 7 September and GB asked for permission to take the Standard out of the District for that day. Permission was granted.

6.11. Newent Fun Day – 13 September. The Branch has been offered the opportunity to have a stall in the Church grounds at no cost (but with the hope that a donation would be made to the Midland Air Ambulance). Unfortunately, no one is available to run the stall. SM will let the organisers know.

6.12. Date of next meeting: Thursday 25 September, at the Memorial Hall, starting at 1900.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 1957.

Meeting Agenda

Newent and District Branch The Royal British Legion

25 September 2025 in Newent Memorial Hall

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