

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

Held 27th June 2024 Newent Memorial Hall.

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richie Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Deputy Chairman, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership
David Sass	Secretary
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Rick Axon	Bar, Entertainment Member
Dave Pollock	Raffle Coordinator
Jan Sologub	
Adrian Dover	
John Price	

1. Act of Remembrance.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1900 hours and asked everyone to think of the people who couldn't be with us due to ill health. He then read out the names of the members of the Parish who lost their lives in WW1 and WW2 during the month of July. He concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Sue Colborne, Jon Miles, Viv Miles, Susan Urch, Pat Price, Colin Britt, Susanne Britt, Simon Mason, Gordon Thorogood, Shaun Westmoreland, Jim Gardiner and Elaine Balding.

3. Chairman's Report.

Good evening, all, this month it was a flag raising bonanza! so to start:

3.1. D-Day 80 Service's and Breakfast – 6 June 2024

The D-Day 80 commemorative service and breakfast took place at St Mary's on 6 June 2024, the day started at 7am with members of the RBL and local community conducting a D-Day flag raising at the church, a short service by our Branch Padre, laying of the D-Day wreath a minutes silence and a standard dip conducted by the Parade Marshal, this was followed by Breakfast in the Church halls supplied by the Padre and St Mary's. We then re-located to the Newent Town Council (NTC) flag pole and conducted a similar service starting at 9am, the Veteran's Representative on NTC Julia Gooch also said a few words alongside our Padre and also raised the D-Day 80 flag.

In my opinion both events went off without a hitch and complimented the D-Day 80 displays advertised in both the shop window of Gooch Sports and upstairs in the Market House. My thanks go to the Branch Padre for all the organising, kind words and support he always gives, to NTC for inviting us to participate in their plans, to the Parade Marshal for once again stepping in to the limelight and parading the standard and of course to everyone who attended at such an unusual hour, it really was good to see everyone there.

3.2. Armed Forces Week – 24 – 30 June 2024

Newent Town Council very kindly invited the Branch to participate in the start of Armed Forces Week celebrations by attending the raising of the AFD flag at the NTC flag pole next to the library. Distinguished guests included the Vice Lord Lieutenant (VLL) Roger Deeks, RBL County Chairman Gary Mills and the NTC Mayor Sara Hulbert. Brief talks were given by the VLL, the Mayor and our Branch Padre, once again the event went off without a hitch. Afterwards we were invited to Coffee & Cake hosted by the Community Café, which was gratefully received. Thanks go to NTC for again supporting Veterans and service personnel and for inviting us to attend.

3.3. Marie Curie Talk and Presentation – 25 July 2024

Don't forget next month we have a guest speaker with Mr Peter Sara the Senior Marie Curie Community Fundraiser for the West Midlands and South West who will be giving a talk on Thursday 25 July 2024. This talk is open to anyone so please spread the word around and if you have any advance questions for Peter let me know and I will pass them on.

3.4. Royal British Legion Aspire Leadership Programme

Last month I mentioned about the new free initiative from the RBL, Aspire Leadership Programme. Which as they advertised is an attempt to develop the skills of prospective, current and future Branch, County and National leaders. I applied to attend this course which takes place over 2 weekends down in Haig House London, but unfortunately I was unsuccessful in my bid, reason being they are concentrating on the higher end of the leadership spectrum for this course. Not all bad news though it does mean I can now attend a BBQ on one of the weekends.

3.5. Volunteer Committee Member – Memorial Hall

Last month I mentioned that the Memorial Hall Committee had invited service users to become part of the Memorial Hall Committee, therefore taking an active role in the management of the Memorial Hall. Unfortunately with no volunteers from Branch members I attended the AGM on the 25 June 2024 and volunteered on behalf of the Branch to become the Branch representative. As and when meetings are held I will let you know of any news.

3.6. Branch Subscription Fees for 2024/2025

I also mentioned the motion passed at annual conference with regards to Branch subscription fee increase, during the month an explanation was released by head office which should have gone to every member with an email, however it's come to my attention that not everyone has received it, so we will attach the explanation to the minutes for everyone's attention.

3.7. Veteran's Coffee Morning – 23 July 2024

This month's Veterans Coffee Morning will take place at Manna Coffee House on 23 July 2024 starting at 10am, everyone is welcome to attend.

3.8. 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.

Item 6.1. Newent Veteran Veteran 100th Birthday celebration. After some discussion it was decided that the Branch would enquire with Stoke Mews to discuss the possibility of having an afternoon tea to celebrate this event, sometime close to the actual Birthday, it was suggested that several local dignitaries should be invited to attend such a prestigious event. DS volunteered to confirm the Veterans birthdate (5th January) so firm discussions can be made with VIPs and Stoke Mews.

Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting were Proposed Keith Urch and seconded by Graham Barton.

5. Reports by Officers

5.1. Branch Community Support (BCS)

5.1.1. Branch Remembrance

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.

This period has also seen The Branch commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day with services at The War Memorial at St Mary's, raising of the D-Day Flag both at St Mary's and at The Town Flagpole with kind permission and support of Newent Town Council. Both events were well attended by Branch, Council and community representatives.

Armed Forces Week commenced on Monday, 24th June with a flag raising ceremony at The Town Flagpole attended by civic dignitaries including the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, District and Town Councils, Branch Members and local representatives. Following a short service, arrangements concluded with refreshments at The ChillOut Community Cafe.

5.1.2. Branch Welfare, Membership, Statistics, Community Support and Youth Liaison.

As a direct result of National Conference, there continues to be further changes within the structure of TRBL HQ and the way in which it delivers its services. More information is envisaged to be received by Branches in the coming months.

5.1.3. Branch Welfare

The Branch continues to aid and support its members, veterans and supporters. Veterans and Branch Members may continue contact the RBL Helpline services via the national network on 0808 802 8080 and The Veteran's Gateway: <https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk>

Your representative has been informed that despite proposed revisions to the Veteran Contact System, no changes will occur in the immediate further.

This period unfortunately records a number of mishaps from Members, veterans and local supporters, including our PAO. I am pleased to record that while a period of hospitalisation resulted from all incidents, everyone is fortunately recovering.

5.1.4 FOD Armed Forces Support Network - The Veterans Covenant

Your representative was invited to attend a meeting of the FoD Armed Forces Support Network on 19th June. The meeting was well attended and there were a number of presentations including those from: Simon Dawson (The Wilderness Centre), Kevin Gannaway-Pitts (NHS Integrated Care Board, Glos., Armed Forces Veterans), Max Ward (NHS Mental Health Care Navigator, Gloss.), Sam/Samantha Robinson (Warrior Programme, Horsham) and The Army Welfare Officer, The Rifles, Beachley Barracks. More information will become available to Members once the minutes of the meeting have been issued.

5.1.5. Branch Membership

Subject to timely renewals, Branch Membership remains at 39 members.

The Branch welcomes new members and encourages them to attend forthcoming events, especially our Branch Coffee Mornings at Manna Coffee House on the 4th Tuesday of the month.

5.1.6. Branch Statistics

The Branch continues to provide support to its current Members, new veterans moving into our community and a small number via the Telephone Buddy Network.

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	7
How many beneficiaries visited	5
How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters)	4
Total Welfare Expenditure	NIL
Telephone Buddies:	
Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive	12
Telephone – How many beneficiaries called	5
Telephone – How many telephone buddies:	4

5.1.7. 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.

5.1.8. Newent War Memorial

The Newent Initiative Trust having established a separate "ring-fenced account" specifically for this purpose now seeks to raise funds via public subscription.

Requests for public funding have been published via the local media and a baseline funding application has been submitted to Newent Town Council covering the cost of structural review and cleaning in line with the planned completion date of the end of October 2024.

5.1.9. Forthcoming Dates for TRBL Branch Diary

Remembrance Day Events

November is planning to be a very busy time for The Branch and Newent's community: more details to follow.

Military Wives Concert

A repeat of last year's successful event is planned to be held on 24th November in Newent's Memorial Hall: more details to follow.

5.2. Treasurer's Report

There have been no transactions this month. The current account stands at £1004.41.

June 30th is also the end of our financial year. The accounts will be presented at the July meeting for approval.

5.3. Bar & Entertainments Member.

Posters for Military Wives Concert have been produced and circulated. Linda Morriss at Manna House to carry Mini Flyers in the coffee shop.

Tickets to be printed and distributed to Manna Coffee House (60) Cobblers Micro Pub (40) and given to the Chairman to sell to the public. RA will also promote the event on Facebook.

5.4. Parade Marshal's Report

The Parade Marshal stated that the Branch Standard was Paraded 3 times during the month:

- a. 6 June 2024 - D-Day 80 Commemorations at 0700 hours and 1000 hours
- b. 24 June 2024 – Start of Armed Forces Week

6. Any Other Business

GB has asked Newent Town Mayor (Sara Hulbert) to arrange a meeting for Remembrance Day.

GB reported that some Newent Branch Members had attended the Gloucestershire Grenadiers 75th Anniversary garden party, which was a great success after some good feedback.

GB stated that on Saturday friend of the Branch Mark Dunning will be Ordained Priest, with the ceremony taking place at Gloucester Cathedral and his first official Service taking place on Sunday.

GB Mentioned that now we have a new Standard Holder for use in Ceremonial events he would like to propose that the Branch purchase an RBL Plaque and name plate to use as an advertising feature during events. After some discussion KU Seconded the proposal up to the value of £100. **Decision: Carried unanimously.**

7. Date of Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 20:05 with the next meeting set for 25 July 2024 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall.

Meeting Agenda

Newent and District Branch The Royal British Legion

25th July 2024 in The Memorial Hall

1. Welcome and Act of Remembrance.
2. Mr. Peter Sara - Marie Curie Talk.
3. Apologies for Absence.
4. Chairman's Report.
5. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.
6. Reports by Officers.
7. Any Other Business.
8. Date of Next Meeting.