

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

**Held 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 St Mary's Church Hall.**

<b><u>Attendees</u></b>	<b><u>Post</u></b>
Richie Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Deputy Chairman, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership Secretary
David Sass	Secretary
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal
Rick Axon	Bar, Entertainment Member
Rev Simon Mason	Padre
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Elaine Balding	
Gordon Thorogood	
Dave Pollock	Raffle Coordinator

**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 months of April. He concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

**2 Apologies for Absence.**

Adrian Dover, Colin Calcutt, Clare Page, Terry Weaver, Susanne Britt, Colin Britt, Susan Urch, Pat Price, Jim Gardiner, John Price, Jon Miles, Viv Miles, Tom Heseltine.

**3 Chairman's Report.**

**Introduction**

Good evening All, it's so nice to be back and seeing you all again, after what seems like a hectic few months. It's been a very quiet month relatively speaking so my report is very short this time:

**3.1 County Briefing and County Committee Meeting – 13 April 2024**

A briefing for members will be held at RBL Hardwicke Branch premises at Green Lane, Hardwicke, GL2 4QA. This is an annual briefing about the County Chairs Seminar which took place on the 1-2 March and was attended by the Gloucestershire County Chairman, he will firstly run through the Seminar and then take and answer questions. Branch Members are encouraged to attend the seminar and if anyone does want to attend, please let me know and I'll pass on names.

**3.2 Annual Conference – 10-12 May 2024**

The final motions for this year's conference have now been published and have been sent out to all Members for their consideration. Please let me know by 15 April 2024 your voting choices, we can then take them to conference.

**3.3 Veteran's Coffee Morning – 30 April 2024**

This month's Veterans Coffee Morning will take place at Manna Coffee House on 30 April 2024 starting at 10am, everyone is welcome to attend.

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

**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.**

After noting some minor grammatical errors they were proposed by GB and seconded by EB that the minutes were a true and accurate record.

## **5. Reports by Officers**

### **5.1. Branch Community Support (BCS) Report for March 2024**

#### **5.1.1. Newent Branch former Treasurer, Rex Debenham**

Rex Debenham, our Branch Treasurer of many years has now moved into the RBL Dementia Care Home in Ripon, North Yorkshire.

The Branch has a card for Members' signature and you are invited to add your best wishes. For those that wish to contact Rex directly:

The Royal British Legion  
Lister House  
Southgate  
Ripon  
North Yorkshire  
HG4 1PG  
Contact 01765 694740

#### **5.1.2 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.

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

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

Another programme of training sessions has been arranged but unfortunately that session for Lydney has since been cancelled due to lack of numbers: other options are currently available in Leicestershire for those wishing to attend.

#### **5.1.4 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 further Gloucester based local veterans, neither of whom are currently Branch Members, as part of the RBL Telephone Buddy Network.

It was previously mentioned, the way in which veterans are to contact the RBL National RBL Helpline is to change but at present the National RBL Helpline remains as: 0808 802 8080.

and The Veteran's Gateway: <https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk>

#### **5.1.5 Veteran Liaison and Support Grants**

We have welcomed a number of new veterans to our Newent community and look forward to them joining the Branch.

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

#### **5.1.6 Branch Membership**

In accordance with TRBL records, current Branch Membership remains 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.

#### **5.1.7 Branch Statistics**

The Branch has continued 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 8  
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 20  
Telephone – How many beneficiaries called 8  
Telephone – How many telephone buddies: 4

### **5.1.8 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.

Members are reminded of the Newent Community Event this coming Saturday.

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

#### **2. Newent War Memorial**

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

The Newent Initiative Trust has established a separate "ring-fenced account" specifically for this purpose.

The current phase of the project seeks to secure funding to enable cleaning to commence, (provisionally planned for end March), leading to completion of the Memorial's restoration prior to our planned November 2024 events. The current cost for cleaning is circa £2k (inc. VAT).

It has been proposed that funding the upgrade will be by adopting a "Sponsor a Name" at the cost of £10 per letter, based upon the total cost for all works being in the region of £10k. The cost obviously varies upon the name of our fallen comrade but generally averages in the region of £100 per name.

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

### **5.1.9 TRBL HQ, County Liaison and Branch Communications (OS365)**

County Briefing and Committee Session

Your Chairman and I have an invitation to attend a County Briefing and Committee Session at the RBL Hardwick Branch (Green Lane, GL2 4QA) on Saturday, 13th April 1000 - 1245). Should anyone wish to attend this event as a Visitor, please register your interest.

For other matters relating to other specific HQ/County/Branch communications and local activities, please see your Chairman's and other Branch Representative Reports.

#### **5.1.10 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.

Members are reminded that your Chairman and Deputy have agreed to attend the Conference virtually rather 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.

NOTE: Members will be receiving details of the Motions being tabled in the coming days such that their voting preferences may be counted.

#### **5.2 Treasurer's Report**

There were no transactions this month and the balance remains at £996.91

#### **5.3 Bar & Entertainments Member.**

Proposed Branch Events 2024. Schedule as reported at previous meeting.

#### **6.0 Any Other Business.**

**6.1 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary D-Day Wreath** KU has spoken to the Branch PAO and he has ordered one. There may be an opportunity to use it at the Wreath laying on Remembrance Sunday.

**6.2 May Hill Beacon lighting 5<sup>th</sup> June** KU suggested the Newent Branch Participate in some form.

*Action: KU to gather more details from FODC and report to membership.*

**6.3 Newent Veteran Reaching 100 years** GT mentioned a resident of Stokes Mews (Ex Intelligence Corps) who will reach 100 soon and suggested we honour him in the Branch. He also mentioned a Veterans Card that gave ex forces members a discount in various places. RA also mentioned about the Blue Light Card, which he uses regularly.

*Action: GT to provide members with more details.*

**6.4 Innsworth Military Wives Chior Concert - Sunday 24 November in Newent Memorial Hall.** RA and GB suggested Tickets could be sold for £8 each with seating for up to 100 people. A discussion was had about the optimum price of tickets and it was agreed that they stay at £8. The Hall would be available for the concert use from 1400-1700.

*Actions: **Chairman** to Inform Newent Town Council of the date and **EB** to speak to Newent Coral Society to make sure there is no conflict and **RA** to “revamp” last year’s poster with this year’s details.*

**6.5 D Day Flag Raising by Newent Library at 7am** The Secretary informed the Members that this would be put to Newent Town Council at next full Council Meeting on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

*Action: Secretary*

**6.6 Remembrance Sunday service may be in the Church in case of bad weather.** The Padre said that due to the success of last year’s service which was held in-doors due to bad weather, he would now be firming up plans for similar services in the future if the weather dictated. The preference would be to hold it outside as in previous years, weather dependent. He also mentioned that it was 350 years since ‘Tumbledown Sunday 18 January 1674.

**6.7 Newent Community School Remembrance Service** Graham Barton Parade Marshall asked if we could check with Dawn and find out which day they planned to hold their memorial service this year.

*Action: Chairman to check with the School.*

**6.8 Armed Forces Week – 24 – 29 June 2024.** The Chairman would ascertain if NTC are intending to celebrate Armed Forces Week and if so what are their intentions.

*Action: Chairman to contact Julia Gooch (NTC Veterans Rep) and ask the question.*

**6.9 Veterans Week or Veterans Day** was discussed and the Chairman suggested he look into it.

The Padre suggested that a special invitation to veterans could be sent out to attend a Sunday Memorial Day Service.

*Action: Chairman to report back at April’s meeting.*

**6.10 Thanks.** Chairman and Members expressed their thanks to the Branch Padre for allowing the branch to use St Mary’s Church Rooms for this month’s Branch meeting.

**7. Date for Next Meeting.** The Meeting Closed at 20:05 with the next meeting to take place 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024 in Newent Memorial Hall.

## **Meeting Agenda**

### **Newent and District Branch The Royal British Legion**

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2024 in The Memorial Hall**

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.