

GLOUCESTER CITY ACCOUNTS
INCLUDING
POPPY APPEAL ACCOUNT AND BRANCH OWNED STOCK

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Summary of all Branch Accounts

- Branch General Account – we control this directly via the Treasurer. Account held in the City Lloyds branch, two people have to sign cheques, signatories recorded with Lloyds. This is for branch admin, purchase of goods such as the gazebos, stamps, stationary, phone, low-cost rental, and so on.
- Branch Welfare Account – we control this directly via the 3 trustees of the local BPT. Account held in the City Lloyds branch, two of the 3 trustees have to sign cheques, signatories recorded with Lloyds. This is purely for welfare.
- Branch Fund Initiative (BFI) – we indirectly control this with access by request via the Treasurer.
- Branch Legacy Trust (BLT) - we indirectly control this with access by request via the Treasurer.
- Branch Property Trusts (BPT) – we have 2 BPTs as explained below, one held in local trust that we control directly and one held in corporate trust (by central RBL) that we have little say over, although can request funds via business cases.
- Poppy Appeal Account – not a branch account, managed by the Poppy Appeal organiser (PAO).

The Treasurer reports monthly on the General, Welfare and BFI totals, these accounts being operated through LOMAS (Legion Online Membership Accounting System) by the Branch Treasurer. We receive an annual statement for the corporate BPT. The local BPT is a combination of a flat we own, and rent out, with the rent held in the Welfare Account and used for welfare cases.

We cannot hold more than £5000 between the General and Welfare accounts thus surplus is transferred to the BFI, this transfer is generally from the welfare account.

Branch Fund Initiative

Our BFI account is part of the larger RBL BFI meaning overall we should receive more interest than individually. The BFI is designed for branches to deposit surplus funds which are not immediately needed for the day to day running of the branch. That is still branch money but to release funds there is a process. Funds to be withdrawn will be spent in accordance with the objects (Article 3) of the Royal Charter and the Membership Handbook, namely the below:

- a) to relieve need and to further the education of beneficiaries and their spouses, children and dependants;
- b) to relieve need and protect the mental and emotional health of the spouses, children, dependants and immediate family members of beneficiaries who have died or been severely injured;
- c) to relieve suffering, hardship and distress to spouses, children and dependants caused by the absence of those serving in the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force on Regular, Reserve or Auxiliary engagements;
- d) to promote and support schemes for the resettlement, rehabilitation, retraining and sheltered employment, of beneficiaries and their spouses, children and dependants;
- e) to promote public benefit by the commemoration of those who have died whilst on active service with the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom.

NB it should be noted that children in full time education (up to 18) are deemed dependant, there is an Educational Support scheme beyond 18 if needed (Women's Section's President's Award). Disabled children can remain dependant for life if they are solely supported by parents.

Branches can also use their BFI account to make donations to the Poppy Appeal, (RBL) Care Homes and County Welfare Funds. Branches can also pay over affiliation fees to Head Office via the BFI, reducing branch administration and bank charges.

Our BFI is continually added to as a result of how we have used our local BPT as explained in this document. All funds raised via the local BPT are specifically for welfare thus para e) above would require agreement by the branch if we used BFI money for such a purpose.

Branch Property Trusts

We have two BPTs as a result of the compulsory purchase some years ago by the City Council of numbers 16 and 18 Commercial Road. Number 18 was the RBL Club, until recently rented from the council by the RNA until it folded. Our branch rented it for a while and via the Poppy Appeal, space is still rented to store stock, this is likely to change soon as explained in the Poppy Appeal section. Number 16 was a tile shop and is now the Glos Bike Project premises.

Corporate BPT

The funds raised on the sale of No 18 Commercial Road, is in corporate trusteeship, i.e., held centrally by the RBL. The last annual report issued in June 2020 for the year ending September 2019 stated £206,272.39 held in that trust. I have a query (and have emailed RBL accounts) with it though, likely £7,730.48 too high as it included rent from the property we own as explained for the local BPT. Back in 2016 there was instruction that the money would be moved out of our BPT and used for wider RBL needs, the option to use the funds supposedly ending in Sep 2019. Given we received an annual statement in June 2020 this suggest the funds are still available. This needs to be followed up, this is a pot of money we could use to rent somewhere for a while at least. There is (or was) a process to follow

including a business case, we can (or could) access those funds, so if the ideas flood in and it's still valid, let's go for it. I have learned today (12 Jan 21) that some funds have been transferred from corporately held BPTs (over 600 branches) into Area Trust Funds. This is a brief explanation of a contentious subject, we have no real control of this money.

Local BPT

All documents fully detailing the below are available in our branch online sharepoint folders and can be shared with branch members on request.

The funds raised on the sale of No 16 Commercial Road, is in local trusteeship, i.e., held by our branch. The trustees are Garry Mills, Kay Scase and Mark Paveley. A public consultation was held at a branch meeting on 6th Feb 2015 including a vote on acquiring a property to rent out as described below, minuted and reported in a newsletter.

“A submission on behalf of the Local Trustees requesting that a suitably modern house, apartment or flat be purchased and rented out on the open market. The property purchased should be in the confines of the City of Gloucester Boundaries. Monies raised from rental income will be utilised for the benefit of RBL beneficiaries (serving personnel, ex-service and their dependents) within the City of Gloucester and area. The Trustees are charged to ensure a suitable yield from such an investment, that the property is managed by an external agency and that the investment property be fit for purpose and to a high standard. This proposal was accepted and recommended.”

Consultation ensued and RBL advice was sought by the Gloucester City Branch from Hugh Phillips, the RBL Head of Trust Property Governance. The Trustees met with Hugh Phillips in Gloucester City on Tuesday, 24th March 2015 at Robert Raikes House, Southgate Street, Gloucester City. The main advice from Hugh Phillips prior to the meeting is as below, dated 17th February 2015:

“The decision as to how to use the funds held in the local trust is a matter for the local trustees taking into account the terms of the trust under which they are required to operate. Our role as Legion staff is to lend you support and advice in the process and hence to not only keep you on the right side of the law but also to seek synergy between your plans and those of the Legion's Area Manager.”

At the time we had £168,256.87 in this BPT. The property was purchased for £130000, Solicitor's bill £1800, funds transfer (same day) between accounts £25, balance in Business Saver £36,431.87. The Business saver account was the account we had holding the local BPT total. That account has since been closed and money is held in the local Welfare Account and the BFI, nearly £43K between them as at Dec 21. The purchase completed June 29th 2015. Address: Flat 9, 6 Suffolk Drive, Gloucester, GL1 2AF. It is currently occupied by a serving Royal Navy sailor.

So, for monthly figures reported by the Treasurer you will see BFI and Welfare account totals both as a result of rental income and in keeping with “for the benefit of RBL beneficiaries”. That is the purpose of monies raised from the rent after costs. Money may be added to welfare from other sources i.e., donations people specifically make for welfare although the vast majority is the rental income. I trust you can see that this raises far more money than the corporate BPT and keeps the local money local!

Branch Legacy Trust

In Autumn 2020 the branch learned of a legacy specifically left to the branch by EA Scillitoe in 2015, to the sum of £35,356.15. We have been asked to consider releasing funds:

- a) To the Benevolent Fund to support all welfare services throughout England and Wales.
- b) As a donation to our local Poppy Appeal district supporting the fundraising in our area.
- c) To the Area Trust Fund which supports the welfare services in our County.
- d) To a specific welfare service of the branch's choosing e.g. PPE for (RBL) Care Homes (current costs around £40K per 3 months)
- e) A welfare or remembrance cause of our choosing, in effect I read that is being in line with the Royal Charter as stated above for the use of our BFI account.

This money cannot be used for renting a property.

Poppy Appeal

This is a funny one to get your head around although useful to explain. Bob Perkins is the PAO and in that role is overseen by the (RBL employed) County Community Fundraiser. It is not directly a branch remit although we do of course support Bob as a branch and most don't see it as different. Bob is also supported by the Gloucester City RBL Women's Section, his wife Rachel is the Deputy PAO, they are responsible for distributing the hundreds of collection tins locally each year and indeed do most of it themselves. The ladies from the RBL WS also do the counting afterwards, a mammoth task. Non-RBL members also support Bob for Poppy Collections.

There is a bank account that Bob as PAO manages for the Gloucester City Poppy Appeal, it is nothing to do with the branch, all monies therein are sent to the central Benevolent Fund and thence distributed across our beneficiaries as dictated by demand. Poppy Appeal money could be given to the branch, so it is always important to ask if it is for; branch admin, branch welfare or for the Poppy Appeal to make sure it goes to the right account and used for the intended purpose. The Poppy Appeal stock is managed by Bob and stored in 18 Commercial Road, payment for rent is from the Poppy Appeal as a cost thereof, it is not a branch responsibility.

Branch Equipment and Documentation

We have some items stored alongside the Poppy Appeal stock at 18 Commercial Road but that belongs to the branch, such as paperwork, flags, small furniture items, a garden gazebo. When we buy the new gazebos a bit more space will be needed. If the Poppy Appeal stock is moved elsewhere, we need a new home for branch items, ideally we will sort that out beforehand. Some branch items are held by individuals such as a computer and laptop with individuals, the Standard and accompanying equipment is held by Bob Perkins as branch standard bearer for example. There are some certificates and awards in the mix, some of which I hold at home. We do not have an inventory across all items we own, an activity we should conduct.

I spoke some time ago with the SOGM Director regarding a potential for a display case at SOGM as well as limited storage, we should pick this action up again, wouldn't it be great to have on display some treasured items? If we cannot store other items there, we need to find somewhere else, that is readily accessed and with an inventory across all items.

Annex A

This detail is for completeness should we need to vote on fund transfer requests, they are not branch remits.

RBL Glos County Accounts

Routinely we may be asked to contribute to the County from two aspects: day to day running of the County Committee activities including ceremonial activities and other events, and welfare. The County has the following accounts: General, Beneficial and County BFI.

The County Welfare Fund in turn has requests made to it from the Area Trust Fund. In the case of the BLT, we have the option to transfer funds to the to the Area Trust Fund which supports the welfare services in our County.

There is much more to the running of these accounts I am sure the County Treasurer would love to impart, this is purely a simple summary should we vote on transfer of money to the Count funds. Any requests will have the full detail to discuss.

Area Trust Fund

Our branch is within the South West Midlands and Somerset Area, that includes Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

When a grant is made on a welfare case there is a process of Almonisation, this is where the Area ask for other invested service charities if they would like to contribute towards the case spend, this includes parties such as other service charities, Regimental funds and welfare, other non-service charities which may have a link to the individual through other employment such as civil service welfare etc.

Almonisation is a two-way process which has all charities seeking for contributions from others to assist with a case, some big case working charities such as SSAFA do not hold any funds of their own so will pay individual grants on contribution from others such as the RBL.

Part of the Almonisation process includes a request to County to enquire if they would like to contribute towards the grants made on a quarterly basis. County Welfare Funds are accrued via donations specifically for the County and via branches.

If a case does not meet the total figure required during the Almonisation process then we still provide that support and use the Poppy Appeal funds via the Central Benevolent Fund to ensure the grant can be paid in full regardless of others making a contribution or not.

Notwithstanding the costs of the welfare to beneficiaries there are operational costs to providing welfare such as sending an Outreach Officer with a family for a day to make a homeless application with a local authority, costs include travel, staffing costs and training of the staff member. These are not accounted for in any break down of grants given in an Area report.