



Central News – October 2026

Membership information, updates and engagement

News and Updates

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Important dates

12 October 2026	Fireside Chat – Episode Four [click to join at 12pm]
17 October 2026	Members' Town Hall [click to join at 10.30am]

2026 Remembrance Key Points

The Remembrance Key Points document has been updated for the 2026 Remembrance period. The document sets out the principles and practices that guide how we honour the service and sacrifices of the Armed Forces community. It is designed to support members and communities in communicating the core messages of Remembrance, helping ensure their activities are inclusive and reflective of the values we uphold. Read the document at rbl.org.uk/remembrance.

Fireside Chat – Episode Four

Fireside Chats – Episode 4 | The Unseen Toll: What the Medals Don't Show

Royal Navy veteran Jason Smith sits down with RBL's Jon Summerson for an open conversation about the realities of modern military service and life after the Armed Forces.

During over 23 years of Naval service, Jason served in operational and leadership roles, including frontline deployments and high-pressure environments, balancing the demands of service with family life. Following his medical discharge, Jason reflected on the less visible impacts of service, from the cumulative pressures of a constant operational tempo to transition, identity, mental health and family relationships.

Together, Jon and Jason discuss these hidden sacrifices, the modern veteran experience and why conversations around transition, wellbeing and support matter. Join them at **12pm on 12 October** [using this link](#). Can't make it? Look out for the recording in November's Central News. You can also catch up on previous Fireside Chats including Episode 3: *The Story Behind Scotty's Little Soldiers* and other virtual membership events [using this link](#).

October Members' Town Hall

Save the date for our next Members' Town Hall. On Saturday, 17 October 2026 at 10.30am, we'll be discussing best practice in branch recruitment and retention. We will also discuss the principles of gain and retain to sustain.

This interactive session will encourage conversation and inspire good ideas. Attendees will hear from a branch that has experienced strong success in recruitment and retention and will be able to share their own successes or ask questions.

[Use this link to join on the day](#). Missed our previous Town Halls? Catch up on them and other virtual membership events [using this link](#).

Cenotaph Parade and Festival of Remembrance

For those who have registered to attend the 2026 **Cenotaph Parade**, e-tickets and joining instructions will be sent between 30-31 October from cenotaph@britishlegion.org.uk. If you do not receive an email by 31 October, please check your spam / junk folder. More information and FAQs can be found [on our website](#).

For members who have purchased **Festival of Remembrance tickets**, these will be posted to the address on your booking 10 days before the event. If your tickets have not arrived by Friday 6 November, please contact festival@britishlegion.org.uk.

If you need to change the address on your booking, you can do this via the [self-service portal here](#). You can also change the guest on your booking using the self-service portal up to two weeks before the event. Please [visit our website](#) for more information and FAQs.

Roaring start to Community Grants programme

Our new Community Grants programme has had a very successful launch! After a very competitive application process, 39 organisations have been awarded grants for a broad range of projects across the UK. Together, these projects will provide £1.5m in funding and offer over 11,000 beneficiaries with opportunities to connect with others in their community.

We'd like to say a big thank you to all members, officers and committees that have provided contributions and feedback so far, and we look forward to hearing from many more of you over the coming months.

This new process provides a fantastic opportunity for branches and counties to make a real difference to our beneficiaries in their communities, by directly aligning with our strategy of Connect, Remember, Support. We hope that as the next funding round opens in 2027, our members will have even more opportunities to support their local Armed Forces community.

Community collaboration restores Shipston Branch's noticeboard

Thanks to the skilled craftsmanship of Southam Men's Shed members, the Shipston RBL branch's community noticeboard has been expertly restored to continue serving as a focal point for RBL updates, events and community information.



Southam Men's Shed, based in the grounds of Galanos House, is a community-run workshop dedicated to practical

craftsmanship, social connection, and mental wellbeing. The group brings people together to combat isolation, share skills, and contribute to meaningful local projects, such as crafting and repairing items for schools and charities, and supporting community groups across the region.

This collaboration is a great example of how RBL's partnership with Men's Sheds can play an important role in supporting remembrance, support and connection at the local branch and community level. Learn more about Men's Sheds and our partnership [here on MAP](#). If you'd like to work with your local shed, use the [Find a Shed tool](#) and head over to meet them for a chat!

Connecting through the power of Remembrance



During a trip to Northern France this summer, Hythe and Saltwood Branch members were touched to receive spontaneous thanks for holding a short but moving service of Remembrance at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial.

As branch members gathered at the memorial to Canadian soldiers and two Standard Bearers took position, a Canadian tour guide who had just finished leading a tour approached. He paused, walked over, and offered thanks that immediately struck branch members, says Ian

Norman, Hythe and Saltwood Branch Chair. "His engagement felt sincere, and it was clear he appreciated seeing the Standards present."

The branch's service, which included a speech, poetry reading, prayer and the laying of a wreath, also drew the attention of other visitors who paused to listen.

Afterwards, as branch members wrapped up their visit, they were unexpectedly approached a second time. Another Canadian tour guide stopped her vehicle to express her thanks and how much it meant to see services being held, and to witness Standards being carried with such care.

"Her words were heartfelt and added to the sense that our presence was genuinely appreciated by those who work and study on that ground," says Ian.

"Having two student guides, independently of one another, take the time to speak with us reinforced the feeling that remembrance resonates widely. These were not formal interactions – they were human moments of connection, and they stayed with us as the trip continued.

"Looking back, both encounters were small gestures, but meaningful ones. They reminded us that what we do matters, and that even brief exchanges can leave a lasting impression."

Skegness Branch shows membership growth starts with community

Skegness Branch has welcomed 25 new members since May, focusing on recruitment through community connection. Instead of relying on recruitment campaigns, the branch stays visible through local connections, showing potential members the friendship, purpose and opportunities membership can offer.



Pictured here are the branch's crowd-pleasing Red Barrows, which brought the Legion to life at Skegness Carnival. The display celebrated tradition while showing that the branch is lively, approachable and part of the community.

Useful information

- [Suggestions and ideas submission form](#)
- [Templates for branch to new member welcome emails](#)
- [Link to join the RBL Gamers Group and special interest groups](#)
- **Contact Centre Tel (UK): 0808 802 8080 Overseas: +44 (0)20 3376 8080**
- **Email: info@britishlegion.org.uk**

Thank you for reading! The next edition of Central News is due to be published Tuesday 3 November