

Old Basing and District Royal British Legion (BR1890)

Charity number 219279

Minutes of the Branch Meeting 7th December 2023 at 8pm

Present: George Mars (GM) Ian Preston (IP) Avril Mitchell (AM) Tim Russell (TR) Sue Chewter (SC) Tracey Merritt (TM) Joe Karmazyn (JK) and 6 Branch members

Apologies: Ian Greenway, Julie Yeates, Dave Godfrey

The Act of Remembrance was carried out by our president George Mars who asked us to remember John Down, recently passed away and Wendy Webb (Oct). Both were very active RBL members who had fulfilled committee posts for a great number of years and are sadly missed by all who knew them. George had a personal recollection of Derek and Wendy Webb going back fifty years.

Pat Down thanked us via Brian Dawes for sending representation and a wreath to the funeral and for the condolences we had sent.

The minutes of the September and October meetings: Circulated and adopted as a true copy.

Proposed: AM, Seconded: JK

Matters Arising: A comment made by Andy Dawes regarding a possible motion to county conference had been missed from the minutes. This was regarding BPT's and where the money can be used – the geographical 5 miles radius is insufficient and not workable also, what happens when there are gaps and / or no beneficiaries within that radius.

TR confirmed he is still waiting confirmation from the BPT team about how/where we can spend our BPT funds and whether our area can be expanded. TRBL have to adhere to any terms set in a Property Trust.

Treasurer's Report: 7th Sept 23 to 7th Dec 2023

Opening Balance	£3044.68 Cr	
Receipts	£1350.00	Black Tie Dinner
Payments	£1901.24	BT Dinner: £200 DJ, £1204.75 Caterer. £150 Conference delegates reimbursed. £10 overpaid for BT Dinner tickets. £128 for Remembrance Order of Service. £208.49 for PA System. £200 of this recouped from OB&L Carnival Committee grant.
Closing Balance	£2493.44 Cr	

TM confirmed the club are not charging us for the Port, tea and coffee supplied for the BT Dinner. JY has received many positive comments for the evening and can confirm the final profit for the Poppy Appeal will be £545.24. This will be paid promptly.

BPT 1/7/23 to 30/9/23 O/Bal £12532.25 Cr, interest rec £46.87, C/Bal £12579.12 Cr

Julie has requested a statement for the BPT as we are waiting for the rent to show on the account. It should be on the Dec statement. Amanda Sapio (finance) expected it to be received sooner and will keep tabs on it, it currently being in their unallocated cash..

BFI 1/7/23 to 30/9/23 O/Bal £40.19, interest rec .15p, C/Bal £40.34

Poppy Appeal Report: Tim had been particularly sad to learn that John Down had died. When Tim took over as PAO, John was always on hand with help - having been PAO himself he had a wealth of knowledge and advice to impart for which Tim was immensely grateful.

The Poppy Appeal got off to a great start this year. The BT Dinner was excellent with a good raffle And generous donation of the Rum raffle from IP.

With a new site at Sainsbury's Hook and additional new collectors at Hook and Chineham and outstanding support from the Poppy Team – Chris Beadle, Tracey Merritt, Diane Matthews and Avril

Mitchell the Poppy Appeal went very successfully. I made need to recruit another deputy to assist at Hook if anyone wants to volunteer.

I will be reporting more fully on individual totals in January due to only receiving contactless figures today.

Remembrance day was observed wonderfully. Sadly, no Police support for traffic control but this will be questioned again. Thanks to the Band for their donation of £125. The Church collection raised £601.51 and the raffle at the hall raised £233. Thanks go to Tracey for providing our after-parade buffet again, as always, it is much appreciated what a great spread you provide us.

Contactless and Gift Aid have been well used this year and also the QR codes will bring additional funds once processed.

So, the totals for the 2023-24 Poppy Appeal, to date are:

Old Basing £11,199.17 + Contactless £5,980.50 = £ 17,179.67

Hook £6,555.11 + Contactless £5,077.00 = £11,632.11

Total £28,821.78

Membership Report: Tracey reported our current membership is 398 with 39 outstanding, not all of these are overdue yet.

TM has received a number of complaints that DD's are failing and not because of the member's bank, also it has proved difficult for some to get help renewing on the phone and online. TR asked for details so he can chase this up with HO.

Club Report: Mark Taylor confirmed the Club Christmas Draw will take place 15th December, still time to buy tickets if wished.

There will be 'Buddy and the Beatle' New Year's Eve entertainment, tickets £10 on sale now.

28th December is Quiz Night, teams of no more than six @ £2.00 per player. Book your team now.

The Club will be open throughout Christmas and New Year so please come in.

Thanks for all who attended the Club AGM, it's good to see so many people take an interest.

Band Report: Diane Matthews reported that the Corps of Drums have now changed their name to the Old Basing Royal British Legion Band.

The hours spent rehearsing for the Mayor's Variety Show were well spent as it was a great success. Making their debuts were four new band members and Andy Dawes with the Standard.

Since then we have been performing for Remembrance events in the Malls Basingstoke, North Hants Hospital, St Mary's Church, Chineham Centre and of course here at the club. We have received some great feedback as well which is always encouraging.

The Christmas Fayre in December was a new event which was well received and many people came along to listen to the band as well as browse the stalls. Tim's Splat the Rat was also popular and we raised £243 which was excellent. We followed the fayre with a social for the Band which was a film show organised by Alex Dawes. Hopefully people are seeing our Facebook posts advertising our events, Russ Parrott is keeping it up to date.

The band will play carols in St Mary's and at Chineham Centre in December, followed by a buffet lunch.

Jim Holley is retiring next year as treasurer after 30 years in post.

Diane finished her report with a 'band' version of the 12 days of Christmas which we all sang. Very good!

County Chairman report: A new Director General has been appointed. His name is Mark Atkinson and he has a lot of experience in the charity sector. His last role was with the RNID.

The Motion to Annual Conference which was a spectacular failure is being revisited for submission in 2025. Emma Shepherd from HO has been meeting with County Chairmen and asking for insight with a view to amending the proposal. There is shock at HO and a complete lack of understanding as to why the RBL membership didn't do as they were suggested to and accept the motion. Quite simply, they acted in an underhand manner and tried to slip the motion past the membership with little prior notification or chance to discuss. We are still awaiting the copy of the Charities Commission report upon which the motion is allegedly based.

Correspondence:

- An email from Les Clarke's Daughter-in-law asking whether we might be able to offer some companionship visits when he is home from hospital. We have two ex-navy volunteers already, Ian Preston and Roy Lane. Les was in the Royal Navy.
- Confirmation that our MS1 was received in October, well before the deadline.
- A circular with information on the new Learning and Development System going live soon.
- Application form for Nation Membership Awards. We do not have anyone eligible.
- County Conference reminder and delegate form, completed this evening and will be submitted together with the Shaw cup form.

Events and fund raising:

- The Burns Night event will not now go ahead as we have not been able to engage a caterer.
- We are considering a Spring Ball also the D-Day 80 event will be happening on 8th June.
- Rick Bourne asked whether we had booked the hall as he knows someone else has. After some discussion between Rick Bourne, Tracey and Branch Committee it has been confirmed that the branch had booked the hall and will have the hall on 8th June and the other hirer will be offered an alternative date.

A.O.B:

1. Diane Matthews asked whether the car park is going to be resurfaced soon and also whether there can be lighting there. TM confirmed the latest quote for resurfacing was £80k which they do not have and would struggle to fundraise for. It would give people the opportunity to claim usage rights if they had contributed to the cost. TR asked whether we could have windscreen stickers for members which would help identify who is using the hall. Other suggestions are a polite sign although TM says there is already a 'private car park' sign up. The schools and dog walkers are the worst offenders for using the car park but it seems problematic to stop them doing so without causing bad feeling in the village.

We cannot have outside lighting because the neighbouring house owners do not like it.

- 1.1. Diane congratulated us for the BT Dinner. After last year when it was not well subscribed and we were undecided whether to hold the event again, we should all be very pleased with the success that it was. She had a very good night.
- 1.2. Dian asked whether the football teams park in the car park as it has been full on Sundays. TM confirmed the home and away teams park at the school.
2. Andy Dawes has completed and passed his Standard Bearer training, for which we thanked him. He is available for ceremonial duties.
 - 2.1. Would we like to have the Standard marched on at Branch meetings? If so, there is a protocol which would need putting in place.
 - 2.2. In future it would be helpful to have notices up in the village for the Remembrance Parade to avoid people parking in awkward places.
 - 2.3. Andy reminded us that at the October meeting we promised to have the accounts on the notice board. This has not happened. JK will remind Julie to bring a spare copy.
 - 2.4. Basingstoke ACF will be parading out of Old Basing for approx 6 months whilst Sarum Hill hall is closed for refurb.

3. Ian Preston asked what is the future for the ACF hut in Old Basing. As previously mentioned, it is believed that in the long term it will be sold, in the short term it is being used. Rick Bourne states there is a 50-year lease on the building, the site is landlocked and the RBL would need to give permission for access through our car park.
 - 3.1. IP, together with Ian Greenway and Joe Karmazyn took part in the Cenotaph Parade in November, a very proud moment for them. IP said he found it amazing and was pleased there were no protesters causing trouble.
 - 3.2. Ian let us know that he will be starting Chemo in January and he may lose his hair and look slightly different. He hopes to not miss too many meetings or events. We all wished him well.
 - 3.3. Ian has received an invitation to attend the Community Partnership evening at Lychpit hall. Tracey and Mark Taylor are attending, TR will try to attend.
 - 3.4. The new portable PA system, purchased by IP, can be used as a Tannoy, has Bluetooth, has built-in speakers and a microphone so is extremely versatile. It also has a tall stand to mount it on. This needs to be added to the Asset Register. TM reminded us we need it PAT tested, she can ask Roger Self to do it.
4. George Mars handed TR a Poppy business box, at his November Freemason's Lodge meeting Remembrance was observed and a collection taken.
5. Rick Bourne had an update from the CWGC. There will be signage added at the Church to indicate we have war graves and headstones will be put on the gravesites. There do not appear to be any contactable family members, therefore it is believed there would not be a complaint from any quarter.
6. JK asked whether we have knowledge of who owns the large vans that park at the club every day. TM confirmed that the vans belong to The Bakehouse and park with permission and supply us with bread.
7. Old Basing Carnival will be held on 15th June 2024.

The next meeting will be on 4th January 2024 at 8pm.

The meeting closed at 9:41pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Ian Greenway, Chairman