

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

23 April 2026 – Memorial Hall

Attendees

Post

Keith Urch	Deputy Chair, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer
Dave Pollock	Raffle Coordinator
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre

1. Act of Remembrance.

The Deputy Chair opened the meeting at 1900 hours and asked everyone to think of the people who couldn't be with us due to ill health or for any other reason. He then read out the names of the members of the Parish of Newent who lost their lives in WW1 and WW2 for the month of May. He concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Richard Balding, Elaine Balding, Adrian Dover, Jon Miles, Viv Miles, Colin Britt, Sue Urch, Pat Price, John Price, Jan Sologub, Simon Mason.

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman sent a message saying that he hoped Members would have a good meeting.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the March meeting had been circulated. It was pointed out that there was an extra word (will) at the bottom of item 3.3 that needed to be deleted. Subject to this alteration, KU proposed and DP seconded that the Minutes should be accepted as a true and accurate record of the Meeting. Passed unanimously.

There was one matter arising:

- 5.3** GB reported that he has accepted the invitation to attend Woodlands Memorial event on 10 June.

5. Reports by Officers

5.1 Branch Community Support (BCS) Report for April 2026

Dear Branch Members, Veterans, Families and Supporters of the Newent & District Branch of The Royal British Legion.

We have pleasure in presenting this month's BCS Report as follows:

5.1.1 General Information

Welcome to our April Meeting and General RBL Update

We continue reconnecting with our local Veterans, serving members of our Armed Forces community, Cadet Units in Newent and The FoD, Armed Forces Community Network.

There appear to be conflicting statements from County, Regional and RBLHQ regarding qualification for youth memberships. It is hoped that issues will be resolved either before or during TRBL Annual; Conference.

More information will be made available to Members during the meeting.

5.1.2 Branch Remembrance

At this time we remember those unable to be present at our monthly meeting due to numerous reasons and offer our support to those in need.

5.1.3 Branch Welfare, Membership and Statistics.

This reporting period has again been exceptionally quiet, with a minimal number of formal requests for advice or support.

Branch Welfare

Aside from the support available via your BCS Representatives, Veterans and Branch Members are encouraged to continue to contact the RBL Helpline services as normal via the national network on 0808 802 8080 and The Veteran's Gateway: <https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk>

Branch Membership

The current Branch Membership this reporting period totals 44 Members.

New Members are naturally encouraged and welcomed especially from those adjacent Branches that may be closing in the near future.

Branch Statistics

We continue to be supportive of our local Veterans and others within our surrounding area.

The Branch continues to provide support to Branch Members, other Veterans in our community and an ongoing number via the Telephone Buddy Network.

We would remind Members that you can support others in need by signposting them to TRBL helpline or by reference to the Branch BCS representatives at the earliest convenience.

Please note that all communications are confidential.

Branch Statistics for this period are therefore as follows:

Total Number of Welfare visits	4
How many beneficiaries visited	7
How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters)	2
Total Welfare Expenditure	NIL
Telephone Buddies:	
Telephone – How many beneficiaries called	4
Telephone – How many telephone buddies:	2
Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive in support of Veterans	4

5.1.4 Branch Community Support, Youth Liaison and Community Activities.

Community Support and Youth Liaison

The Branch, having attended the recent NHS sponsored Health & Wellbeing Event last month at the Memorial Hall, has received a small number of requests seeking further information.

The Branch awaits further information regarding the new date for the Service for the Dedication of the Newent AC Standard: hopefully a revised date will be available shortly.

Your Branch Representatives continue to liaise with the many varied groups and youth organisations within our community.

The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy - Nominations

Unfortunately, nothing further to report this period albeit it is hoped that the Cadet forces and local schools will submit a suitable candidate(s) in due course.

Newent & District Branch Centenary Celebrations 2027

Members are invited to submit further ideas for next year's planned Branch Centenary Event.

In the meantime, date(s) and venue for the event(s) are confirmed as being:

Sunday Morning Service on the 21st of February 2027 at St Mary's Church, Newent for the Rededication of the Branch Standard, and a community event the following Sunday, 28th February 2027, involving the Innsworth Military Wives Choir and other musical entertainment during the afternoon accompanied by refreshments from 1430hrs to about 1700.hrs.

Representatives of The Lieutenancy will attend, marking this very special occasion for Newent.

Other aspects for consideration to include: a Big Band, Orchestra and local music groups, Community School Poster Competitions and a display of the Branch's history.

5.1.5 Forthcoming Dates for TRBL Branch Diary

The inauguration of the Imjin Memorial is taking place at The Cyril Hart Arboretum, Speech House on Friday, 24th April 2026: booking essential via the FoDDC.

Please note that the forthcoming Veteran's Breakfast and Coffee Morning is being held in the Red Lion on Tuesday, 28th April 2026, commencing 10 am: everyone welcome.

For further information please see the reports issued by our Branch Chairman, Branch Officers and Standard Bearer.

5.1.6 Special Notification Regarding Safeguarding from TRBL BCS Team

If you have a Safeguarding concern, in the first instant contact your Branch BCS Representative and then, as appropriate, your Membership Engagement Officer directly.

If your MEO is out of office, please email Safeguarding@britishlegion.org.uk copying in your BCS Representative and MEO.

If you have a Veteran in need of support, please call our contact centre on:
0808 802 8080 (8 am – 8 pm, 7 days a week).
In the event of an emergency, please contact 999 without delay.

5.2 Treasurer's Report

This month we have outgoing £12.99 for a carrycase for the Branch standard;
incoming 0.45pence from HMCTs.
Current balance £1015.02

5.3 Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer Report

A new date for the Service to dedicate the Army Cadets new Standard is currently being arranged – Andrew Barraclough is expecting to hear from his superiors within the next few days.

The Branch Standard is going to be paraded at the inauguration of the Imjin Memorial at the Cyril Hart Arboretum, Speech House, on Friday 24th April.

The Branch has been invited to attend the annual Violette Szabo event at Wormelow on Sunday 12th July. The Standard Bearer is asking for permission to take the Branch Standard to this event. Permission was granted.

There were no other reports.

6. Branch Centenary, 18th February 2027

GB reported that the booking for the Innsworth Military Wives Choir has been confirmed. GB agreed to forward details to HA so that the £50.00 deposit could be paid.

KU has spoken to the Lord-Lieutenant who said that he was hopeful that a VIP might be able to attend.

The Branch Padre has confirmed that he is happy for the rededication of the Branch Standard to be part of the morning service at Saint Mary's on 21st February.

Other options are:

- Applying for 100 year pennant to go on the Standard
- Slide show of Branch activities over the last 100 years
- Providing a case in which to permanently exhibit the original Minutes book

Members were asked to keep coming up with ideas.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 The Branch Padre has asked if the Branch would like to mark the anniversary of D-Day on Saturday 6th June at 1100.

The Branch has also been asked to take part in the Newent Celebrates event on the afternoon of 6th June. The general feeling was that it would be difficult to do more than have our gazebo and display table at the event. Staffing the stand for five hours would require at least four Members. HA said that she would be prepared to do a couple of hours.

Members were in favour of SM's idea of a small event by the War Memorial at about 1100 on 6th June.

7.2 KU reported on the extraordinary county meeting re. MEO issues.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 28th May 2026 in the Memorial Hall starting at 1900.

There being no further business the Deputy Chairman closed the meeting at 1955.

Agenda for the Newent & District Branch Royal British Legion Meeting 28 May 2026 at the Memorial Hall

1. Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Chairman's Opening Remarks.
4. Adoption of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising
5. Reports by Officers.
6. Branch Centenary, 18th February 2027.
7. Any Other Business.
8. Date of Next Meeting.