



**Royal British Legion
Basingstoke, Overton & District Branch – BR1842
Annual General Meeting**

Tuesday 15th October 2024, 19.30 pm, Basingstoke Labour Club

MINUTES

Present:

President:	Dudley Wall (DW)	Members	Tom Wall (TW)
Chairman	David Barton (DB)		Olive Wall (OW)
Secretary	Cheryl Felstead (CF)		Chris Hughes (CH)
Vice Chairman	John Davies (JD)		
Treasurer / Mem Sec	Malcolm Brunsdon (MB)		
Events Coord	Steve Day (SD)		

1. Exhortation

The meeting was opened with The Exhortation read by the Branch President

2. Welcome & Apologies:

DB welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.
Apologies were recorded from Holly Church (MEO), Tim Russell (County Chairman), Steve Wevill, Ann Wall, Lee Robinson and Wayne Stent

3. Adoption of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated to all members and copies were available in the meeting. No comments were received.

Proposed SD Seconded DW that the minutes be accepted as a true record. Carried

4. President's Address

DW reflected that the RBL had gone through much change over the last few years. There has been a worrying decline in the membership and in particular the number of active members. As an organisation we really do need to look at our long-term strategy if we are to remain a viable 'member led' organisation. This means that we have to find a way to make the Legion relevant to people today so that they see us as a vibrant organisation that operates continually throughout the year; not just something that springs to mind for a few weeks in the run-up to Remembrance Sunday!

We are only a small Branch and we have done well with the few volunteers that regularly turn out to support events. It would seem though, that the majority of members are just happy to pay their dues once a year, but this is not what membership is really about. If we are to truly aspire to the values and purposes of the Legion, it takes some effort.

DW thanked all those who have given their time and efforts to support the Branch in the past but also opined that we should work harder to make the Branch viable; it is on all our shoulders to make this work.



5. Chairman's Report

The Chairman's report had been circulated to all members but was available in the meeting too. The report reflected a year of highs and lows. He noted that we have done much work to collaborate with the other 'veteran' supporting agencies and organisations and this is bearing fruit. However, he also noted that much of that effort comes from a very few volunteers and that the Branch events and meetings have been poorly supported.

DB added that he wished to record the thanks of the Branch for the work done by CF. She had taken on the role of secretary for just one year to enable the Branch to become compliant and she had continued in that role in the absence of a volunteer despite her increasing work and other commitments. She had reluctantly stood down this year as she did not have the capacity for her different responsibilities and her position was not sustainable. That vote of thanks was echoed by all present.

DB advised that he was stepping down in part because of the lethargy shown within the Branch and so that he could concentrate on a county role, hopefully working with youth groups as the County Youth Officer. He noted the low turn-out which is symptomatic of member non-participation

6. Adoption of Annual Accounts

MB reported that the accounts were in a healthy state and had been independently examined by the County treasurer without comment. The annual accounts had been circulated to all members before the meeting but were also available for those in attendance. Account figures follow:

Branch funds	Opening Balance	Closing Balance	Increase/Decrease in Funds
In Bank	£1,386.81	£2779.21	£1,392.40

Income	Amount
Membership fees	£261.00
Fund Raising Events	£1,248.97
Legacies	£338.84
Donations	£1,209.00
Other Income	£50.00
Total Income	£3,107.81

Expenditure	Amount
Membership Fees paid to Head Office	£21.00
Branch Fund Raising Events	£159.23
Ceremonial	£325.29
Conferences and Meetings	£355.25



Training	£59.40
Printing, Stationery and Postage	£73.31
Payment to other parts RBL	£690.36
Other Expenditure	£31.57
Total Expenditure	£1715.41

Income vs Expenditure	Amount
Income	£3,107.81
Expenditure	-£1,715.41
Total Increase/Decrease	£1,392.40

Proposed MB, Seconded DB that accounts be accepted. Carried

MB also reported that the social fund was also healthy. This account does not contain any charitable funds and is for the use of members' social activities.

The social fund account balance stands at £592.84

7. Poppy Appeal Report

The poppy appeal report was given by SD on behalf of the PAO who could not be present. 2023 had been another successful year. Across the UK, over £50M had been raised, of which, £72,328.13 had been raised by the Basingstoke team. Although this was a little lower than the previous year, we had not had some collection points available to us (eg Sainsbury's and Basingstoke Town Centre).

The 2024 campaign will begin shortly with the Trench Lunch at the Gabardine Bar. Collections will resume at Sainsbury's and we will collect in the Malls for the first time. Festival Place are once again providing a shop front but they have limited where we can position collectors because other charities 'pay' for dedicated space!

8. Other Reports

8.1. Membership Secretary's Report

MB reported that we have had a slight increase in membership this year which peaked at 100 but which currently stands at 98 due to two members leaving just last month.

JD added that we had followed up with the departing members and that they just felt that they could use their money in better charitable ways. They also stated that they had not heard from the Branch for some years other than AGM notifications. It was pointed out to them that they had declined email, mail or SMS contact so the only time that we could legally contact them was to notify the AGM.

It was agreed that we should perhaps put more effort into recruitment and retention. It was opined that communication was key to that process but that communication was improving.



8.2. Standard Bearers Report

DB reported that he had represented the Branch at the following Remembrance services/parades:

- 22nd October – Launch of Basingstoke Poppy Appeal parade
- 9th Nov 23 – Hampshire Hospitals Foundation Trust Service
- 11th Nov 23 – Armistice Day service
- 12th Nov 23 – Remembrance Sunday parade and service
- 21st Apr 24 – ANZAC day service, Brockenhurst

D-Day events were memorable, but none more so than the 'French Freedom Flame' transiting through Portsmouth on its way to the USA. It was the first time that the flame, lit from the tomb under the Arc de Triumphe, has ever left France. We were present at:

- 14th May - The Freedom Flame service in Portsmouth
- 6th June – D-Day 80th Anniversary flag raising
- 24th June – Armed Forces Day flag raising
- 29th June – 80th Anniversary D-Day Memorial Convoy departure from Milestones Museum

Sadly, DB's duties also included attending a number of funerals and memorial services on behalf of the families of veterans. It is a privilege to recognise the service given by veterans on their last journey and we hope that our presence affords the families some comfort.

8.3. Events Coordinator Report

SD had taken on the role but, at the time, the Branch had no clear plan on what it wanted to achieve. The 'Get to Know Your Branch' event at Gabardine bar had been extremely successful, so much so that they were repeating the format this year to launch the poppy appeal. Last year's event had been a fundraiser for the Branch whereas this year's event is supported by the Branch but is being run by the Poppy Appeal team.

A planned awareness/fundraising event linked to the Festival of Transport did not take place but is on the horizon for the coming year.

DB suggested that we should have a prepared plan for the year. SD agreed and will present a plan to the committee

8.4. Youth Affiliations Report

Our Branch Youth Officer was not available. Youth work and affiliation with cadets is an area where the Branch did not perform as well as it would have liked. This is reflected in the Branch Plan

9. Election of Officers and Committee

Nominations had been received in accordance with existing rules for the following:

Chairman: John Davies - Proposed MB, Seconded OW

Vice Chairman *None*

Secretary *None*

Committee: David Barton – Proposed JD, Seconded MB,
Stephen Day – Proposed JD, Seconded Wayne Stent

These were all uncontested and deemed elected for a period of 3 Years



The following Appointments were made:

MB reappointed Treasurer. Proposed JD, Seconded DW. Carried
DB reappointed Standard Bearer Proposed OW Seconded SD. Carried
SD reappointed Events Coord Proposed MB Seconded OW. Carried

JD advised that the committee was non-compliant and that he would cover options in AOB

10. Conference Motions

There were no conference motions for discussion.

11. Appointment of Delegates

Assuming that the Branch will become compliant by 31 December, the following delegates were appointed

11.1 County Conference. SD to be delegate. Proposed MB, Seconded DB. Carried

11.2 National Conference. National Conference is in Harrogate. The meeting discussed affordability and whether sending a delegate represents VFM but concluded that it is important to be involved in the decision making. MB to be delegate. Proposed DB, Seconded TW. Carried.

12. Review / Adoption of Branch Plan

The Branch Plan was circulated prior to the meeting and copies were available for attendees. JD confirmed that the committee had recently reviewed the document which had been brought up to date to ensure that it complied with Legion rules, purposes and values outlined in the new Management Handbook. The Branch Plan maps across to the County Plan which, in turn maps to Legion strategic vision. The document is a living document that is regularly reviewed by the committee.

Proposed SD, seconded MB that the plan be adopted. Carried

13. Any Other Business

13.1 Presentation of Branch President's Certificate

DW presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the Labour Club for the support that the committee, staff and members have given the Branch over many years. The award was accepted by the Club Manager on behalf of the Labour Club.

13.2 Future of the Branch

JD advised that the Branch was no longer compliant. To become compliant, we need to have 7 committee members, one of whom must be an elected Secretary. If a volunteer is forthcoming, they can be co-opted onto the committee. Assuming that we remain non-compliant, the members will have to decide what the future of the Branch is to be. Options will be:

1. Close the Branch
2. Amalgamate with another Branch
3. Become a county Supported Branch

JD proposed that we schedule a Special General Meeting for the 26th November. If we recruit a secretary before that date, the issue is resolved and the SGM will revert to a standard branch meeting. If not, the SGM will decide the Branch's future. Seconded DB. Carried

Action: JD to ensure members understand implications of options 1-3.



14. Date of Next AGM


The AGM is provisionally scheduled for 21st October 2025 at 19.30 pm

15. Closing Ceremony

There being no further business, the President concluded with the Closing Ceremony and the Kohima Epitaph.

The meeting closed at 20.19 pm

Certified that this is a true record of the meeting

Signed. 
J C DAVIES
POC 1

Date: 14 OCTOBER 2025

