

Old Basing and District Royal British Legion (BR1890)

Charity number 219279

Minutes of the Branch Meeting 1st February 2024 at 8pm

Present: George Mars – President, Ian Greenway – Chairman, Ian Preston – Vice-Chairman, Julie Yeates – Treasurer, Avril Mitchell – Secretary, Tim Russell, Joe Karmazyn and 8 members

Apologies: Tracey Merritt, Sue Chewter.

The Act of Remembrance was carried out by George Mars with a request for us to remember all the service personnel in action around the world.

The minutes of the previous meeting:

Circulated and adopted as a true copy. Proposed: Avril, Seconded: Joe

Matters Arising:

Andy Dawes referred to the discussion of the Year-end accounts not being available etc. To clarify, it is agreed that the Annual Accounts will be displayed on the notice board after the Annual General Meeting.

Referring to the suggestion of marching In our Branch Standard to meetings, Andy mentioned that previously it had been marched in on the Slope and this would be safer given the ceiling height. It was further discussed. Andy proposed, Ian P 2nd to march in the Standard, no votes in favour. To have the Standard on display, vote: Carried.

A further suggestion by Joe to march the Standard on at our AGM and selected other functions as appropriate, 2nd Rick Bourne, vote: Carried.

Chairman's Report:

Ian G thanked everyone for attending this evening and commented how quickly the year has flown by.

Our events planning is ongoing. The joint venture with Basingstoke RBL to mark D-Day 80 and the Black-Tie dinner in October still being the two main fundraisers for the year.

Ian spotted the Blue Plaque on the Wheatsheaf, Basingstoke. This commemorates the life of Major John Howard, who played a vital role on that pivotal day on June 6, 1944. Major Howard and other officers from the 1st Airlanding Brigade arrived in Basingstoke in January 1942 and their officers' mess was based in The Wheatsheaf. Major Howard was instrumental in leading the capture of the "Pegasus" Bridge, and he and his men were instrumental in preventing German forces from attacking the eastern flank of the Allied forces landing at Sword Beach on D-Day.

Treasurer's Report: 4/1/24 to 1/2/24

Current Account O/Bal	£2847.44	cr
Receipts	£nil	
Payments	£ 100.00	Deposit to DJ for BTD Oct 24
C/Bal	£2747.44	

Uncleared cheques issued £545.25 and £53.25

BPT O/Bal	£12579.12	cr
Rent receipts	£ 3173.79	
Interest	£ 54.85	
C/Bal	£15807.76	cr

BFI O/Bal £40.34 cr, interest rec .15p, C/Bal £40.49

Julie is still awaiting confirmation from HO on the queried amounts as per her last report.

Report proposed by Julie, 2nd Tim. Accepted.

Poppy Appeal Report:

January is a quiet month with no events, however I have receipts of £545.25 (BT Dinner) £542.25 (Newnham PC) from last month together with cheques received this month of £84.64 (Currency), £18.43 (Ziffit), £7.71 (Music Magpie) and £11 (Vintage Cash Cow).

The QR Codes used during Poppy Appeal generated £83 for Hook and £254 for Old Basing.

Totals YTD: Old Basing £12945.46 + £8068.50 contactless, Hook £6638.11 + £5037.00 contactless, total of £32,689.07.

Tim had an award to present to George Mars for 30 years volunteering for the Poppy Appeal.

Membership Report:

We currently have 437 members with 23 unpaid at today's date.

Club Report:

Mark Taylor reported that the club are working on getting the potholes in the car park repaired.

The Flagpole which was blown down in the last storm will be restored in the next couple of weeks.

The Six Nations Rugby matches will be broadcast in the bar, please come along to support this.

Band Report:

The band are still learning new tunes for upcoming summer events and for arena events *Hi-Ho* and *A Spoonful of Sugar* will be popular for people to join in and march along and we are practicing *Liberty Bell* and *The Great Escape*.

Band Person of the year will be announced 23rd March and there will be a few nice additions to the décor this year, making it an 'Oscars' style event.

On 9th June the band will lead a D-Day 80 veteran's parade at Lepe – hopefully not a windy day! also Swallowfield Show Aug bank holiday which we haven't been able to do for a while due to low band numbers.

The Band AGM is 7th April time and venue TBC.

Ian G asked Diane whether she could confirm the Band's Charity number as we do not have it. She will check into this.

Diane was asked whether the Band are booked for the OB Carnival, she will check.

County Chairman Report:

Tim had an email from HO outlining the latest role changes which have been announced – Jason Coward (National Chairman) has relinquished one role, Lynda Atkins (National Vice-Chair) is now also Chair of the Membership Council and this seems like a conflict of interests. She take the role from John Boisson who was asked to leave for no good reason. Paul Harris has been relieved of one role - he states this is a good thing.

There is a motion of Censure of the BoT being put forward to National AGM by Gloucestershire County as there is a worry that the BoT are attempting to circumvent the Royal Charter.

The new Director General comes to us from the RNID and is known as a 'broom' so we should expect more personnel changes.

Correspondence:

- Annual Membership Awards newsletter, we do not have a suitable candidate to put forward.
- The February Link and Central News.
- An open letter from the two village schools to all parents who use our car park, asking for their consideration of the advantage they are offered and reminding them to appreciate it. It can be revoked at any time.

- Avril confirmed she has registered Ian G as branch delegate for annual conference. Joe is no longer available to attend. Avril stated that if her WS delegate status is not approved, she is happy to attend as our second delegate. This was agreed accepted by all present.

Events and fund raising:

- The D-Day 80 commemoration will be a joint event with Basingstoke Branch. Ian G and Joe met with David Barton, Basingstoke RBL Chairman. They have an events coordinator to liaise with.

Ian spoke to the Base Commander Grp Cap Matt Roberts about the possibility of borrowing some kit for the event. He has given us the contact name and suggested that if there is any pushback, ask Tim to name-check him with the Station Warrant Officer.

The Band are not free to support us as they have another engagement that day. Ian will contact the ACF and ask for support from them, possibly a display. Andy updated us on the H+S aspects the ACF are limited by so we will need to bear this in mind.

Ian asked Rick Bourne and David Godfrey whether Dave's Daughter-in-Law will be able to entertain at the event. She may, although will be 8 months pregnant so would need to be a short set, she can also DJ recorded music. Ian asked them to get some idea of costings from her and report back.

- The Black-Tie dinner October 26th, the caterer and DJ are already booked. We have approx. 25 reserved tickets already, we need to check prices and prepare menus. Ian G is keen to invite a member of the Royal Family and will write to them. If one accepted we would also need the Lord Lieutenant or a DL – Hugo Cubitt perhaps?
- Regarding a Burn's Night, George confirmed that there is no set time frame during which this must take place, he has even attended one in July. This being the case we will revisit the idea of holding this event and look for a caterer.

A.O.B:

- The large vans that park at the club, it was confirmed they have a reciprocal arrangement with the club to use the space. It has been noticed that the vans can present some challenges parked where they are: they block visibility and sometimes make it impossible to access the handicap parking bays. Mark was asked whether there is anything that can be done, also we were under the impression those spaces were for emergency vehicles use.
- Andy Dawes asked whether we have a list of the potential sites which could receive money from our BPT account. We do not but Ian G will work on it. We confirmed to Brian that we will revisit the Parklands Centre Veteran's Garden as a possibility.
- Rick Bourne had a bag of WW2 magazines which he asked us to take. These may provide useful information for a display at our D-Day 80 event and then potentially auctioned to raise funds. Other than this they could be offered to the editor of the Hampshire Link.
- George Mars gave us a number of his old military uniforms to use, these discovered whilst packing to move house.
- Andy attended the funeral of Stan Richardson in Basingstoke and will be attending Les Clarke's on 5th Feb.
- Andy raised the question of whether an arrangement has been reached with HO over the almost £14.5k which has to be repaid by the Club to our BPT.

The expenditure requests were accepted by the RBL initially and our books were audited without query by the RBL it does not seem correct that they are now asking for this money to be restored. Andy further asked what law has been broken to require this to be repaid - it is Charity Law and the terms of our BPT.

It is part of the Club's lease agreement that they must give the Branch fair and reasonable use of the premises, however the Club and Branch committees agree that there is scope to chargeback for our fundraising event use and a list is being compiled to present to HO together with a suggested payment plan. Ian G stated we have already told the Club we do not expect them to just write a cheque for the full amount and both committees are actively working together to find a solution.

Andy pointed out that the club own 40% of the site and the RBL 60% yet the RBL do not pay any maintenance costs and this is unfair. Tim highlighted that we are a Branch Occupied Property and the RBL are not required to do anything.

Joe pointed out that the RBL are viewed favourably in the UK and in the eyes of the public giving their donation to us expecting it to help a veteran in need, they do not want to then hear that we spent that money supporting a social club. Giving money to the club could be viewed as fraud or misappropriation of funds. We have to bear this in mind and move forward with the situation we have. We do not have to like the situation but we do have to work with it.

- A band member who has been an RBL member since 1981, Simon Brown stepped forward to address the meeting. He has a long and rich history of his own and many of his relative's military service. He recently had a flashback occurrence which has deeply unsettled him and needed to talk to us about it. Ian G suggested he would meet him for a drink in the bar next door after the meeting as clearly there was much Simon needed to process.

The next meeting will be on 7th March 2024 at 8pm.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Ian Greenway, Chairman