



## Central News – November 2024

Sharing operational information, engagement opportunities and news with RBL Counties/Districts, Branches and Sections around the world

### Key Information

Title	Page	Summary
<b>October MC Briefing</b>	2	Latest Briefing from the MC Chair now on MAP
<b>Celebrities and Remembrance</b>	2	Who to contact if you plan to work with celebrities or influencers during Remembrance
<b>White poppies</b>	2	RBL's position and how red poppies support beneficiaries
<b>Malicious emails</b>	2	A reminder to stay vigilant
<b>rbl.community Branch Community Support roll out</b>	3	Updates on accounts and information for BCS Reps and Branch Community Coordinators
<b>RBL Elections 2024/25</b>	4	Available roles and information
<b>Contractual agreements</b>	4	Important guidance on restrictions

### News and Updates

Title	Page	Summary
<b>How are you marking Remembrance?</b>	4	<i>Legion</i> magazine wants to hear from you
<b>Remembrance Key Points</b>	4	Summary of our principles and practices
<b>Help, advice and guidance</b>	4	We are here through life, long after service is over
<b>Beret Badge availability</b>	5	When to expect updated Beret Badges
<b>Charity Fraud Awareness</b>	5	Dealing with suspected fraud
<b>Annual Conference 2025</b>	5	Key information for next May

### Branch Life

Title	Page	Summary
<b>“What membership means to me”</b>	6	We hear from a young branch treasurer

Important dates	
9 November 2024	Festival of Remembrance
10 November 2024	Remembrance Sunday
11 November 2024	Armistice Day
31 December 2024	Deadline to submit MS1s

## October Briefing from the Chair of the Membership Council now available

Please [visit MAP](#) to read the latest Briefing from the Chair of the Membership Council.

## Celebrities and Remembrance

We are delighted to hear about the variety of events being planned by branches for Remembrance and we wish you all the best with them. If you have plans that involve celebrities, please kindly inform Teresa Greener at [TGreener@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:TGreener@britishlegion.org.uk); or if your plans involve social media influencers, please contact Hannah Summersfield at [HSummersfield@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:HSummersfield@britishlegion.org.uk). This enables us to work together, avoid duplication and ensure the correct contacts are used.

## RBL’s position on white poppies

RBL’s red poppy is a universal symbol of Remembrance and hope. Red poppy wreaths are available through the Poppy Shop for those wishing to take part in an Act of Remembrance. Importantly, funds raised by the red poppy support our Armed Forces, veterans and their families in their time of need.

We understand that some people may wish to lay a white poppy wreath or wear a white poppy at Remembrance. Whilst RBL has no objection, we would ask that they consider using the red poppy alongside it as an act of respect for the service and sacrifice of Britain’s Armed Forces, veterans, and their families, and we encourage those organising Remembrance services to discuss with all groups how best to meet their needs.

## Stay vigilant against malicious emails

With the Poppy Appeal underway, it is a key time for us all to stay extra vigilant against phishing attempts and malicious emails. Scammers may try to gain access to our systems by sending

misleading messages, so keep an eye out for anything that feels suspicious. If something doesn't feel right or is unexpected, take a moment to double check before clicking or responding. Verify the sender, even if the email seems to come from within RBL, especially if the message seems unusual. Avoid sharing sensitive information; be cautious with emails that ask for personal information like your password, as RBL will never ask for this in an email. If you spot anything suspicious, please report it to your Membership Engagement Officer or email [membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk).

Please kindly take a moment to remind your committees and members to stay vigilant and to report any incidents as soon as possible. Let's work together to protect RBL's data and keep our beneficiaries' information secure. Thank you.

### [rbl.community email addresses roll out](#)

We recently gave an overview of updated changes to the Branch Community Support (BCS) process and roles. Please share this information with any former BCS Reps and any Branch Community Coordinators (BCC) in your branch.

#### **Branch Community Support Representative role:**

Following feedback from a BCS Rep survey in December 2023, the BCS structure was refocused to prioritise our BCS Supporters as the primary, face-to-face support to local beneficiaries. This meant that the role of BCS Rep ended in September 2024 and that BCS Rep email addresses will be deactivated from the 25th of November 2024.

We recognise that BCS Reps who are not transitioning to the BCC role may have valuable information stored that they wish to share with the branch, which will be lost once their email is deactivated. If so, please refer to the [steps in the guide](#), which is located on MAP.

#### **Branch Community Coordinator role:**

Evolving from the BCS Rep role, the Branch Community Coordinator role was introduced in October 2024, with a priority to support navigation, engagement and reporting of branch activities such as fundraising, touchpoints and events. Each branch may have up to four BCCs to allow branch individuals to focus on key areas of interest and to drive branch engagement. This role is now reflected on the MS1 and Membership Handbook.

Registered BCCs will be allocated an rbl.community email address upon request, the format of which will be [branch].BCC1@rbl.community, [branch].BCC2@rbl.community, etc. For more information about Branch Community Support or to get involved, please email:

[membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk)

## RBL Elections 2024/25 – Call for nominations

Nominations are currently open for RBL's next National Chair, National Vice Chair, three new trustees for the Board of Trustees, and 12 representatives for the Membership Council. If you have the skills, knowledge and capacity to represent RBL, please register your interest in being nominated with your branch by **17th January 2025**. Full details of the elections process have been shared with all Voting Branches; please contact your branch for a copy of this information. It is also available [on our website](#).

If you're a Branch Chair and are unsure of the process or have not been contacted by your branch Elections Point of Contact, please contact your Membership Engagement Officer or the RBL Governance Team at [elections@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:elections@britishlegion.org.uk).

## Entering into contractual agreements

We would like to kindly remind all branch and county officers that no member of the Legion is permitted to enter into any kind of contractual agreement on behalf of the Legion, unless the Board of Trustees has given permission to do so. This is to ensure that the Legion does not incur any financial or other liability. If you have been requested to sign any kind of contract or agreement, please contact [membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk) so that appropriate advice can be provided before any agreement is entered into.

## How are you marking Remembrance?

Every year, branches find new and innovative ways to mark Remembrance. To celebrate this work, *Legion* magazine is planning to feature a round-up of Poppy Appeal and Remembrance activity in the winter issue. If you'd like the opportunity to have your activities featured, please submit details and photos of your event/activities to [membersmag@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:membersmag@britishlegion.org.uk) by **19th November 2024**. Please kindly note that *Legion* will not be able to feature every submission they receive.

## Remembrance Key Points

Thank you to everyone for your hard work so far during the 2024 Poppy Appeal. To support our members and volunteers in this work, a useful 'key points' document summarising the RBL's position on Remembrance is now available on our website. Outlining the principles and practices that underpin how we honour the service and sacrifices made by the Armed Forces community, past and present, these key points will help individuals, communities and organisations to understand and convey the core messages of Remembrance. [View the key points on our website](#).

## Help, advice and guidance

We know Remembrance can be a difficult time for many. The film *Helmand: Tour of Duty*, which

recently aired on BBC2, may have impacted some of our members and their loved ones and we would like to remind you that we are here to support. Our support starts after one day of service and continues through life, long after service is over. You can call us on 0808 802 8080 8am-8pm, seven days a week. Or email us at [info@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:info@britishlegion.org.uk) .

### Beret Badge availability

We apologise that beret badges are currently unavailable to order from RBL's Poppy Shop. This is due to the redesign of the badges to incorporate The King's Tudor Crown. New badges should be available to order [from the Poppy Shop](#) towards the end of November. Thank you for your continued patience.

### Charity Fraud Awareness Week

We are proud to be supporting Charity Fraud Awareness Week 2024. All charities are, unfortunately, susceptible to fraud/theft and while it is only a small minority who are dishonest, the threat can come from both outside and within an organisation. This means that we all need to be fraud aware and take steps to protect the RBL's money and assets.

Where the RBL is affected by fraud, it often relates to the theft or misuse of cash or stock items, however fraud and the methods by which it is committed are continuously evolving. We all have a part to play in relation to the prevention and detection of fraud. If you suspect someone has committed or is committing a fraud or theft, please report it immediately to your Membership Engagement Officer or Membership Engagement Manager reporting, *or* you can report it to:

- The RBL's whistleblowing service, managed by Navex Global, on <https://britishlegion.ethicspoint.com> or 0800 088 5862.
- The RBL Audit Compliance & Investigations Team at [AuditComplianceInvestigations@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:AuditComplianceInvestigations@britishlegion.org.uk)

By reacting to suspicions of fraud you can help the RBL safeguard the monies raised for those we support. Thank you.

### Annual Conference 2025 – key information

Last month, we were delighted to share the *October Circular* for Annual Conference 2025 with County and Branch Officers. We look forward to welcoming many of you to Harrogate next May, or having you join in online, and are pleased to share the following 'at a glance' information:

- Date: 16th - 18th May 2025
- Venue: Harrogate Convention Centre, North Yorkshire

- Format: Hybrid – attend in-person or online
- Travel: Situated in the middle of town, the convention centre is a seven-minute walk or short taxi ride away Harrogate train station
- Parking: There are 158 parking spaces at the venue and 1,200 within walking distance
- Accessibility: Includes step-free access, wheelchair seating, induction loops, accessible toilets and changing places

Find out more about Annual Conference 2025, including the key deadlines for registration, awards and motions in the *October Circular*, available [on MAP](#). For those who do not have access to MAP, information is also available on [the RBL website](#). Should you have any questions about Annual Conference, please contact [membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk).

### “What membership means to me”

*We find out what motivates some of our members to demonstrate the purpose and values of membership. This month, we speak to Hayden Langston: Branch Treasurer & Standard Bearer, Oakengates and District.*



Hayden (pictured left with standard) may be the youngest branch treasurer in RBL history. Now aged 19, he has been a treasurer for a little while – but his activity as a member doesn’t stop there. In addition to being a Standard Bearer, Hayden was co-opted onto the County Committee to grow the county’s social media presence and is also working towards updating the County’s branch websites.

Yet Hayden says that when he joined Shropshire Army Cadet Force back in 2018, he had no military ambitions and knew nothing of RBL.

“Little did I know that over the next few years that would all change,” he says.

After becoming an Army Cadets Detachment Standard Bearer aged 14 and teaching ceremonial cane and rifle drill to senior cadets across the county, he became interested in the forces. On his sixteenth birthday, he began the enlistment process to become an Aviation Groundcrew Specialist in the British Army, with the hopes of becoming a pilot.

Less than a year later, though, an injury during training brought his ambitions to an end. With no backup plan, Hayden says he “felt lost”.

“After being told by the education system for five years that I would get nowhere without a degree, I didn’t know what to do.”

He began working in the finance department of an international office supplies company. “At the same time, I was head-hunted by the Legion to become the Oakengates & District Branch Standard Bearer.”

Hayden used his connections to train Cadet Detachment Standard Bearers to the Legion Standard, “promoting the Legion’s charitable aims to the youth in the process”. Shortly afterwards, he was appointed as the Branch Treasurer.

Hayden balances his Legion activities with work. In March 2023, he began dairy farming – working up to 60 or 70 hours a week while ensuring he remains an active member.



Recently, he co-organised a fundraiser in which eight youth members and five full members climbed Yr Wyddfa (Mount Snowdon) to raise funds so that 50 local veterans could be taken on an annual day trip to visit the National Memorial Arboretum. “In total we raised £985 as of mid-August and we are hopeful the figure continues to rise,” he says.

Hayden says that as a younger member, he enjoys all aspects of the Legion. “Making a difference is so important and to be able to contribute towards the local community is immensely rewarding,” he says. “I particularly enjoy engaging with other branches, helping them develop further to increase their presence.”

He also enjoys training other young people, helping them to gain experience that will appeal to employers. “Hopefully assisting them further in their life – it also helps secure the Legion’s place in the future, ensuring the continuity of local branches,” he says.

He adds: “Membership to me is commitment to supporting those who have committed their lives to the nation and ensuring they get the support they deserve.”

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Thank you for reading! The December edition of Central News is due to be published  
Tuesday 3rd December.