

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
The Royal British Legion – Brampton & District Branch
Methodist Church, Brampton
Monday 7 October 2024



The Chair opened the meeting at 1905 hrs and welcomed all.

Tribute: The Chair read the roll of deceased members followed by the Tribute

Present: John Bridge OBE DL (President), Mick Forsdick (Chairman), Pete Digby (Vice Chairman/Poppy Appeal Organiser), Siobhan Grehan (Treasurer), Paul Gane, Rosemary Parsons, David Parsons, Brandon Wilgus, Bert Lewer, Trevor Stone, Allan Lewis, Steve West, Clive Wood, Mervyn Linnell, Ken McKenzie, Chris Pocock, Steve Burton, Di Branham, Rich Sutton.

Apologies for absence: Carole Rose (Secretary), Rees Burns, Ian Taylor, Karen Taylor, Jonty Taylor, Steve Rose, Nigel Beet CBE, Tim Thurston, Maureen Wigley, Ian Phoenix-Sisk, Zoe Greenslade, Ian Howkins-Griffiths, Sue Linnell, Millie-Mae Todd, Simon Rees, Sally Rees, Ian MacDonald, Steph MacDonald, Phil Bell.

Matters arising from the Previous AGM. The chairman reported on the following matters arising:

- **Branch Fees.** – As from 1 October 2024 a Branch administration fee of £5.00 is now included in the annual RBL membership. The Chairman explained that RBL Central would be increasing the annual membership fee by £2.00 per year for the next 5 years; he stated that the branch would not consider raising branch fees during this period. Branch fees are now £20.00 RBL membership plus £6.00 Branch administration fee.
- **Branch Profits** – As agreed branch income has been transferred from the Veterans' Club Account :
 - £1,406.00 into Branch Account.
 - £660.61 to the Poppy Appeal (£100.00 to Sawtry Poppy Appeal for DDay Poppy Pins, £660.61 into Brampton Poppy Appeal).

President's Remarks.

- The President said that it was an honour and a privilege to be the President of the Branch and he was looking forward to a new chapter. He said that it had been a year of mixed emotions having not only been attending celebratory events but attending the funerals of members who had passed. He said that the Branch was strong and visible which is why more people were getting involved but stressed the importance of building on those successes to continue growing. He said that many positive events such as the formal D-day Dinner proved the worth of the Branch and it's standing within the local community and thanked Ian Taylor and Mick for the organisation of such a successful event. He said that many people had worked hard in the background organising trips and visits and stressed the importance of supporting such activities to ensure the growth of the Branch. He said that there were some changes proposed for some key positions and it was important for the membership to continue to support the incoming committee to ensure the further development of a vibrant and successful Branch.

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Chairman's Report. The Chairman opened by again thanking everyone for attending and supporting him through his tenure as Chairman. He said that the Branch had had another very positive year for the seeing the membership briefly reaching 100 but stressed the importance of generating interest in joining. As well as the continuation of the monthly NAAFI Break, we had a very successful Christmas Draw allowing us to donate to this year's poppy appeal, the Branch held an equally successful, well attended "formal Dinner".

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank all of the committee and the membership for their support to him over the last 6 years. Without their help and support the Branch would not be in such a strong a position as it is today. He said that he hoped that the membership would give the incoming Chairman the same level of commitment and support.

The Chairman said that whilst each and every member of the committee had supported the growth and development of the Branch he wanted to mention four members in particular who had gone the extra mile to ensure the Branch goals were met. He went on to award Certificates of Appreciation to Siobhan Grehan, Ian Taylor, Paul Gane and Ian Howkins-Griffiths.

Treasurer's Report. The Treasurer provided a breakdown of the three accounts associated with the Branch. She said that as agreed at the previous AGM monies had been transferred to both the Branch Account and the Poppy appeal as explained earlier. Copies of the accounts can be found attached to these minutes.

Events' Report. In the absence of the events committee lead the Chair briefly discussed the events conducted over the last year. He said that the NAAFI breaks continue to be well attended and highlighted the success of these additional events:

- Christmas Draw 2023 – Raised over £1000.00.
- Formal Dinner – Raised over £400.00.
- Brampton Village Fete – Raised over £200.00.
- Alconbury Village Fete – Raised over £400.00.
- Brampton Oktober Fest – Raised over £160.00.
- Brampton Christmas on the Green – Raised over £100.00.

Poppy Appeal Report. The Poppy Appeal Organiser provided a summary of last year's Poppy Appeal stating that £14,773.76 was raised across the district. He said that Mr Roger Whyborn would be assisting this year and that Mr Whyborn would be the main point of contact during the Poppy Appeal Period. He also said that he would be putting together the collection boxes at 1400hrs on Monday 14 October at the Hare, and welcomed assistance from anyone able to do so.

Prior to the dissolution of the existing Branch Committee the President on behalf of the Executive Committee and all Members sincerely thanked the outgoing Chairman, Mick Forsdick, for his outstanding contribution to the Branch over the past six years and presented him with a token of our appreciation.

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Election of Officers and Executive Committee. The Branch committee was dissolved and the Branch President presided over the election of the new committee. The following were elected to the Branch Committee for the 2024-2026 period :

a.	Chairman:	Mr Clive Wood
b.	Vice Chairman	Mr Mick Forsdick
c.	Secretary	Mrs Carole Rose
d.	Treasurer	Mrs Siobhan Grehan
e.	Standard Bearer(s)	Mr Ian Phoenix-Sisk, Mr Nigel Owen with support from 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic)
f.	Website	Ms Zoe Greenslade
g.	Media Officer	Ms Zoe Greenslade
h.	Committee Members	Mr Paul Gane, Mr Steve Rose, Mr Brandon Wilgus, Mr Pete Digby.

Chairman's Remarks: The incoming Chairman reiterated the President's comments from earlier and thanked all in attendance. He then went on to thank Mick Forsdick for his commitment to the Branch over the last 6 years as Chairman highlighting the raising of the Branch profile, membership and improving the standing of the Branch within the local community. He remarked on the fund raising initiatives that were instigated during his tenure, such as production of bird boxes, hedgehog houses and the upcoming pallet Christmas trees. He said that Mick was always impeccably dressed no matter the occasion, from funerals through to formal dinners, always ensuring that the RBL was appropriately represented. He said that the standing of the Branch had been the driving force for the organisation of the annual Remembrance Parade on behalf of the Parish Council. He said that the Brampton Branch had become one of the most dynamic branches in the County of Cambridgeshire, which was mainly down to the commitment and drive of Mick. He then went on to thank The Vice Chairman and Poppy Appeal Organiser, Pete Digby for his support to both Mick and the Branch. He said that as the PAO, donations had gone from strength to strength with his organisation and management skills, culminating in £14 773.00 being raised last year. He said that Pete had been an ardent supporter of all Branch activities since his move from the Kimbolton Branch. Pete will remain on the executive committee, whilst he takes on the challenges of his appointment as the County RBL Chairman.

He then gave a brief account of his career and involvement in numerous voluntary organisations, since leaving the Royal Air Force.

The new Chairman then set out his vision for the Branch. He stated that he was looking to build on the solid foundation that the previous committee had achieved for the Branch and would focus on the following areas :

- Recruitment of more members.
- Attending more events within the district.
- Generate interest in outlying villages by organising open evenings.
- Encourage members to become more active within the branch and at branch organised events.
- Resend the survey, as only 10% had responded.

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- Forge closer links to active military establishments.
- Support and develop the Annual Memorial Ride.
- Continue support for the Poppy Appeal.

The new Chairman stated that the branch played a vital role in helping hard to reach veterans to tackle loneliness and isolation. Whilst not necessarily being able to help directly, we must be able to pass up details through the RBL welfare services chain or signpost to local support services. He said that it was also important to create a rapport with other military charities such as RNA, SSAFA and RAFA.

In essence, he said that we need to promote

- Remembrance – Not forgetting those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms.
- Fundraising – Ensuring we continue to raise funds for the Branch as well as the Poppy Appeal.
- Kindness – Being there for anyone going through tough or difficult times.
- Membership - Encourage more members from across both the local and Armed Forces communities.

The new Chairman finished by saying that he was looking forward to getting to know the branch members, as well as working closely with the committee to achieve the objectives set.

Treasurer's Comment: The Treasurer proposed that the Community Account which currently has no reporting period should be aligned with the Branch Account reporting period, 1 Jul – 30 Jun. The Branch Community account would also be independently audited.

This was agreed by all present

Matters from the membership: There were no points raised from the membership.

Poppy Appeal: Covered previously.

Points from the Floor: There were no points to the good and benefit of the Branch from the floor.

Date of next Annual General Meeting: Monday 6 October 2026 at the Methodist Church, The Green, Brampton.

Date of next Branch Executive Committee and Branch Meeting. Monday 28 October 2024, in the Hare on the Green, Brampton, with the open meeting starting at 1930hrs.

There being no other business the Chairman thanked Rosemary Parsons for organising the meeting venue and closed the meeting at 2006hrs.

M Forsdick for Secretary
8 October 2024

Attachments - Financial Reports