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

27 August 2026 – Memorial Hall

Attendees	Post
Richard Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Deputy Chair, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership
Simon Mason	Branch Padre
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer
Helen Axon	Treasurer
David Pollock	Raffle Co-ordinator
Jan Sologub	
Jim Payne	
Jim Gardiner	

1. Act of Remembrance.

The Chairman 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 September. He concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Jon Miles, Viv Miles, Adrian Dover, Tom Heseltine, Sue Urch, John Price, Pat Price, Terry Weaver, Colin Britt and Elaine Balding.

3. Chairman's Report

Introduction

Good evening, everyone. It's been a very quiet time since the last meeting, but herewith the highlights:

Gloucestershire County Committee en masse Resignations

At the beginning of this month I received an email from the ex-county secretary from his personal email stating that with immediate effect the County Committee had resigned and that the County would go into administration again. A couple of weeks later another email was circulated on behalf of the National Chair Lynda Atkins:

Three complaints regarding behaviour contrary to our RBL Values were received (one from a fellow member and two from employees). These complaints did not relate to any one single incident, meeting or event. An independent, external investigator was appointed to ensure a thorough and objective assessment of these complaints. Following a detailed investigation, the conclusion of the investigator was that two of the complaints were fully substantiated and the third was partially substantiated…….

As result of the findings of the report in this particular case, several members of Gloucestershire County Committee have chosen to resign. We thank them for their support for the County and wider RBL and we wish them well for the future.

Lynda also outlined the complaints process taken and emphasised that if anyone had any questions or concerns they could get in touch.

Newent Cemetery & Chapels Project

I've been asked by Newent Town Council (NTC) and the Armed Forces Representative to share the link to the NTC public consultation page for the Newent Cemetery Heritage project which is: https://newenttowncouncil.gov.uk/news/7711/. Obviously any queries or questions should be addressed to: townclerk@newenttowncouncil.gov.uk . The closing date for responses is 31 August 2026.

Remembrancetide 2026

NTC have come back with a query about road closure for the Parade on the Sunday morning as they are saying a road closure would mean wrt Culver Street a diversion and appropriate signs from Gloucester and Ross roads etc. They have suggested 2 options:

1. a rolling roadblock as per recent years;
2. an alternate route through the Lake carpark, along Court lane and then continue up Broad Street opposite the Market Square.

Following a discussion, KU proposed and DP seconded that we should go with Option1. Passed unanimously. GB asked RB to request that NTC publicise the rolling roadblock via their various communication channels.

Veteran's Coffee Morning

The next Veteran's Coffee Morning will take place in the Red Lion on Tuesday 22 September 2026 starting at 10am. It's a great opportunity to get out of the house and meet some new people over a coffee, so if you know anyone who might benefit from this type of casual event please let them know.

Finally

Don't forget that, as normal, if anyone needs help in any way at all please do not hesitate to get in contact, and if we can help, we will.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the July meeting had been circulated. There were no amendments. KU proposed and HA seconded that they be accepted as a true record of the meeting. Passed unanimously.

Matters arising:

There were three matters arising:

6. Incentives for the poster competition – after a brief discussion it was agreed that there should be two book token prizes – one for the primary school winner and one for the secondary school winner.

7.2 KU has contacted Andrew Barraclough and is awaiting a reply.

7.3 RB has obtained prices for the frame. Members agreed that the brown frame would be the better of the two choices on offer.

5. Reports by Officers

5.1 Branch Community Support (BCS) Report for August 2026

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

We present this month's BCS Report as follows:

5.1.1 General Information

Welcome to our Meeting and TRBL Update.
As this hot weather appears to reach its end, we now await the deluge which will undoubtedly arrive as promised by our beloved MET Service, which it surely will.

It continues to be important that we support our elderly Veterans and neighbours, looking out to those in need of help and support.

5.1.2 Branch Remembrance

At this time we remember those unable to be present at our meeting due to varying 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 limited requests for support, so time has been spent attending on-line BCS courses, discussions and receiving updates from our colleagues at TRBL HQ.

Branch Welfare

Aside from the much valued support available from your BCS Representatives, Veterans and Branch Members are encouraged to continue to contact and now formally register via the RBL Helpline services on 0808 802 8080 and The Veteran's Gateway: https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk

This brings me to an issue raised by TRBL HQ regarding BCS.

BCS Terms and Conditions have recently been revised, causing a number of UK wide issues. No longer can a BCS Representative visit or provide advice or support to a colleague, Veteran or Veteran's family unless that said person is formally registered with the RBL Helpline.

This ensures that TRBL, to use their words, "Are in control of the BCS network, thereby ensuring all volunteers and their recipients are registered, compliant with due processes and entitled to provide and receive support" and more importantly, BCSs are covered by TRBL insurance. BCS representatives are encouraged not to offer advice or direct support to a prospective recipient of TRBL services until registered and authorised by a nominated Case Officer.

Those attending the on-line BCS course raised a significant number of questions relating to the new rules and processes, declaring that they foresee problems moving forward by restricting the way in which many of the BCS representatives currently undertake their activities. Questions raised are being forwarded to TRBL HQ for a response as a couple were extremely contentious including who was actually entitled to receive benefits and in what form.

As yet, no replies have been received.

As a brief summary, out of some 2,000 plus Branches there are only 374 active BCS (figures as of July 2026).

Branch Membership

Subject to the renewal process, we believe that the current Branch Membership totals 41 persons: new Members are always welcome.

Branch Statistics

We continue to be supportive of our local Veterans, their families and others within our surrounding area but the way in which these services are being delivered remains under review by TRBL HQ. Various levels of active Branch Community Support (BCS) will continue including signposting, offering local advice and guidance, personal visits or via the Telephone Buddy Network.
Please note that all communications are confidential.

Based upon current Branch practices, Branch Statistics for this period are therefore as follows:

Total Number of Welfare visits	3
How many beneficiaries visited	4
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 Branch Members and local Veterans this period: 6

NOTE:
Based upon the current / revised BCS TRBL HQ reporting system, Branch Statistics recorded should be zero throughout.

5.1.4 Branch Community Support, Youth Liaison and Community Activities.

Community Support and Youth Liaison

Your Branch BCS representative(s) has received a further request seeking information on behalf of an elderly female Veteran who has recently suffered a stroke: the Branch was able to signpost them to the appropriate local support organisation.

The date for the Service of Dedication of the Newent AC Standard continues to be progressed.

In advance of the forthcoming academic year, we continue to liaise with the many varied groups, schools and youth organisations within our community.

The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy - Nominations

Further clarification has been sought from the Newent Branch of The Gloucestershire Army Cadet Force regarding their nomination: no further nominations have been received.

Newent & District Branch Centenary Celebrations 2027 - A Reminder.

We continue to support next year's planned Branch Centenary Event as we move ever closer with an air of anticipation.

Recent updates are included within the Minutes of the July meeting.

Representatives of The Lieutenancy will attend, together with hopefully, other local dignitaries, marking this a very special occasion for Newent.

5.1.5 Forthcoming Dates for TRBL Branch Diary

Members and colleagues are invited to note the following planned events:

Please note that the Veteran's Breakfast and Coffee Morning being held in the Red Lion on the 4th Tuesday of the month, commencing 10 am: everyone welcome.

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

Take care, keep safe, and we will look forward to hearing from you all in due course.

5.2 Treasurer's Report

This month we have received 48pence from HMCTs for a stolen poppy box. This brings our current balance to £1,790.88.

Members should have received a bank reconciliation report taken from the Lomas report. We, as a Branch, need to agree this report.

After some discussion JG proposed and SM seconded that the report should be agreed. Passed unanimously. KU said that HA should be thanked for her work on the accounts – all Members present agreed.

5.3 Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer Report

The Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer had nothing to report this month.

5.4 Branch Padre Report

SM reported that he was intending to use part of the Remembrance Sunday Service to look ahead to the Centenary Celebrations. He is also working on a project helping young people to connect with the idea of Remembrance.

There were no other reports.

6. Branch Centenary, 18 February 2027

RB showed Members a poster that he has designed. It was agreed that it should be distributed throughout the Town and wider afield.

There was a discussion re. sale of tickets. RB and KU agreed to contact local shops to ask them to sell tickets. JP said that his wife would be willing to sell some through her contacts. There would also be some for sale on the door.

RB has sourced a box in which to display the old Minutes Book. This would cost £16.09. GB proposed and KU seconded that the box should be purchased. Passed unanimously.

Other options still under consideration include:

- Slide show of Branch activities over the last 100 years, Newent History Society have been asked for their advice.

- Possibly involving students from NCS to digitalise the names of Branch Members from the Branch's founding in 1927.

Members were asked to keep coming up with ideas.

7. Any Other Business

7.1. GB suggested that a booking should be made for the Branch Christmas Dinner – either at the Alma or at an alternative venue. RB offered to check with the Red Lion and the King's Arms to see if either of them could accommodate us.

7.2. GB asked if it would be possible to obtain more of the blue shirts with the RBL logo. KU and GB to investigate and report back.

7.3. GB asked if we had received confirmation of the Remembrance Service at Newent Community School. This will probably be Friday 6 November. RB reminded Members that, as well as the Remembrance Service at Saint Mary's on Sunday 8 November, there would be a short Service at the War Memorial on Wednesday 11 November – timings to be confirmed by the Branch Padre.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 24 September 2026 in the Memorial Hall starting at 1900.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 2010 .

Agenda for the Newent & District Branch Royal British Legion

Meeting 24 September 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, 18 February 2027.
7. Any Other Business.
8. Date of Next Meeting.