

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

### Held 28th November at Cobblers Micro Pub

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richie Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Deputy Chairman, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership
David Sass	Secretary
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Simon Mason	Padre
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Rick Axon	Bar, Entertainment Member
Dave Pollock	Raffle Coordinator
Susan Urch	
Elaine Balding	
John Price	
Tom Heseltine	
Sue Colborne	
Gordon Thorogood	
Jan Sologub	
Adrian Dover	
Steven Doyle	
Jim Payne	
Ashley Martin	
Terry Bourne	

#### 1. Act of Remembrance.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1905 hours and asked everyone to think of the people who couldn't be with us due to ill health. He then read out the names of the members of the Parish who lost their lives in WW1 and WW2 during the months of December and January. He concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

#### 2. Apologies for Absence.

Julia Gooch, Jim Gardiner, Pat Price, Colin Britt, Susanne Britt, Jim Payne, John Miles, Viv Miles, Terry Weaver and Shaun Westmoreland.

#### 3. Chairman's Report – 28 November 2024

Welcome everyone to our away-day in Cobblers, I hope all the weather hasn't caused you too many problems, a big month for the Branch, so I'm obviously starting with the:

##### **3.1 Remembrancetide Weekend 8 – 11 November 2024**

**8 Nov 2024 Newent Community School.** The School once again excelled with a very respectful, poignant and special service. My thanks go to the School Principal, Deputy Head and all the other teachers who made us so very welcome, the whole School who turned out and respected the occasion and special thanks to the Bugler and Head Girl who performed their respective duties in front of the whole School.

**10 Nov 2024 Parade & Service,** I had no reason to doubt that the Town Parade and Service would go without a hitch, with the excellent stewardship of our Parade marshal, the timing and organisation of the Service by the Branch Padre and of course we wouldn't be able to Parade without the support of Newent Town Council (NTC) and the road closure team. My thanks on this go to: NTC and our very supportive Mayoress, to the Branch Padre and Parade Marshal who both ran things like clockwork, to the young Standard Bearer from the Newent Air Training Cadets and last but not least to the best rendition of 'the Last Post' and 'Reveille' (which had me blubbing like a baby) by the incredible Newent Air Training Cadet up in the balcony, and it would be amiss of me to leave out the town of Newent for such a fantastic turn-out again this year.

**11 Nov 2024 St Mary's Church,** for those that could make it, at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month a few of us gathered with students of Picklenash School for a short service led by our Branch Padre, which included a short explanation of why we were gathered for the benefit of the assembled young people, the reading of the names and a minutes silence, all of which was a very fitting tribute to the memory of the

fallen from Newent.

### **3.2 Highnam Good Neighbour Café invitation – 5 November 2024**

Our Parade Marshal received an invitation for the Branch to set up a Poppy Appeal and Information stand at one of their twice monthly charity coffee mornings. This turned out to be an excellent 2 hours with approximately 80 participants enjoying coffee and cakes and donating towards the Poppy Appeal. Donations in the tin came to £66 with some extra on-line donations as well. My thanks go to everyone involved with this incredible venture and also for the extra donation of £100 from the Committee.

### **3.3 Poppy Appeal Money Count – 15 November 2024**

This year the Branch was invited to help out at the Newent & District Poppy Appeal money count which took place at the TA Centre in Arle Road, Cheltenham. The Deputy Chairman, Parade Marshal and myself joined the Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) and his wife to count the donations in the 80 odd 'Tins' distributed around town. The 'Tins' yielded over £5,000 and this does not include on-line donations and wreath sales which I think for a town our size is remarkable. Thanks go to our PAO for an excellent campaign again this year.

### **3.4 Military Wives Concert – 24 November 2024**

I'm sure you will already have heard that the planned concert by the Innsworth Military Wives Choir could not go ahead due to the dreadful weather experienced over the weekend. My thanks go to Graham who liaised with the Choir and to both the Entertainments Member and our Branch Treasurer who is busy arranging refunds.

### **3.5 Veteran's Coffee Morning – 28 January 2025**

We had a new addition to our Veterans Coffee Morning this week and I would like to welcome and thank Brian, who served in the REME and the usual suspects for making it an interesting morning. Next month's Veterans Coffee Morning will take place at Manna Coffee House on 28 January 2025 starting at 10am, everyone is welcome to attend.

### **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**

### **4.1 Matters Arising.**

**Item 4.1.** Newent Veteran's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday from September's Meeting will be discussed as a separate item later in the meeting.

**Item 6.1.** was now complete.

**Item 6.4.** the Deputy Chairman discussed the John Edward Whitehorn Trophy and stated that so far no nominations were forthcoming, he will send out a further reminder to all the youth groups. The Chairman agreed to carry this item over to the next Branch meeting in January.

**4.2. Minutes of Previous meeting.** The minutes of September's meeting were proposed by HA and seconded by JS that they are a true and accurate record and passed unanimously. Chairman signed the minutes.

## **5. Reports by Officers**

### **5.1 Branch Community Support (BCS) Report for November 2024**

Dear Branch Members, Veterans, Families and Supporters of the Newent & District Branch of The Royal British Legion, it is with pleasure that I present this month's BCS Report.

#### **5.1.2. Welcome**

With our Branch AGM over, this month sees the possibility of welcoming more local members to our pre-Christmas Branch Meeting, being held at Cobblers in Church Street, Newent. We look forward to reconnecting with many veterans and serving members of our Armed Forces who are now living within our community, especially as we near the festive season and the annual period of National Remembrance is at an end.

### 5.1.3. Branch Remembrance

Following the success of Newent's Remembrance activities at Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre, Remembrance Parade and Service at St Mary's and The War Memorial Service on 11th November, we remember those friends, veterans, and Branch colleagues who are unable to be present this evening. Members are reminded that the Branch is here to assist and support veterans and their families; you only need to contact one of your Committee.

### 5.1.4 Cinderford Branch TRBL

The Cinderford Branch will be hosting its first Veterans' Breakfast on the 4th December at the Golden Lion hostelry on Cinderford High Street: Everyone is welcome to attend from 0930hrs for 1000hrs when the breakfast will commence. There is no set cost, they will just be looking for a donation on the day to the branch. For further information please contact Mark Evans, Cinderford RBL Chairman on 07760 377567.

### 5.1.5 TRBL National Activities.

There continue to be changes within the structure and operation of TRBL HQ and the way in which it delivers its services to Branches. At this time, Membership Meet-ups and Roadshows planned for this year and early into next year have been cancelled: more information will be available in the New Year.

### 5.1.6 Branch Welfare, Membership, Statistics, Community Support and Youth Liaison.

#### 5.1.6.1 Branch Welfare

The Branch continues to aid and support its members, veterans and supporters. Veterans and Branch Members may continue to contact the RBL Helpline services via the national network on 0808 802 8080 and the Veteran's Gateway: <https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk> Your BCS Representatives will continue to utilise their local and regional experience to assist wherever possible.

#### 5.1.6.2 Armed Forces Support Network - The Veterans Covenant

The success of the newly formed FoD Armed Forces Support Network over the past year continues: assurances have been provided that this service will continue for the foreseeable future. More information is available to Members upon request.

#### 5.1.6.3 Branch Membership

Branch Membership remains at 51 members.

This period has been less busy when compared to previous months, albeit we continue to be supportive of two of our local veterans and another within our surrounding area. The Branch continues to provide support to its current Members, new veterans moving into our community and a small number via the Telephone Buddy Network.

We would remind Members that following the recent severe weather and as we approach the winter months, you can support others in need by signposting them to TRBL helpline.

In the event that Members identify a local comrade in need, they are initially encouraged to contact a Committee Member or BCS Representative at the earliest convenience: all communications are confidential.

#### 5.1.6.4 Branch Statistics

For this period are therefore as follows:

Total Number of Welfare visits	3
How many beneficiaries visited	3
How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters)	2
Total Welfare Expenditure	NIL
Telephone Buddies:	
Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive	8
Telephone – How many beneficiaries called	4
Telephone – How many telephone buddies:	2

#### 5.1.6.5 Branch Community Support and Youth Liaison Activities

##### a. Community and Youth Liaison

Your Branch Representatives continue to liaise with the many varied groups and youth organisations within our community.

##### b The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy

During the past two months, application forms have been sent to all secondary schools and youth organisations serving Newent and its wider community, seeking nominations for this unique award to a

young person providing outstanding community services: replies via the Branch Secretary are imminent.

### **5.1.7 Newent War Memorial**

The requests for public funding having been published on behalf of The Newent War Memorial Committee are proving to be extremely successful, with pledges recently received from businesses and Veteran Regiments in the total sum of £ 2,000. Initial cleaning of The Memorial is complete and the remaining names are being cut.

The total cost of the project is circa £10k anticipated to include a Memorial Garden Stone (incorporating a time capsule), Plaque and a provision for ongoing maintenance. Grateful thanks are extended to everyone that has donated to date as part of this unique community project.

### **5.1.8 Military Wives Concert**

Unfortunately due to the recent severe weather conditions, this wonderful event planned to be held on 24<sup>th</sup> November in Newent's Memorial Hall had to be cancelled at short notice. The Branch will be publishing notifications within the community inviting those that purchased tickets to seek reimbursement.

### **5.1.9 Forthcoming Dates for TRBL Branch Diary**

#### **a. Branch Festive Meal**

Thursday evening, 19th December at The Alma Inn, Linton, Herefordshire.

#### **b. Branch Coffee Morning**

Tuesday morning, 28th January 2025 at Manna House, Newent. For further information please see the reports issued by our Branch Entertainment's Officer and our Branch Chairman.

### **5.1.10 Recognition**

Special thanks this year are extended to the following: Newent Memorial Hall Committee, Local Businesses, Newent Local History Society, Schools and other Community Groups for their continuing support and raising funds for the Branch, the Poppy Appeal, and the Refurbishment of Newent's War Memorial. However, we must all remember that the ongoing success of the Branch is due to its Committee, Branch Members and the many other unsung heroes within our local community, without whose support the Royal British Legion would not be the success that it is today. Please remember those in need as we approach the festive season. Wishing you all a healthy, happy and safe Christmas and New Year: see you in January 2025.

### **5.2. Newent Treasurer's report for Nov 28**

The current account balance stands at £1383.81.

£100 was donated to the Poppy Appeal from a Good Neighbour coffee morning at Highnam.

£46 has been received from Members subscriptions.

However, £266 of the above was ticket sales for the cancelled Military Wives Concert. The Chairman and Treasurer are in the process of refunding. Although some people have kindly donated instead of requesting a refund, the above figure will reduce as refunds are made.

### **5.3. Entertainments and Bar Member - Dates for your diary**

December 19 Christmas Meal Alma in Linton (awaiting confirmation)

### **5.4. Parade Marshal's Report**

November has, as usual, been a busy month. We were invited to take part in the Remembrance Service held at Newent Community School on Friday 8 November. As always, the students behaved very well, treating the occasion with the respect it deserved.

On Sunday 10 November the Branch took part in the annual Remembrance Parade and Service. The Parade was well supported and the Church was packed for the Service.

Monday 11 November was marked with a short service at the War Memorial where Members of the Branch were joined by Year Six students from Picklenash School.

### **5.5. Poppy Appeal Organiser's Report**

Amount collected from Boxes throughout Newent: £5,052 through cash or cheque. It was not clear yet how much was collected by BACs.

Final total will be clear after statement received and will be reported when available. Colin thanked all who helped with the final count.

## **6.0 Any Other Business**

**6.1 Newent Town Council (NTC) Civic Carol Service 10 December.** Members are invited to attend, 6 Members of the Branch had already indicated that they would be attending, anyone else wishing to attend should inform the Branch Chairman or NTC direct.

### **6.2. Newent Veteran's 100th Birthday**

After much discussion, it was decided that the proposed 'party' for the Veteran would be impractical therefore, GT suggested that he had contacted the Intelligence Corps Association as the Veteran was a member, and he had found several items in their online shop that could be purchased by the Newent RBL Branch to present to him as a celebration of his 100th birthday.

The Chairman suggested that this was an excellent compromise and asked if GT, DS and JS could present this to him at the weekly coffee meeting at Stokes Mews where he lives. As they are residents in the same building this would not put an extra burden on the facility. GT volunteered to purchase a wall plaque on behalf of the Branch for presentation to the Veteran, GT, DS & JS all volunteered to present the plaque on the date of Veteran's Birthday 5 January 2025.

### **6.3. Newent Christmas Lights Switch on in Market Square.**

The Secretary notified the meeting that the Newent Christmas Lights switch on would be at 4:30pm on November 30th. He hoped many would attend.

### **6.4 Imjin Memorial fund raiser.**

Chairman informed the meeting that JG – NTC Veterans representative had raffle tickets which were helping to raise funds for a memorial to commemorate the battle of Imjin. Tickets were available in Gooch Sports shop and via the Chairman.

### **6.5 Open Evening – Newent ACF**

The Chairman stated that the Branch had been invited to an Open Evening for the newly forming Newent Army Cadet Force on 12 December 2024 at the Newent Community Pavilion starting at 7pm. The Chairman has accepted the offer, but if anyone else would like to attend, please let him know.

### **6.6 Chairman's Jewel.**

EB stated that now HM King Charles III had been confirmed as the new patron of the Royal British Legion, shouldn't the Branch update the Chairman's Jewel to the new cypher. After some discussion it was decided that when the new Cypher for the Jewel was available the Chairman's Jewel should be updated with the new version. Proposed by EB and Seconded by RA the meeting voted unanimously.

### **6.7 Memorial Hall Annual Rent.**

SU proposed that the branch agree a figure of £100 for this year's rent to the Memorial Hall, this represents good value at just over £9 a meeting for the 11 meetings held each year. EB seconded the motion and the meeting voted unanimously.

## **7. Next Meeting date 23 January 2025**

There being no more business the meeting closed at 20.10 with the next meeting set for 23 January 2025, starting at 7pm in the Memorial Hall.

**Meeting Agenda**

**Newent and District Branch The Royal British Legion**

**23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025 in The Newent Memorial Hall**

1. Welcome and Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.
5. Reports by Officers.
6. Any Other Business.
7. Date of Next Meeting.