

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

25 June 2026 – Memorial Hall

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richard Balding	Chairman
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Adrian Dover	Secretary
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
David Pollock	Raffle co-ordinator
John Price	
Jim Payne	

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 July. He concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Jon Miles, Viv Miles, Colin Britt, Keith Urch, Simon Mason, Sue Urch, Pat Price, Terry Weaver and Elaine Balding.

3. Chairman's Report

Introduction

Good evening, everybody:

Thanks

My thanks to everybody who covered for my absences during the past month especially to Graham, Helen, David, Jim and Tom for the D Day event, and to all those who attended the Armed Forces Flag raising.

County Newsletter for June

I had submitted an article to the Membership Engagement Officer (MEO) for submission in to this month's County Newsletter about our Armed Forces Flag raising event, I suspect this one will be published due to the high number of VIPs that attended, so look out for it soon.

Newent Cemetery Heritage Project

Newent Town Council (NTC) have sent out a stakeholder engagement pack which outlines how they think the various stakeholders can assist in this project. They've put several items against the Branch, which are:

Royal British Legion

- Input on remembrance and commemorative use
- Support in identifying military stories and connections
- Advice on appropriate interpretation of service and sacrifice

- Opportunities to support oral history and veteran engagement

This Project is at a very early preliminary stage and I will keep you all informed when I receive further guidance. If anyone would like to see the complete 2 page document please let me know.

Remembrancetide 2026

Planning has already begun on this year's Remembrancetide events. The Padre has a good handle on the theme for this year and NTC have agreed to an initial meeting on the 9 July 2026 to look at the overall plan for the Parade and Service. As things get firmed up I will keep you informed on the decisions.

100 Year Pennant for Branch Standard

As most of you know one of the items on our to do list for our Branch's 100 years celebrations was to have an updated 100 year pennant. However, Membership who are the governing body for such things have decided that our Branch and several others that have applied do not qualify to parade the 100 year pennant. This is apparently because sometime in our last 100 years the Branch was disbanded and then reformed therefore creating a break in our timeline, and further to that it appears the 75 anniversary pennant we already have was given to us in error! Obviously I have challenged this but will have to wait until the Ceremonial Working Group next sit, they sit bi-monthly. However, there is a determination by Branch Officers to continue with our plans and celebrate an incredible milestone in our history.

Veteran's Coffee Morning

The next Veteran's Coffee Morning will take place in the Red Lion on Tuesday 28 July 2026 starting at 10am, this is an excellent venue with a lovely outside space, which we used at the last gathering, great coffee and a good breakfast. We've had a good start with this new venue but I would love to see more people turning up; 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 May meeting had been circulated. There were two amendments: the number of volunteers for the D-Day event ended up as five; item 4 typo corrected. Subject to these amendments HA proposed and PP seconded that they be accepted as a true record of the meeting. Passed unanimously.

Matters arising:

RB had four actions from previous Minutes: writing a letter to the Powell family thanking them for the donation of £450.00 in memory of Elizabeth Powell; contacting NTC re. arrangements for Armed Forces flag raising; contacting RBL re. the Centenary Pennant; contacting NTC to ask for a planning meeting for Remembrance Sunday.

All actions have been dealt with.

5. Reports by Officers

5.1 Branch Community Support (BCS) Report for May 2026

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

We have pleasure in presenting this month's BCS Report as follows:

5.1.1. General Information

Welcome to our June Meeting and TRBL Update, apologies for not being able to join you all this evening.

At this time of exceptionally hot weather, you are all reminded to continually hydrate and keep as cool as you are able,

As we continue reconnecting with our local Veterans, serving members of our Armed Forces community, Cadet Units in Newent and the FoD, Armed Forces Community Network to celebrate Armed Forces Week our thoughts turn to those still in need of help and support.

Given recent National RBL announcements affecting the Branch, I'm sure that our Chairman will have several items to discuss with you.

More information will undoubtedly be available to Members during the meeting.

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 quiet, with no requests for support so time has been spent visiting, telephoning and generally keeping a watching brief on our Members' health and welfare matters.

Branch Welfare

Aside from the much valued support available via your BCS Representatives, Veterans and Branch Members are encouraged to continue to contact the RBL Helpline services as normal via the national network on 0808 802 8080 and The Veteran's Gateway:

<https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk>

Branch Membership

The current Branch Membership this reporting period totals 41 Members.

New Members are always encouraged and welcomed.

Branch Statistics

We continue to be supportive of our local Veterans and others within our surrounding area.

The Branch continues to provide support to Branch Members, other Veterans, their families in our community and a number via the Telephone Buddy Network.

We would remind Members that you can support others in need by signposting them to TRBL helpline or by reference to the Branch BCS representatives at the earliest convenience.

Please note that all communications are confidential.

Branch Statistics for this period are therefore as follows:

Total Number of Welfare visits	5
How many beneficiaries visited	5
How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters)	2
Total Welfare Expenditure	NIL
Telephone Buddies:	
Telephone – How many beneficiaries called	8
Telephone – How many telephone buddies:	2
Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive in support of Branch Members and local Veterans this period	20

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 two requests seeking further information on the Branch and the support it is able to provide.

The Branch still awaits further information regarding the date for the Service for the Dedication of the Newent AC Standard; this continues to be progressed. In the meantime we continue to liaise with the many varied groups and youth organisations within our community.

The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy - Nominations

The Branch has received one nomination from the Gloucestershire Army Cadet Force for consideration; details have been sent to the Branch Chairman for your consideration (see attached). *[RB briefed Members about the nomination, which would be discussed by Branch Officers at a later date]*

As yet, no further nominations have been received from any other youth organisations.

Newent & District Branch Centenary Celebrations 2027

Despite recent potential setbacks care of TRBL HQ, Members are invited to support next year's planned Branch Centenary Event.

The date(s), venue for the event(s) and attendees are confirmed as being:

Sunday Morning Service on 21 February 2027 at St Mary's Church, Newent for the Rededication of the Branch Standard.

A ticketed community event at Newent's Memorial Hall the following Sunday, 28 February 2027, involving the Innsworth Military Wives Choir and the Barbershop Group, "Something For The Weekend" accompanied by refreshments from 1430hrs to about 1700.hrs.

Representatives of the Lieutenancy will attend, marking this very special occasion for Newent.

Other aspects for consideration include Community School Poster Competitions and a display of the Branch's history.

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 is now being held in the Red Lion on the last 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.

5.1.6. Notification Regarding Safeguarding from TRBL BCS Team

Branches have again been requested to publicise that if you have a Safeguarding concern, in the first instant contact your Branch BCS Representative and then, as appropriate, your Membership Engagement Officer directly.

If your MEO is out of office, please

email Safeguarding@britishlegion.org.uk copying in your BCS Representative and MEO.

If you have a Veteran in need of support, please call our contact centre on **0808 802 8080** (8 am – 8 pm, 7 days a week).

In the event of an emergency, please contact 999 without delay.

5.2 Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer Report

The Standard Bearer took the Branch Standard to the funeral of David Riis-White, a former warrant officer in the Royal Navy, at Gloucester Crematorium on Friday 29 May 2026.

On Saturday 6 June the Branch Standard was on parade as part of Newent's D-Day anniversary celebrations.

On Wednesday 10 June the Branch Standard was on parade at the Woodlands Memorial service at Earthcott Green along with sixteen other Standards from various groups.

On Monday 22 June the Branch Standard was on parade for the start of Armed Forces Week at Newent's flag raising ceremony.

On Sunday 12 July the Branch standard will be on parade at the Violette Szabo memorial service at Wormelow.

At 1400 on Wednesday 22 July the Branch Standard will be present at the burial of Elizabeth Powell's ashes at Newent Cemetery.

5.3 Treasurer's Report

There has been only 1 transaction this month; 45 pence from HMCts. (Poppy box payment)

Current Account Balance: £1,789.92

There were no other reports.

6. Branch Centenary, 18 February 2027

After a brief discussion, the following arrangements for the event on Sunday 28 February 2027 were agreed:

- 1400 Doors open
- 1430 – 1530 Innsworth Military Wives Choir (including a short comfort break)
- 1530 – 1615 Refreshments
- 1615 – 1700 Barbershop Group “Something for the Weekend”
- Refreshments to be tea/coffee/squash/water and cakes
- RB is looking at the cost of producing tickets
- Ticket price to be £10.00 (to include refreshments)

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.
- Providing a case in which to permanently exhibit the original Minutes book
- 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

There were no item under AOB.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 23 July 2026 in the Memorial Hall starting at 1900.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 1955.

Agenda for the Newent & District Branch Royal British Legion Meeting 23 July 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.