

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

24 April 2025 – Memorial Hall

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richard Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Deputy Chairman, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Rick Axon	Bar, Entertainment Member
Dave Pollock	Raffle Coordinator
Tom Heseltine	
John Price	
Pat Price	
Jan Sologub	
Gordon Thorogood	

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, especially Jim Gardiner and Sue Colborne. He then read out the names of the members of the Parish of Newent who lost their lives in WW1 and WW2 during the month of May. He concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Colin Britt, John Miles, Viv Miles, Elaine Balding, Susan Urch, Simon Mason, Sue Colborne, Jim Gardiner, Jim Payne and Adrian Dover.

3. Chairman's Report

Welcome everyone I hope you are all well. It's been a quiet month; so what's been happening since the last meeting? First of all a couple of notices:

3.1. ANZAC Day Memorial Service – 27 April 2025

The ANZAC Day Memorial Service will take place at Leighterton Church Cemetery, Tetbury Lane, Leighterton, GL8 8UP on Sunday 27th April 2025 at 3.00pm.

3.2. South Gloucestershire Armed Forces Day – 21 June 2025

An invite has been sent out to all Branches within Gloucestershire County to Join Staple Hill Branch at this year's South Gloucestershire Armed Forces Day, taking place on Saturday 21 June 2025 in Page Park, Staple Hill.

3.3. VE Day – 8 May 2025

The Branch Deputy Chairman has very kindly volunteered to attend both the VE 80 events on behalf of the Chairman, this is because the Chairman and his wife have been invited to attend the Westminster Abbey ceremony. Details of the events will be in the Deputy Chairman's report.

3.4. Newent War Memorial rededication – 21 June 2025

The rededication of the recently cleaned and updated War Memorial will take place on the 21 June 2025. The details will be finalised by the Branch Padre and War Memorial working party in due course, however the provisional timings would be:

14:00 Rededication service and laying of wreaths
14:45 Refreshments in the Memorial Hall

Please note that these timings are subject to change, however as soon as the final timings are known, members will be notified.

We will also be taking the chance to lay wreaths for the 80th anniversaries of both VE & VJ day.

3.5. Affiliation – Newent Platoon and Newent Branch TRBL

The Affiliation between Newent Platoon and Newent Branch TRBL has now been confirmed by Head Office and affiliation badges have been ordered. We are just waiting for the badges and Certificate to arrive.

3.6. Veteran's Coffee Morning – 27 May 2025

Don't forget that the next Veterans Coffee Morning will be on 27 May 2025 starting at 10am in Manna Coffee House, everyone is welcome to attend.

3.7. Branch Secretary Vacancy

The Branch are still without a full time Secretary so if anyone would like to take on this essential role please let me know, I will only be too pleased to describe the responsibilities etc.

3.8. 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

Matters arising:

item 5.3. Memorial Hall Booking, the Chairman has booked the Memorial Hall for the 21 June 2025 Rededication of the War Memorial and VE/VJ Day Service and has asked for refreshments to be costed for up to 80 guests.

With no further actions and no amendments the minutes were proposed by KU, seconded by RA. as a true and accurate record. **Decision:** Passed Unanimously.

5. Reports by Officers

5.1 Branch Community Support (BCS) Report

5.1.1. Welcome

Welcome to our April Meeting and General Update. We continue to progress reconnecting with our many local veterans, serving members of our Armed Forces community and Cadet Units in Newent, having now finalised the first of our formal Branch Affiliations with the newly formed Gloucestershire Army Cadet Force (The Rifles) Newent Detachment.

5.1.2. Branch Remembrance

We remember those friends, veterans, and Branch colleagues who are unable to be present this evening due to illness, hospital procedures and in particular our former veterans, Sue Colbourne's father and Arthur James Cook, both of whom have passed away. Your Deputy Chair and Standard Bearer represented the Branch at Arthur's funeral at Aston Ingham Church. Our sincere condolences are extended to their family and friends

5.1.4. Branch Welfare, Membership, Statistics.

5.1.4.1. Branch Welfare

The FoDDC Veteran's Forum will be meeting again following the County Elections in May: more information in due course.

Veterans and Branch Members may 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>

Aside from these excellent services, your BCS Representatives will continue to utilise their local and regional experience to assist further, wherever possible in providing support and advice to its Members, veterans, their families and supporters in times of need: you only need to contact one

of your committee.

5.1.4.2. Armed Forces Support Network - The Veterans Covenant

The Forest of Dean (FoD) Armed Forces Support Network continues to be supported by the FoDDC: more information is available upon request.

As a Veteran, you are reminded to register your status with your local health service provider.

5.1.4.3. Branch Membership

With the current branch transfers nearing completion between Newent and Longhope Branches, due to the past closure of the Minsterworth Branch, Membership numbers are reducing to 44 Members: new members are always encouraged and welcomed.

5.1.4.4. Branch Statistics

We continue to be supportive of our local veterans and others 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 you can support others in need by signposting them to TRBL helpline or by reference to the Branch BCS representatives at the earliest convenience: all communications are confidential.

Branch Statistics for this period are therefore as follows:

Total Number of Welfare visits	8
How many beneficiaries visited	4
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	5
Telephone – How many telephone buddies:	2

5.1.5. Branch Community Support and Youth Liaison Activities

5.1.5.1. Community and Youth Liaison

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

Your Deputy Chairman and Parade Marshal attended the first of the newly formed Gloucestershire Army Cadet Force (The Rifles) Newent Detachment open evenings on 3rd April at 2000hrs, to witness a number of cadets pledging allegiance to The King, having completed their initial training.

5.1.5.2. The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy

Reminders 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: unfortunately, we still await nominations.

5.1.5.3. Newent War Memorial

Further funding has been pledged and our financial goals have been reached. As such The Newent War Memorial Committee is now finalising arrangements for the Rededication Service, now planned to take place on Saturday, 21st June at St Mary's Church. More information will be published shortly.

The Stonemason's planned production of the Memorial Stone, Time Capsule and Memorial Plaque continues at pace. Grateful thanks are extended to everyone that has donated to date as part of the unique community project.

5.1.5.4. Commemorative Events

It is planned to hold 80th VE & VJ Day commemorations. Branch representatives have been working closely with the Town Council's Veteran's Representative, Cllr Julia Gooch and arrangements are being finalised for Thursday 8th May.

5.1.5.5. Forthcoming Dates for TRBL Branch Diary

a. Newent Town Council, VE Day Commemorative Event, Thursday, 8th May 2025, meeting at the Flagpole by the Library, moving onto the War Memorial and then to Shepard House for light refreshments, meeting with other invited guests. All Veterans are invited and an indication of numbers planning to attend would be appreciated. Details as follows:

- Flag raising & reading of the Proclamation at the Flagpole – Meet at Flagpole at 0915 for 0930 start
- Walk to War Memorial in St. Mary's Churchyard
- Speech by Mayor & prayers by the War Memorial – at approx. 0950
- Tea & cakes with Veterans at Sheppard House – from about 1015 to 1130 / 1200

NOTE: We would be delighted if all veterans could attend - transport is available for those that are less mobile. An indication of numbers attending would be appreciated.

b. Newent Memorial Hall, VE Day Commemorative Event, Thursday, 8th May 2025, Newent Memorial Hall are hosting an afternoon tea, including music and refreshments between 2:30pm and 4:30pm to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. This is a community event and all Veterans are invited.

NOTE: We would be delighted if all veterans could attend: an indication of numbers would be appreciated.

c. Charity Big Band Dance, organised by Newent & District Rotary Breakfast Club on Saturday, 17th May 2025 in support of local charities will be held at The Memorial Hall, Newent. This is a ticketed event and will include a Fish "n" Chip Supper.

d. The Chairman also mentioned that Cobblers Ale House was also having a charitable event to commemorate VE Day on the 10th May 2025, starting at 4pm. During the early evening Pork and Stuffing Baps will be available for a donation, and for every pint bought Cobblers will subsidise by 11 pence, which was the average price of a pint in 1945.

Note: all donation profits will go to The Newent and District Branch of TRBL.

e. Veteran's next Branch Coffee Morning will be held on Tuesday, 27th May 2025 at Manna Coffee House, Newent.

For further information please see the reports issued by our Branch Chairman and Rick, our Branch Entertainment's Officer.

5.2. Treasurer's report

The current account stands at £1100.86.

5.3. Parade Marshal

a. The Branch Standard was paraded at the funeral of former Branch Member Arthur James Cook at Aston Ingham on Thursday 10 April.

b. There have been ongoing discussions re. the timing and format of the War Memorial rededication.

c. Along with the Vice-Chairman, I attended the enrolment ceremony for the Newent Army Cadets on Thursday 3 April.

d. On Wednesday 16 April I attended a briefing meeting at the Woodlands Memorial, Earthcott Green and the Branch has been invited to attend the Memorial event on 11 June and to bring the

Branch Standard. The Parade Marshal volunteered to carry the standard at the event and asked permission to take the Standard out of the Area. **Decision: Approved and carried Unanimously.**

If any Members would like to attend this event, please let the Parade Marshal know by the next meeting.

6.0 Any Other Business

6.1. The Crown in Lea. TH mentioned that the Crown in Lea had undergone a refurbishment and has reopened, he also mentioned that the former Lea Branch of the RBL are trying to reform and would use the Crown as their meeting place.

6.2. Apologies. The Deputy Padre gave her apologies for the next meeting.

6.3. Poppy Appeal 'Trinkets'. The Chairman introduced the Members present to some small trinkets the local Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) had received from a local resident. These trinkets will be produced and sold to further boost the local Poppy Appeal total for this year. The PAO didn't have prices yet but would let us know as soon as he did. Also on sale were the newly received VE Day 80 Pin Badges. See Photos below.



7. Next Meeting date

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1950 hrs with the next meeting set for 22 May 2025, starting at 7pm in the Memorial Hall.

Meeting Agenda

Newent and District Branch The Royal British Legion

22 May 2025 in 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.