Minutes for the Annual General Meeting of

The Royal British Legion Newent & District Branch: Memorial Hall -

22 October 2026

Attendees	Post
Richard Balding	Chairman
Adrian Dover	Secretary
Rev Canon Simon Mason	Padre
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Rev Pat Phillips	Honorary Padre
David Pollock	Raffle Coordinator
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal, Standard Bearer
Terry Weaver	
Jim Gardiner	

Item	Action
1. Act of Remembrance. The Chairman opened the meeting at 1900 hours and asked that we spare a thought for those who could not be with us due to ill health. He then read the names in the memory of the fallen from the Parish of Newent during WWI & WWII for the month of November followed by the exhortation.	
2. Apologies for Absence. Apologies had been received from Keith Urch, Elaine Balding, Colin Britt, Jon Miles, Viv Miles, John Price, Pat Price, Tom Heseltine, Jan Sologub.	
3. Chairman's Opening Remarks. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed his thanks to those who turned out.	
4. Adoption of Minutes from the previous AGM. The Minutes from the AGM held on 25 October 2025 had been circulated to all Members before the meeting and were noted by all present. They were proposed as a true record of the meeting by Helen Axon and seconded by David Pollock. The motion was passed unanimously.	
5. Matters arising from previous minutes. There were no matters arising.	
6. Chairman's Report. The Chairman gave his report. See Annex A.	

7. Individual Officers Reports.

7.a. Vice Chairman/Branch Community Support/ Youth Liaison. The Vice Chairman gave his report. See Annex B.

7.b. Branch Padre Report. The Branch Padre gave his report. See Annex C

7.c. Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer Report. The Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer gave his report. See Annex D.

7.d. Treasurer's Report. The Treasurer gave her report. See Annex E.

7.e. Raffle Coordinator's Report. A total of 7 raffles were held from October 2025 through to September 2026. See Annex F.

There were no further reports.

8. Presentation and Adoption of Accounts.

8.a. Adoption of Accounts.

The Treasurer reminded everyone that the Accounts for the year ending 30 June 2026 had been presented at the Branch Meeting held on 23 July 2026. Simon Mason proposed and Jim Gardiner seconded that the accounts should be adopted - passed unanimously.

9. Election of Officers and Committee Members.

There was one new nomination for the Committee posts – Terry Weaver as Parade Marshal. Proposed by Graham Barton, seconded by Simon Mason. Therefore the Branch Committee for the next 12 months is as follows:

Position	Name
Chairman	Mr Richard Balding
Vice Chairman	Mr Keith Urch
Secretary	Mr Adrian Dover
Treasurer	Mrs Helen Axon
Branch Community Support	Mr Keith Urch
Parade Marshal	Mr Terry Weaver
Membership & Youth Liaison	Mr Keith Urch
Raffle Coordinator	Mr David Pollock
Padre	Rev Canon Simon Mason
Honorary Padre	Rev Pat Phillips
Standard Bearer	Mr Graham Barton

The Chairman thanked all the Committee Members for their continued support and looked forward to working with them over the coming year.

10. <u>Nominations to National Office.</u> There were no nominations to National Office.	
11. <u>Motions and Charter Motions for the Annual Meeting of the County Conference.</u> There were no Charter Motions.	
12. <u>Appointment of Delegates to the Annual Meeting of the County Conference and Annual Conference.</u> The Chairman reminded all Members that they could attend the Conferences remotely. If any Member wished to attend in person, part of the cost could be claimed back.	
<u>13. Branch Centenary, 18 February 2027.</u> The Chairman said that he has received the tickets for the Centenary Concert on 28 February 2027 and he would distribute these to the outlets and individuals who had agreed to sell them. The Padre said that at some point after Remembrance he would get a small group together to discuss the format for the Church service on 21 February 2027.	
<u>14. Any Other Business</u> 14.1 There has only been one nomination for the John Edward Whitehorn Trophy. The Padre agreed to talk to the Head of Newent Community School to see if there is anyone else who could be nominated. Members agreed to discuss this at the next monthly meeting. 14.2 Christmas Tree Festival. The Branch tree is to be decorated at 1800 on Wednesday 18 November and taken down at 1400 on Friday 4 December. 14.3 The Chairman and Standard Bearer have been invited to take the display stand and a poppy box and collection tin to the Highnam Friendship Café on Tuesday 3 November. 14.4 The Chairman asked Members to let him have menu choices for the Christmas Meal at the next monthly meeting.	All
<u>15. Date of next Meeting:</u> 1900, Thursday 26 November 2026 at the Memorial Hall. There being no further business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 2020.	

<u>Agenda for The Newent & District Branch Royal British Legion Meeting 26 November 2026 at the Memorial Hall</u>

1. Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Chairman's Opening Remarks.
4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes
5. Reports by Officers.
6. Branch Centenary, 18 February 2027.
7. Memorial Hall donation.
8. Any Other Business.
9. Date of Next Meeting.

Annex A

Newent and District Branch TRBL

Annual General Meeting in the Memorial Hall - 22 October 2026

Chairman's Report

Introduction

This year the Branch continues to engage and interact with the local community as well as the local youth uniformed services. I believe these are very positive notes to start a new year on, however, it hasn't been all plain sailing; the County has had a very bad year with the resignation of the whole committee so is now in administration for the 2nd time in the last 3 years. This upheaval hasn't been helped with a succession of Membership Engagement Officers making reporting ever more confusing.

Welfare

Welfare continues to be the bedrock of what the Newent & District Branch stands for. The Branch this year has supported and signposted several beneficiaries as well as supported several local residents with practical help and advice. Unfortunately, the RBL has changed its rules and as such it limits the Branch Community Supporters involvement, but rest assured they will continue to support those who need it on behalf of the Branch whether they are beneficiaries or not, so please keep passing on the details of anyone who might require support.

Membership

The membership continues to be a conundrum, and as such the Branch needs to recruit new Members into the fold. On the whole this year we have lost several Members and therefore the Branch does need to grow, otherwise we stand a chance of sinking too low to recover. So to the existing Members please let anyone who might listen know that we are always appreciative of new Members.

Affiliations

As mentioned in my introduction, the Branch continues to have excellent working relationships with Newent Town Council, the Air Cadets, Newent Community School and the local Girl Guiding movement as well as Cobblers Ale House who adopted the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal as their charity of choice in 2022 and have continued with its support. The Branch will strive to continue these working relationships and friendships and if possible grow them by adding further affiliations.

Finances

The Branch bank balance continues to remain healthy with very little movement throughout the year, although with our centenary swiftly approaching Helen will become busier with payments in and out of the account.

Poppy Appeal

The Poppy Appeal always gains support from the local community. This year we are lucky in that 3 dates were offered to the Poppy Appeal Organiser(PAO) and therefore the season has already started with an excellent first Saturday on the 17th October, we still have 2 more Saturday's (24th & 31st Oct) to keep the donations coming in.

Remembrance and activities

This year our Parade Marshal & Standard Bearer has been busy not only supporting Newent Remembrance events but honouring selfless sacrifices including the Imjin Memorial, Violette Szabo event, Armed Forces Week, 6th June Newent Celebrates event and several Veteran's funerals.

Other events the Branch has participated in included the NTC Civic Carol Service, the Veteran's Coffee Mornings, Newent Health & Wellbeing event and of course our annual Christmas Meal.

Thank You's

I'm going to start my thank you's by introducing both the Officers and Committee Member of the Branch: Deputy Chair plus his various other roles including BCS – Keith Urch; our dependable Parade Marshal and Standard Bearer – Graham Barton; the Branch Treasurer – Helen Axon, who continues to impress; the Branch Padre an ever present support – Reverend Cannon Simon Mason; the Raffle Coordinator – David Pollock who keeps things interesting and our named Secretary – Adrian Dover who ensured the Branch continued. Without the support of these willing volunteers the Newent Branch of the Royal British Legion would cease to exist and therefore earn my unreserved thanks.

As always thanks go to Newent Town Council as a whole, the Town Mayor and Armed Forces Representatives who give unflinching support to the Branch, and Cobblers Ale House for their continued support to both the Branch, the Poppy Appeal and Veterans Coffee Mornings; Newent Community School for helping to keep remembrance alive as part of the School ethos; Newent Memorial Hall for their continued support and to our local Poppy Appeal Organiser – Colin Thomson, who this year has been in much demand.

Last but not least to all our Members, whether they are able to make events and meetings or not, it is always lovely to see so many of you turn out, this is such valuable support mechanism for such a small Branch, so thank you all.

Richard Balding
Chairman
Newent & District Branch
The Royal British Legion

Annex B

Branch Community Support Annual Report for the Period 2025/2026

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

It is with pleasure that we present to you the BCS Annual Report for the period 2025/2026.

NATIONAL NEWS

Members will undoubtedly remember that National RBL had paused their Meet-ups and Roadshows last year and to date, this initiative remains unchanged.
We are minded that several changes have taken place at National, Regional and County level this year which will undoubtedly have a fundamental affect upon the operations of many branches.
Following continued feedback from many County Chairs about the importance of clear communication and effective engagement, TRBL have made changes - unfortunately some of which have directly impacted upon the wider membership both at County and Branch level.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY NEWS

Following past difficulties, being placed into administration and rising again, the County now find themselves in a difficult situation following the recent period of mass resignations from the Committee: The County are now under the direct control of HQ,TRBL. The Newent Branch extended its support to the County Executive but as yet, the future of the County's operational structure remains uncertain.

BRANCH NEWS

Overview
As your representative having the combined roles of Vice Chairman, Branch Community Support and Youth Liaison Officer, one wishes to express sincere thanks to Branch colleagues, those manning the Veteran's Gateway, various Newent community organisations, schools, and our Town, District and County Councils for their continued support of the Branch's many activities.
This past year has not been without its issues but with the significant support of Branch Members, we have again continued to meet the needs of Veterans and their families within our community.
Following the raising of awareness of Veterans' needs and The Covenant in particular, many more local Veterans have formally registered themselves with local Health Practices: we thank our Newent Practice for their continuing commitment.
Having welcomed new Members following the unfortunate closure of adjoining branches, we find that the increase in membership was unfortunately short-lived and we have experienced a reduction in our overall Branch Membership.

Members are reminded of the ongoing support available via the Branch, TRBL Helpline, via Forces Connect South West network and the reccently created FoDDC Armed Forces Network. Our Town and District Cllr Julia Gooch (Newent) continues to further the aims and objectives of the Branch and The Covenant within the District. The FoDDC's appointed Armed Forces Champion is Cllr Alan Preest, who represents both Gloucestershire County and Lydney.

As in previous years, this Annual Report covers the three main areas encompassed within the role of Branch Community Support and Welfare Officer.

BRANCH MEMBERSHIP

Members may recall that Branch Membership numbers have fluctuated significantly over past years but is now relatively stable from its yearly high of 52 Members to its current level of 41 Members.

The Branch is justifiably proud of its membership, the friendships forged, reinforcing its uniqueness and links within our local community.

BRANCH WELFARE

TRBL having developed further improvements to Branch processes and procedures for BCS training, your Chairman and BCS Representative continue to be registered to provide BCS support.
TRBL have recently announced a number of new changes to the BCS requesting that all supporters agree to, and sign, agreements. Such agreements will be equally applicable to all volunteering roles.

During the year 2025/2026, a total of 44 welfare visits were made to Members, their families, and locally based Veterans, with a corresponding number of contacts of support being made through the Telephone Buddy network. This represented a decrease from previous years, but still reflects the need to support our colleagues and their families, primarily focused around aspects of health and mobility.

Notwithstanding the proposed changes, it is considered beneficial that we measure this years summary data against that of previous periods included (in brackets), and as such, the Branch data for this period in accordance with the RBL National Reporting System is as follows:

The 2025/2026 Reporting Period

The current reporting period presents yet another changing picture of the Branch, a summary of which follows:

Total Number of Welfare Visits	**44**	(55)
Beneficiary visits:	**44**	(31)
Branch Community Supporters:	**24**	(36)
(Note that this represents an average of 2 BCS per month)		
Total Welfare Expenditure was:	**NIL**	(NIL)
Total Telephone Buddy calls made:	**100**	(131)
Beneficiaries called:	**20**	(38)

(Note that monthly numbers have varied from a maximum of 6 to a lower number of 2 beneficiaries)

YOUTH LIAISON, BRANCH AFFILIATIONS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Regular communications have continued to be maintained with local youth organisations, schools and community organisations throughout this reporting period.
Please note that this year's Commemorative Service at Newent Community School by kind permission of the School's Head, is anticipated to occur on Friday, 6th November: all Members are welcome.

In addition to the above, the Annual Service of Remembrance is taking place on Sunday, 8th November at St Mary's Church and supplemented by a short service being held at Newent's War Memorial on Wednesday, 11th November.

The Branch continues to support the family wishes of the late John Edward Whitehorn having established a youth award in his honour: we currently await the outcome of a call for nominees.

Interest in Branch Affiliation continues with affliation to both local Cadet Forces.

Sales of the Newent Local History Society's book highlighting the great loss that Newent and District families had suffered in both World Wars, "We Will Remember Them", have continued during this reporting period. With the completion of the refurbishment, addition of missing names and rededication of Newent's War Memorial, a time capsule was installed.

The Branch also looks forward to celebrating its Centenary in February 2027, plans for which are well advanced and shortly to be published.

RECOGNITION

Special thanks 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 both the Branch, and The Poppy Appeal. 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.

Report Prepared By:
Keith C Urch
BCS representative
Newent & District Branch (BR3063)

Annex C

Padre's report

It has been an honour to be part of various events as well as working with others across our community. It is at times like these that we recognise how much the work of RBL is appreciated and valued.

My thanks to all Officers of our Branch who not only lead us with inspiration but are tireless in making sure individuals are cared for.

As I express my thanks for all that is done for us by Branch Committee, I would also like to express a concern over the increasing load that is carried by them as governance and processes develop and grow.

Plans for our Remembrance Sunday service are now in place as we look forward to remembering with thanksgiving and taking the opportunity to remind the wider community of all that RBL does. Over 1,400 signed poppies are being produced by Newent Community School and 6th Form Centre, together with 304 poppies on a bunting made by Glebe Infants and Picklenash Junior Schools to be used in our Remembrance Sunday service.

I look forward to another good year and the preparations for celebrating our centenary in 2027.

Rev. Canon Simon Mason,
Branch Padre.

Annex D

Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer Report for year 2025/2026

Since the AGM in October 2025 the Branch has been involved in several events:

- Remembrance Service at Newent Community School on Friday 7 November where the Branch Standard was paraded.
- Remembrance Parade and Service on Sunday 10 November. This was very well supported by uniformed groups, civilian organisations and the public. After parading through the Town, the Standard Bearers formed a Guard of Honour by the Church porch before joining the rest of the congregation inside. After the service everyone moved outside to the War Memorial for the Act of Remembrance.
- Remembrance commemoration by the War Memorial on Monday 11 November where the Branch Standard was paraded, followed by a visit to Ross Willis Court.
- Unfortunately, the Service to dedicate the Army Cadets new Standard on Thursday 19 March had to be postponed at short notice. As yet an alternative date has not been arranged. Branch Members will be notified as soon as a date is agreed.
- On Thursday 19 March the Branch Standard was on display at the Health and Wellbeing event held at the Memorial Hall.
- On Sunday 22 March the Standard Bearer attended the training day for Standard Bearers held at Tuffley Community Centre.
- On Friday 24 April the Branch Standard was paraded at the dedication of the Imjin Memorial at the Forest Arboretum.
- 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 Thursday 9 July I attended the Remembrance Day planning meeting at Newent Town Council's offices.
- On Sunday 12 July the Branch Standard was paraded at the Violet Szabo Remembrance event at Wormelow, Herefordshire.
- On Wednesday 22 July the Branch Standard was present for the burial of Elizabeth Powell's ashes in Newent Cemetery.
- On Thursday 15 October I attended the Army Cadets meeting to help assemble their new Standard and to brief their designated Standard Bearer on the format of the Remembrance Parade.

Plans for marking Remembrance this November are at an advanced stage. My thanks go to the Chairman, Committee Members and Branch Members for their support throughout the last year.

Graham Barton,

Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer.

Annex E

Summary of Branch accounts 2025/2026

The financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June each year. Our returns were sent through to the MEO at that time.
In summary:

It has been a quiet year financially.

Opening Balance: £1,077.36

Income:

Membership Fees:	£86
Donations:	£500
Centenary Contribution:	£370
H.M.Courts:	£ 4.05

Expenditure:

Badge bar engraving:	£ 7.50
McC13:	£ 27.50 (wreath)
RBL shop - Parade Marshall gloves etc.:	£ 49.50
Carrycase:	£ 12.99
Memorial Hall:	£100
Concert Deposit:	£50

Balance 30th June 2026: £1,789.92

Annex F

Raffle Coordinator's Annual Report 21 October 2026

A total of 7 raffles were held from October 2025 through to September 2026.

Total net profit from seven raffles: £54.80

2025 - 2026 Newent Branch RBL Raffle Report

Raffle Date	Cost of Prizes	Tickets Sold	Net Profit
23 October 2025	6.64	14	7.36
18 December 2025	13.28	30	16.72
22 January 2026	7.59	8	0.41
26 March 2026	5.79	10	4.21
25 June 2026	1.85	8	6.15
27 August 2026	6.05	14	7.95
24 September 2026	0.00	12	12.00
Total Cost of Prizes	**£41.20**		
	Total Tickets Sold	**96**	
		Total Net Profit	**£54.80**