

**Royal British Legion
Basingstoke, Overton & District Branch
Branch Meeting**

Tuesday 26th November 2024, 19.30 pm, Basingstoke Labour Club

MINUTES

Committee Present		Members & Guests Present
Dudley Wall (DW)	President	Tom Wall (TW) Robert Soutter (RS) Chris Parsons (CP) Cath Parsons – Guest Lindsey Collins- Guest
John Davies (JD)	Chairman	
Chris Davies (CD)	Secretary	
Malcolm Blunsdon (MB)	Treasurer	
David Barton (DB)	Standard Bearer	
Steve Day (SD)	Events	
	Committee	
Rosena Hillier (RH)	Committee	

AGENDA

- Item 1. Exhortation**
- Item 2 Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**
- Item 3 Previous minutes**
- Item 4 Matters Arising (not on the Agenda)**
- Item 5 Branch Reports**
 - **Chairman**
 - **Treasurer**
 - **Membership**
 - **Standard Bearer**
 - **Events**
 - **Youth**
- Item 6 AOB**
- Item 7 Date of next Meeting**
- Item 8 Closure & Kohima**

Branch Social Activity

1 Exhortation

The President (DW) opened the meeting with the exhortation.

2 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

JD welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular our newest members, Rob Soutter and Chris Parsons and, also two guests; Cath Parsons and Lindsay Collins

No apologies were recorded

3 Adoption of Previous Minutes

The draft minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated to all attendees. No comments / amendments had been received. Proposed SD, seconded DB that they be entered as a true record. Carried

4 Matters Arising (not on the agenda)

There were no matters arising

5 Branch Reports

The following Branch reports were provided:

5.1 Chairman

Chairman's report is attached at Annex A. Key points

5.1.1 Remembrancetide.

- It appears to have been an excellent Poppy Appeal. Congratulations and thanks to Wayne Stent and the many helpers who worked so hard. The event was started with a parade and lunch at the Gabardine Bar. Food was provided by the Bar and by the Nepalese community.
- JD provided a learning session to the Air Cadets based on the meaning of remembrance
- Remembrance Sunday and Armistice went well. Some significant changes were the inclusion of a cadet for the exhortation and a Gurkha for the Kohima.
Note. Comment received that the silence had not been respected by a small group on the Sunday.

Action. JD to raise in event wash up with relevant parties

5.1.2 Affiliation with Cadets

Affiliation with Basingstoke Sea Cadets finalised. Ceremony on 8th Nov attended by JD and MB.

Next stage is to affiliate with Army, CCF and RAF cadets too.

5.1.3 Welfare / Wellbeing

Branch is working closely with Hampshire Hospitals Foundation Trust, GP practices and other agencies for the benefit of potential beneficiaries



In response to question from RS, JD confirmed that the committee was now properly constituted and compliant but there are vacancies if anyone wished to volunteer their services.

5.2 Secretary

NSTR

5.3 Treasurer

Treasurer confirmed that accounts remain healthy. Balances are:

- General Account (charitable monies) £2680.12
- Social account £541.28

5.4 Membership Secretary

Membership has increased and now stands at 101. There have been no leavers.

5.5 Standard Bearer

DB paraded the Standard at the Poppy Appeal opening event, Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day. He will be one of 3 Standard Bearers present at a veteran's funeral in Wickam.

5.6 Event Coordinator

SD confirmed that the Poppy Appeal launch raised @£300 profit which was slightly less than expected due to some unforeseen expenses. He is starting to work on events for next year.

5.7 Youth Officer

The Youth Officer was not available. Update included in Chairman's report.

6 Any Other Business

6.1 Future Branch Meeting

JD expressed view that current format of meetings was not engaging and does little to encourage people to turn out on any night, much less the cold, dark nights of winter. He invited open discussion on way forward. Points raised:

- People want to have fun, which takes different forms; quiz night, games etc
- Meetings need to be welcoming and inclusive. Allowing members partners and/or guests (as we had done this evening) may encourage others to come too and, may improve both recruitment and retention.
- Guest speakers can be engaging. They don't always have to be military but, they don't have to be costly either. Healthy mix of Military / non-military preferable. Can also use members to express own experiences.
 - JD confirmed that we could not use Branch charitable monies for speakers unless we could demonstrate it provided a wellbeing aspect. Such events had to be self-funded.
 - Speakers need to be planned and coordinated, especially if expecting members to be providers.
- Other events such as breakfast meets or evening meals or visits would help develop that sense of belonging.



- Communication is key to making people aware but it can also be used to elicit or canvas for other members views eg the sway.
- Look at how we reach people who cannot attend by either live streaming or videoing meetings.
- Invite other similar organisations to joint meetings/events where there is a common shared interest. This does already happen at RAFA who have previously invited RBL, unaffiliated veterans and civilian emergency workers to their meetings, the next such occasion being at 19.30 pm on 2nd Dec at the Labour Club where the guest speaker is talking about the charity 'Hounds for Heroes'.

There was unanimous agreement that the current method of delivering meetings was not going to bring people in!

6.2 Welfare / Wellbeing

JD expressed view that we should not be seen as a social club and that the welfare or wellbeing of beneficiaries should be at the heart of everything we do. It is disappointing that, to date, we have not really addressed welfare as a Branch. We should start this Christmas with an outreach campaign, targeting our elderly members and anyone who is a potential beneficiary whom we know may be vulnerable. Proposed JD, seconded TW that we:

- Visit all members over the age of 85 and provide those that are beneficiaries with a small gift from the Branch
- Telephone all members aged 75 – 84 to ensure that they are well, cared for and have support in place from family, friends or other organisation.
- Claim mileage for delivering gifts. Whilst this was anathema to all, JD explained that we needed to determine the proper running costs for the Branch so claims must be made. If members wished to donate those monies back, that was a personal decision

RH suggested that the telephone calls should be a regular feature; not just for Christmas. Whilst there was full agreement, we have to be cognizant of our own capacity to deliver. SD suggested that we would be able to better gauge the requirement after this first foray into member wellbeing. The proposal was carried.

Actions:

- 1. JD to confirm members are beneficiaries, purchase gifts and produce a rota.**
- 2. All members delivering gifts to claim mileage expenses**

6.3 Gift available for a veteran

CP and Cath advised that they were currently clearing a parent's property and that they had an electric elevating chair and a left hand Handy care Stair Lift that they would be willing to donate to a veteran in need.

Action: JD / DB to inform Basingstoke Veteran's Hub about availability. Pass CP details to Hub.



7 Next Meeting

The next meeting, on Tuesday 17th December will be in a new format and will include a Christmas quiz. Mince pies and mulled wine will be available.

8 Closure

Business being concluded, the President closed the meeting with the Kohima Epitaph.

Majority of members remained for social meeting

Annex:

A. Chairman's Report

Signed by:



Chair

Name: John Davies

Dated: 18 January 2025



**ANNEX A TO
BRANCH MINUTES
DATED 26 NOV 24**

**Royal British Legion Basingstoke, Overton & District Branch
Branch Meeting – Chairmans Report – 26 November 2024**

First can I welcome our new Branch members here tonight.

Secondly, I am pleased to welcome Chris as secretary. Now that appointment has been made, we can actually concentrate on running the Branch rather than anguishing over it's future.

Our last Branch meeting was on 17th September, followed by our AGM in October. In that time, your Branch has been busy on a number of different fronts.

Remembrancetide.

We kicked off this year's poppy appeal with a parade and veteran's lunch, again hosted by the Gabardine Bar. They, along with our Nepalese community provided the lunch. As some of you may know, the poppy appeal is not coordinated by the Branch. Nevertheless, Wayne Stent and his army of helpers are to be congratulated for all of their hard work around the Borough. We will, in the fullness of time find out how much they raised this year.

At the request of OC 443 (Basingstoke) Air Cadets Sqn, I attended one of their meetings and gave a talk of 'Remembrance' what it means and why it is important. The cadets made a Sqn wall of remembrance on which they placed the names of those dear to them.

In the run-up to Remembrance and Armistice Day, we had been heavily involved in the planning of the event with Basingstoke and Deane Council. It is fair to say that this year's event was better than the previous year in that many of the lessons learnt had been addressed. Was it perfect? – No, but we will no doubt teak it a little more next year. For me, the highlight was the show of support that the public gave as the veterans marched past. Malcolm Brunsdon lay the wreaths on both days, a departure from what is often the norm of the Branch President or Chairman laying the wreath. It is intended that we will continue to ask a veteran to represent the Branch going forward. The other departure from the old way was to have a member of our Gurkha community deliver the Kohima Epitaph which was done by Catain (Retd) Rai on both days.

Affiliation with Cadets

On the 8th November, Malcolm and I had the privilege of completing the Affiliation process with Basingstoke Sea Cadets. We presented their Commanding Officer CPO Liz Mitchell with a certificate to mark our affiliation and look forward to working with them in the future.

Next steps are to do likewise with Army and RAF Cadets.



Welfare / Healthcare

We have been working with healthcare providers for some time.

Working with the Hampshire Hospitals Foundation Trust, we have been part of a working group for some time to identify how we improved the hospital patient offer for veterans and to ensure that the Armed Forces Covenant is understood by both providers and patients. We are now part of the smaller Steering Group working with the Trust's Chief Operating Officer.

Patients of the Camrose, Gillies and Hackwood GP practice were recently invited to a veteran aware day. As a registered Veteran Friendly Practice, they wanted to ensure that their patients fully understood what primary care provides for them. Both Malcolm and I attended so that we could talk to veterans and signpost the different options open to them

Working in collaboration with other agencies, we have been able to provide direct support to veterans in need. This is what we really exist for but I will let Malcolm cover the detail in his treasurer's report. One of the things that I would like to explore is whether we as a Branch can become active, providing outreach and support for our elder members.

Happy to take questions

