



Central News – September 2024

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Important dates	
13 – 14 September 2024	Autumn County Chairs' Seminar
30 September 2024	Deadline to submit Branch Accounts
1 October 2024	2024/25 election nomination cycle opens
9 November 2024	Festival of Remembrance
10 November 2024	Remembrance Sunday
11 November 2024	Armistice Day

National and Membership Council Elections 2024-5

Are you interested in working with RBL's leadership teams? The 2024-25 election cycle will begin on 1st October 2024 when the nomination window opens. Roles included in this process are the National Chair, National Vice Chair, three Elected Trustees and 12 Membership Council Representatives for the following areas:

- Cornwall and Devon
- Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight
- East Anglia and Essex
- South-East Midlands
- Greater London
- National Branches
- Northern
- South-East
- Overseas
- Yorkshire
- Wiltshire and Somerset
- Wales

These roles are vital in helping to shape the leadership of the Royal British Legion. The election window is open from 1st October 2024 - 17th January 2025, with the successful candidates taking up their positions in May 2025. Election packs will be emailed to election points of contact as well as posted to those branches without an election point of contact email address, ready for the first week of October. The pack will also be available on MAP.

To encourage as many nominations as possible, there will be three briefing days which will provide any interested party with the opportunity to find out more information and ask questions regarding the process and the roles up for election. More information about these dates will be available on the elections webpage which will go live shortly before 1st October 2024, more details will be available shortly in dedicated elections communications.

To find out more about the elections, please contact elections@britishlegion.org.uk.

Membership Update

2024/25 membership application form

Thank you to everyone who has helped ensure the membership fee increase is communicated as widely as possible. Further to last months' notice about the 2024/25 Application Form, which is available to download or order now, we'd like to kindly remind Branches that we will no longer be able to accept any old application forms from Wednesday 4th September due to the way that forms are scanned into Novacroft's systems.

Please ensure that the new application form is used to avoid any delay in processing. The application form will be valid until the end of 2025, and we will review better approaches to manage version control in the future.

Membership fee increase

As the fee increase comes into effect on the same date (Wednesday 4th September), new members and those renewing will pay £20. The change will take place automatically at renewal. Those renewing from 4th September onwards (including bulk members due to renew on 1st October) will receive renewal reminders with the new membership fee amount of £20.

For any Branch that collect fees on behalf of their members (known as consolidated payments), please ensure you prepare to collect the correct new membership fee amount from Wednesday 4th September. To enable us to provide the best possible service and make best use of your membership fee, wherever possible please do encourage/help members to renew using the [online portal](#) or phone, as consolidated payments take much longer and are more expensive to process.

If you or local members would like to know more about these changes, please visit rbl.org.uk/membershipfees. If you have any questions or concerns about the fee increase, please reach out to us at membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk or call us on: UK: 0800 307 7773 (free); Republic of Ireland: 1800 911 936 (free); Overseas: +44 (0)207 191 1091 (full rate).

Branch Annual Returns

Thank you to everyone who has worked hard on submitting their branch accounts so far and those who are in the process of finalising them. As a reminder, the deadline to submit branch accounts is 30th September 2024.

If you have not yet received the Branch Accounts Pack, it is [available on MAP](#) or from your Membership Engagement Officer (MEO). If you need any help with the process or have questions,

please contact your MEO.

September 2024 Membership Handbook

The revised Membership Handbook will be made available week commencing Monday 26th September 2024. Further to some queries we've received, we would like to take this opportunity to clarify why the Membership Handbook is to be reviewed every six months.

The Membership Handbook contains a large amount of information on both policy and process. Although in most cases policies do not change quickly, we are continuously making efforts to improve the clarity around processes to make them as easy as possible to follow. We take on board feedback from branch and county officers and staff, which is incorporated into the updates every six months.

This process is being reviewed by the Membership Finance and Compliance Working Group in consultation with members and staff teams. If you have any suggestions as to how to improve the Membership Handbook, please email membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk titling your email "Membership Handbook Suggestion".

Portrait of HM The King

Thank you to everyone who has contacted us regarding an update on HM King Charles' portrait. As a charity with royal patronage, we are waiting to be provided with an approved image of the Monarch. We will provide an update on this once we hear from the palace.

In the meantime, whilst we have not been given an official image to use by the palace, we are looking to source one ourselves and are trying to do so in the most cost-effective way, with a large variety of different image rights that we would have to purchase. More information will be provided to you as the sourcing progresses.

Branch and County email accounts update

Over the last few months the Information Management and Technology (IM&T) team have been preparing for the rollout of rbl.community accounts to approved county and branch roles conducting business on behalf of RBL. The provision of these accounts supports RBL to better manage the handling of sensitive member data and follow a recommendation from the Information Commissioners Office on good practice. For more information, please see the [RBL Privacy Policy](#).

We know that many of you are already using these accounts, and having an rbl.community account has many benefits including being able to access the Membership Administration Portal. Towards the end of September, we will be sending further communications to let you know plans for rollout and what additional support is available. In the meantime, should you require an

account, you should continue to request them in the normal way.

London Poppy Day 2024

Taking place on Thursday, October 31st, London Poppy Day is the flagship fundraising event for RBL's annual Poppy Appeal. This one-day street collection from 7am - 7pm mobilises more than 1,000 uniformed personnel from the Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force, plus 1,000 veterans, volunteers, and supporters - many of whom are dedicated RBL members.

This is an exciting and unique opportunity to be part of one of the largest fundraising collections of its kind, as well as for communities to engage with uniformed personnel. The presence and efforts of these volunteers are crucial in ensuring the success of the event, allowing for significant fundraising that directly benefits those who have served, and their loved ones.

To get involved, please register at rbl.org.uk/londonpoppyday2024.

Volunteers will be provided with a food voucher if volunteering for the day as well as travel passes for the day before, the day of and the day after London Poppy Day across the National Rail network, and on the day across the TfL network.

Upcoming Gifts in Wills webinars

The RBL Gift in Wills team is pleased to announce the return of a series of webinars, with dates available for North West England and Northern Ireland. The webinars are a continuation of a pilot scheme launched last year and will provide essential information on how members can confidently promote Gift in Wills in branches and clubs.

In 2023, volunteers and members in North West England and Northern Ireland generated £380k in pipeline income, which will go a long way to supporting RBL's welfare work. This year, we hope to raise more money during the Poppy Appeal, so if you're in North West England or Northern Ireland please come along. In 2025, the Gifts in Wills team hopes to build on this pilot and the webinars out nationwide, with more information to be shared next year.

Webinar dates are below, and you can sign-up using the links:

- [Sunday 8th September – 10am](#)
- [Monday 9th September – 2pm](#)
- [Wednesday 11th September – 10am](#)
- [Sunday 15th September – 10am](#)
- [Tuesday 17th September – 4pm](#)

- [Saturday 21st September – 10am](#)
- [Thursday 10th October – 6pm](#)

As a pilot scheme, these webinars are only for staff, volunteers and members in North West England and Northern Ireland. In 2025 the team aim to roll this out nationwide.

To show our appreciation for your time and dedication to understanding this important way of giving to RBL, each volunteer from North-West England and North Ireland who registers and attends will receive a £10 Poppy Shop voucher, which will be sent by email. Max one voucher per person.

For more information on Gifts in Wills please contact Supporter Care at supportercare@britishlegion.org.uk or 0345 845 1945.

Gifts in Wills resources

We are pleased to announce that our Gift in Wills resources will soon be available for order. Branches will be able to access these resources through their MEO. Additionally, Gifts in Wills packs will soon be available to order on the Poppy Appeal Portal via your Poppy Appeal Relationship Manager.

For more information on Gifts in Wills please contact Supporter Care at supportercare@britishlegion.org.uk or 0345 845 1945.

Getting in touch with us

As you may recall, we recently simplified our enquiry process to make it clearer and easier to get in touch and to receive an answer to questions or enquiries. We thank everyone who has embraced this change and made it a success.

Please do ensure all general membership questions, enquiries and submissions are sent to membershipservices@britishlegion.org.uk. Your Membership Engagement Officer can still be contacted as usual for enquiries around branch and county management, local membership matters and compliance queries.

[Our online FAQs](#) are designed to answer some of the most common questions about membership, and we recommend checking them before following up via email if an answer isn't available. Please be assured that we continually review and update these [FAQs](#) to ensure they are as useful as possible.

Will you help us to continue influencing the Government's agenda?

Last month we asked for your help with spreading the word about our latest campaign. And **thanks to your support, we have been able to reach more than 300 MPs!** But there is still more to do and we are calling on all MPs to commit to [Supporting those who Serve Us](#) so that our Armed Forces community receive the support they so deserve for their sacrifice and Service.

We still need your help to reach as many MPs as possible and ensure that our Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged because of their Service. Contacting your MP helps us to continue influencing the Government's agenda.

Will you support our campaign further by asking your members to write to their MP using [this link](#)? By sharing this message with your members, you're helping us create the change we want to see for our Armed Forces community.

If your members receive any responses from their MP, please ask them to forward them to campaigns@britishlegion.org.uk. Thank you!

Do you serve in local government or know somebody that does?

Following a campaign led by RBL, the Armed Forces Covenant - outlining the nation's obligation to look after those who have served and their families - was enshrined into legislation in 2011 and has been signed by every local authority in Great Britain.

Alongside working with national and devolved government, the RBL Campaigns, Policy and Research team engages with local government to advocate for our Armed Forces community.

The team invite all members who are *also* representatives of local government in England and Wales - from Town, Community and Parish Councils to directly-elected Mayors – to join [our Councillor Network](#). Members of the Network will receive regular communication about how local government can support our Armed Forces community, and about the wider work of RBL.

If you do not serve in local government but would like to support our work, please join our [Campaigner Community](#).

If you serve in local government in Scotland or Northern Ireland and would like to support our work, please email: publicaffairs@britishlegion.org.uk.

Rheindahlen Branch members support Invictus Germany 2024

This year, volunteers from Rheindahlen RBL Branch, Germany, were selected from thousands of applicants to help out at the first ever Invictus Games Germany Sports Festival.



Pictured Left to Right: Gaby Green, David Althans, Steve Slater

Branch members, Steve and Anna Slater and David Althans, and Gaby Green, the wife of Branch member John Green, got to help out at this fantastic event, which was the first of its kind, having been announced at the close of the 2023 Invictus Games in Düsseldorf.

Participants from eight nations attended, including from Germany and the UK. At the end of the event, the UK and Ukrainian teams were presented with [RBL Rheindahlen](#) pennants on behalf of [RBL Germany District](#) as a mark of respect and solidarity. These pennants were gratefully received by both team captains: Lt Cdr James Rogers RN (Team UK) and Taras Kovalyk, Head of Veterans Affairs Division, Come Back Alive Foundation, Kyiv (Team Ukraine).

The founding of Invictus Germany, a continuation of Invictus Games 2023 legacy, aims to increase the appreciation of service in the armed forces and blue-light organisations in politics and civil society and promote discourse with servicemen and women.

Steve Slater, Rheindahlen Branch Treasurer, said they would all volunteer again: “In fact, we have all put our names down for the Invictus Games 2027 in Birmingham, for which we hope we will be selected. As we say, ‘Service not Self’.”

He added: “What came across right from the start from all the teams was their enthusiasm and excitement at being on the event. You could see and feel their determination with the whole team behind them giving them moral and verbal support. Demonstrating just what the meaning of ‘Invictus’ means to us all.”



UK and Ukrainian teams are presented with RBL Rheindahlen pennants on behalf of RBL Germany District

Thank you for reading! The October edition of Central News is due to be published Tuesday 1st October.