

Old Basing and District Royal British Legion (BR1890)

Charity number 219279

Minutes of the Branch Meeting 7th March 2024 at 8pm

Present: Tim Russell, Avril Mitchell, Julie Yeates, Joe Karmazyn, Sue Chewter, Mark Taylor and 10 members. In the absence of our Chairman and Vice-Chairman Tim Russell led the meeting.

Apologies: George Mars, Ian Greenway, Ian Preston, Tracey Merritt, Don Walker.

The Act of Remembrance was carried out by Tim Russell who asked us to remember Edna Hughes, recently passed away. Edna was the widow of Lawrie Hughes and had been a Branch and Women's Section member for more than fifty years. She had been an active Poppy Appeal collector as well. Her last few years of ill-health had been a very sad time for her son and daughters. The funeral is at the crematorium on 20th March at 2.45pm.

The minutes of the previous meeting:

Circulated and adopted as a true copy. Proposed: Avril Mitchell, Seconded: Andy Dawes

Matters Arising from the minutes:

1. David Godfrey stated his daughter-in-law will be unable to perform on 8th June as her pregnancy will be more advanced than she thought, her due date has been amended. She has put out feelers for a replacement performer for us and we are advised the cost would be in the region of £250.
2. Brian Dawes corrected the name of Simon Brown to Stuart Brown.
3. Tim apologised for not sending the wreath invoices to Julie yet.
4. Tim has been signposted to speak to Cllr Onollee Cubit should we wish to pursue using the common land for parking on 8th June for our D-Day80 event.
5. Tim will email Kyle Grimsey to ask whether the Cadets wish to be involved on 8th June as we have no update from Ian on this.

Treasurer's Report:

Opening Balance 1/2/24	£2747.44 credit
Receipts	£ 200.00 from Roundwood for the unused Secretary's Laptop
Payments	£ 545.25 Poppy Appeal
	£ 53.25 Tracey Merritt
Closing balance 7/3/24	£2348.94 credit

Commitments: £200 final payment for DJ for BT dinner 26th Oct 24.

Proposed Julie Yeates, Seconded Rick Bourne. Agreed by all present.

Poppy Appeal Report:

Not much to report this month as no fundraising has taken place. Awaiting a cheque from 'We buy Books' for the last batch sent to them.

Tim has an invitation to attend the Hook show 7th July and will ask the Lions about our Band.

Please keep bringing any unwanted clothes, books, cd's / dvd's or coins as they do add up. The total for 23-24 Poppy Appeal is £32,739.07

Old Basing £12945.46 + £8068.50 contactless / Hook £6638.11 + £5037.00 contactless

Membership Report:

Avril gave the report as Tracey was not present.

We currently have 436 members with 24 unpaid and a further 10 due by the end of March.

Ricke Bourne ask Mark to ask Tracey what I the current paid Club membership and how is she managing the renewals if they do not use the club. Mark believes it to be around 150. Tim suggested a mailer to Branch Non-Club members outlining the benefits of the club would be a good idea.

Club Report:

There will be maintenance carried out over the Easter weekend consisting of repairs to the potholes, furniture repairs and raising the flagpole.

The club have started planning for the D-Day weekend and the ideas include a Gin bar, an afternoon BBQ, newsreels shown on the big screens in the hall. Possibly a colouring competition for children, hoping to get the schools involved. There are discussions about a football match. The hall will be decorated with period decorations and 1940's music to be played.

Notwithstanding that the Branch have booked the hall for the day, we will look at how we work together on planned activities since the branch event seems to have stalled. The suggested events sub-committee has not been formed, we need to arrange this.

Band Report:

Diane Matthews introduced Garry Griffiths, Band Director of Music and Alex Dawes, Social Secretary. Garry told us a little of his route into being with our Band.

Diane let us know this is her last report and band secretary after 10 years in the role. With the band having more members it is time to let someone else take on the job and for Diane to have more time to enjoy being a performer.

The Band spent January rehearsing their Drummers Knock for the retirement event of a Lt Col who Garry works with. This was very well received, with a vote of thanks given and the presentation of an RMP Golden Cap Badge to Garry.

The Band are in the process of updating their Constitution as there are a few out of date items there in need of resolving, such as band members should retire at 65. There are some members in their 80's.

The AGM is 7th April and they will decide and vote on their future name as well as voting in their constitution and new committee. There will be a new treasurer – Steve Court since Jim Holley is retiring after 30 years.

Band person of the year is on March 23rd, all welcome to attend. This will be a 'red carpet' event.

Tim offered a vote of thanks to Diane for her 10 years as Band Secretary, we have enjoyed hearing her enthusiastic reports, it shows how proud she is of what they do.

County Chairman Update:

There has been a great deal of communication between County Chairmen and Haig House regarding the recent changes within the Executive Board. The County Chairman's Seminar provided a platform for robust discussions regarding John Boisson. It is widely believed that his removal as Chair of the MC was not as straightforward as we have been told.

Twenty-seven County Chairmen wrote a rebuttal letter to Jason Coward seeking answers to questions posed to him that have yet to be answered. No satisfactory response to this has been forthcoming although Lynda Atkins was moved to write an email entitled Rumour Control addressing putative claims of HO monitoring County Chairmen's opinions on recent events, and stating no such directive exists.

Tim did challenge this as Lynda was sitting in on his focus group at the seminar and was not writing down what was being said, therefore it is believed she may not report accurately what was said.

There is a motion of confidence against Jason Coward and another to censure the B.o.T. being presented to Annual Conference in May.

Tim met the new DG, Mark Atkinson and feels he may do a better job than his predecessor.

There is a motion going forward to increase the membership fee by £2 annually, aiming for a proposed possible figure of £28. This because membership income is £4.6million at a cost of £8million. The perceived value of membership is alleged at £38-40 by HO.

Correspondence:

- The March Link magazine
- The March Membership E-News
- An advertisement from Henley Choral Society, who will perform in The Great Hall, University of Reading on 6th April with a collection for the RBL (Berkshire)
- An email from HO, there is a Branch Management Course available on Map and all committee would be advised to sign up for the online training module. An RBL email address is not required to register for a training account.
- A notice of Group Meetings to be held in Old Basing 23rd March and Fawley RBL 6th April.
- An invitation to attend Lymington Branch 100th Anniversary celebration 24th March.

Events and fund raising:

- Our D-Day event planning is no further forward, we do not have any updates as to what will take place on the day for the Branch.
- Joe contacted Dave Barton this evening to ask whether they have any updates for us as we have had no known contact from their events coordinator.
- Tim stated that since we have the venue, we should put on an event and if Basingstoke want to support it or bring a stall of their own, we can welcome that.
- Tim will speak to Cap Roberts at Odiham base to ask for props and will also check with Ian G what he has arranged for the day.
- We need to advertise our event. Avril will make posters etc but needs to know what to promote.

A.O.B:

1. Andy Dawes asked us to let him know if the Branch Standard is requested for Edna Hughes.
2. Brian Dawes asked what, if anything has been done to help Stuart Brown after his attendance at the meeting last month. Stuart complained that the branch have done nothing for him.

The RBL cannot impose help, a direct request has to come from an individual through the Veteran's Gateway. We can sit with him and help him make contact if he wishes.

We know that he is in need of help, but he does need to follow up on the information he was given by both Tim and Ian G regarding the Veteran's Gateway, this is the best way to get assistance from whichever specialised agency will be best placed to help him.

Brian asked why we didn't we do more to help him, this is because we do not have the specialist training required, nor the resources. We know that Ian G and Joe talked to Stuart in the bar after our meeting last month.

Brian stated that Stuart has gone to Aldershot and they are helping him. Tim stated that we should check that he is getting some help and making progress and if he is not we need to encourage him to contact the VG.

3. Rick Bourne mentioned Trusteeship of the Ban. Dave Godfrey believed the Branch were trustees of the Band but the documentation has been lost. Rick asked whether the Branch are prepared to carry on the role. We agreed that potentially we would. There is no financial risk to the Branch.
4. Alex Dawes asked for confirmation of the RBL Charity number as Garry stated they believe that their status is as an Associated RBL Band (under the RBL terms). As previously referred to, the Band are currently updating their documents and regulations.
5. Andy Dawes asked for clarification regarding the compliance audit, did this relate to the band? It was confirmed, no it did not.
6. John Davy asked whether anybody has some time to volunteer on the OBLV Carnival Committee either marshalling or helping on the day.

7. Joe asked whether the Band are able to perform at our Poppy Launch dinner, they will let us know.
8. Andy Dawes asked if there is a reason that branch members do not attend Band events. This is not something we had really noted as happening and we are not aware of deliberate reasons not to, it is down to the individual to have free time to attend.
9. Tim had information on the ASDIC Basingstoke register. We are not listed as a partner. They have two regular meeting venues which are within our 5 miles radius for BPT expenditure, one at The Golden Lion Basingstoke and the other at Hook. Further to this we also have the contact details for the Juniper Ward at Parklands which houses the six Veterans beds. The Veterans' Garden was opened in 2020 but we may be able to offer upkeep or enquire what else may be needed for veterans there.
10. Garry asked whether we are able to attend the Band Person of the year event on 23rd March. Tim and Avril will attend.
11. Tim had a pricelist for a branded gazebo, would the Branch like to order one? Cost is approx. £1200 but could possibly be funded from our BFI.

The next meeting will be on 4th April at 8pm.

The meeting closed at 9.48pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Ian Greenway, Chairman