

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

24 July 2025 – Memorial Hall

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richard Balding	Chair
Keith Urch	Deputy Chair, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal
Rick Axon	Bar, Entertainment Member
Dave Pollock	Raffle Coordinator
Simon Mason	Padre
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
Jim Gardiner	
Jan Sologub	

1. Act of Remembrance.

The Chair opened the meeting at 19:00 hours and asked everyone to think of the people who couldn't be with us due to ill health. 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 August. He concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Colin Britt, John Miles, Viv Miles, Susan Urch, Sue Colborne, Adrian Dover, Elaine Balding, Terry Weaver, Gordon Thorogood, John and Pat Price.

3. Chair's Report

Welcome everyone I hope you are all well; fairly quiet this month:

3.1. Newent Army Cadet Force (ACF) Affiliation – 17 July 2025

Last Thursday 17 July 2025, the Deputy Chair, Parade Marshal and I were invited to attend a parade night with Newent ACF in order to present the RBL affiliation certificate and badges. This was a lovely evening chatting to the staff and Cadets and enjoying their hospitality. The Deputy Chair presented the RBL Certificate to the ACF along with the Badges and the Parade Marshal very kindly paraded the Branch Standard. My thanks go to staff members and cadets for making us feel most welcome and to both Keith & Graham for their continued support. I'm looking forward to working with the Newent ACF (the Riffles) in the future.

3.2. Newent War Memorial Rededication 21 June 2025 – Photographs

I have received most of the Newent War Memorial rededication photographs and a rolling slide show is available to view in the main hall. I will put a selection on the Branch RBL Website in the near future.

3.3. Victory over Japan (VJ) Day 80 – 15 August 2025

Our Armed Forces Representative (Julia Gooch) on the Newent Town Council has arranged a flag raising for VJ Day 80 on the 15 August 2025, after which there will be a short service at Newent War Memorial, St Mary's Church. The timings for the morning will be:

- 10:25 – Muster (outside Newent Library)
- 10:30 – Flag Raising
- 10:40 – Slow walk to Newent War Memorial
- 11:00 – Prayer and 2 mins silence

It would be nice to see as many of you there as can make it; refreshments will be served in St Mary's after the ceremony.

3.4. Veterans Coffee Morning – 26 August 2025

Don't forget that the next Veterans Coffee Morning will be next week on the 26 August 2025 starting at 10am in Manna Coffee House, everyone is welcome to attend.

3.5. Branch Secretary Vacancy

The Branch is still seeking a permanent 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. Could everyone please ask their friends and family if they would like to take on this pivotal role.

3.7. 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 2. It was noted that Terry Weaver had given his appologies for the meeting but was unfortunately ommitted from the minutes.

Item 6.5. from Previous Meeting. Information about training for Telephone Buddies was received by the Chair and Deputy Chair which has been passed on to PPr.

With no further matters arising GB proposed and KU seconded that the minutes be passed as a true and accurate record. **Decision:** Passed unanimously.

5. Reports by Officers

5.1 Branch Community Support (BCS) Report

5.1.1. Welcome. TRBL having issued BCS individual identification cards as part of their safeguarding programme have discovered that there has been a national failure in due process relating to personal training and issue of the ID cards: this is now being corrected.

TRBL are currently issuing client surveys via post to a number of members in support of improving membership communications: those receiving the surveys are encouraged to complete them and return in the pre-paid envelope.

We continue to progress reconnecting with our many local veterans, serving members of our Armed Forces community and Cadet Units in Newent. We have finalised TRBL arrangements for the first of our formal Branch Affiliations, the details of which are provided below.

5.1.2. Branch Remembrance. We remember those unable to be present this evening due to various reasons and as usual, offer our support to those in need.

The Branch and Veterans Coffee Morning on Tuesday attracted a number of Members, discussing a wide variety of subjects.

5.1.3. Branch Welfare. Aside from the support available via your BCS Representatives, Veterans and Branch Members may continue to contact the RBL Helpline services as normal via the national network on 0808 802 8080 or Veteran's Gateway: <https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk>

5.1.4. Branch Membership. The current Branch Membership stands at 46 Members: new Members are always encouraged and welcomed.

5.1.5. 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	5
How many beneficiaries visited	4
How many visitors (Branch Community Supporters)	2
Total Welfare Expenditure	NIL
Telephone Buddies:	
Telephone – How many beneficiaries called	6
Telephone – How many telephone buddies:	2
Total Number of Calls made by Branch Executive in support of veterans	16

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

On Thursday 17 July 2025, your Chairman, Parade Marshal and I attended a parade night with **Newent ACF** to present their RBL Affiliation Certificate and Affiliation Badges to the Cadets.

In addition to that stated above, Branch Representatives are progressing a similar affiliation via Damon Ballinger, Flt Lt RAFAC | OC 186 (Newent) Sqn Air Cadets.

5.1.6. The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy. The response this year regarding nominations to this excellent youth award has been extremely disappointing. Reminders are being sent to all secondary schools and youth organisations serving Newent and its wider community for action during the next school term in September but as yet, no nominations have been received.

5.1.7. Newent War Memorial and Time Capsule

The Rededication Service of Newent's War Memorial took place on Saturday, 21st June at St Mary's Church.

Photographs recording this unique event are currently being circulated: see the Chairman's Report for further information.

A varied array of items have been collected for placement in the Time Capsule: sealing will take place very shortly once a number of other promised items have been received.

5.1.8. Forthcoming Dates for TRBL Branch Diary

5.1.8.a. Veterans Branch Coffee Morning was held on Tuesday, 22 July 2025 at Manna Coffee House, Newent.

5.1.8.b. VJ 80 Day Commemorations on Friday, 15th August - Flag raising adjacent to The Library at 1030 hrs followed by a short Commemoration Service at the Newent War Memorial at 1100 hrs.

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

5.2. Treasurer's report

Since the last meeting we have spent £27.50 on a wreath and received £4 in subscriptions. The current account stands at £1077.36

The Treasurer then presented the accounts for 2024/2025 and after some discussion and questions the accounts were agreed by all present, proposed by KU and Seconded by RA with a unanimous vote.

5.3. Parade Marshal

- On Thursday 17 July the Branch Standard was paraded at the presentation of affiliation badges and certificate to the Newent Army Cadets.
- Arrangements have been made for the August 15 commemoration of VJ80 at the Town flagpole and then at the War Memorial.

5.4. Branch Padre

The Branch Padre started his report with a big thank you to everyone who had a hand in making the War Memorial Rededication such a fantastic event, he also mentioned that the photographs taken by St Mary's personnel had now been sent to the Chair. The Chair then stated that he would get them put on to the Branch website as soon as he had time.

The Padre informed everyone present that St Mary's Curate Mark Dunning would be in charge of the proceedings for the VJ Day 80 commemorations on 15 August 2025, as he would be away on holiday.

Finally the Padre informed everyone that our long standing Deputy Padre PP had decided to retire from the ministry on 31 August 2025. He then explained that there would be a special service on that date starting at 10:30 to honour everything that PP has achieved over the years.

Discussions then continued and it was proposed by the Padre and seconded by KU that PP was appointed as Honorary Padre for Newent & District Branch of the Royal British Legion. **Decision:** Passed unanimously.

5.5. Entertainments Member.

The Entertainments Member reminded everyone that in October the AGM would be a Cheese & Wine evening; in November there would be a social in Cobblers and a Christmas meal in December.

6.0 Any Other Business

6.1. Awards. The Deputy Chair informed all present that he had attended the Forrester Awards ceremony this month and noted that one of the awards was presented to a 16 year old person from Lydney for his support to the RBL Poppy Appeal.

6.2. Poppy boxes. The Deputy Chair also informed all present that 2 Poppy Boxes had been stolen over the past month from shops in Newent.

6.3. Branch 100 Years Old. The Chair informed all present that the Branch would be turning 100 years old on 18 February 2027 and asked that Members start thinking about possible activities to mark this momentous occasion.

6.4. Standard. The Parade Marshal mentioned that the Standard will be at the 15 August 2025 VJ Day 80 celebrations.

7.0. Next Meeting date

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19:45 hrs with the next meeting set for 28 August 2025, starting at 7pm in the Memorial Hall.

Meeting Agenda
Newent and District Branch The Royal British Legion
28 August 2025 in Newent Memorial Hall

1. Welcome and Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Chair's Report.
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.
5. Reports by Officers.
6. Any Other Business.
7. Date of Next Meeting.