

**Royal British Legion
Basingstoke, Overton & District Branch
Branch Special General Meeting
Tuesday 18th March 2025, 19.30 pm
Basingstoke Labour Club**

MINUTES

Committee Present		Members Present
Dudley Wall (DW)	President	Tom Wall (TW) Yung Wai (Billy) Tsui (BT)
John Davies (JD)	Chairman	
Chris Davies (CD)	Secretary	
Malcolm Blunsdon (MB)	Treasurer	
	Standard Bearer	
	Committee	Non-Voting Guests Present
Stuart Humphries (SH)	Committee	Melvyn Cole (MC) – County Secretary

Apologies

David Barton (Standard Bearer) (DB)
Mr Richard Davey – Member
Mrs Gwen Fricker – Member
Mr Paul Harris – A/County Chairman

AGENDA

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|----------------|--|
| Item 1. | Exhortation |
| Item 2 | Chairman's Briefing |
| Item 3 | Open Discussion and Vote |
| Item 4 | Next Steps (Depending on outcome of Item 3) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POCs • Charity Funds • Branch Standard • Social Funds |
| Item 5 | Future Meetings |
| Item 6 | Closure & Kohima |



1 Exhortation

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

2 Chairman's Briefing

JD welcomed a guest attendee MC (County Sec) and BT, whom was attending for the first time.

Explained that the SGM was called at behest of the Branch Committee following a decision at their meeting on 18th Feb. All members had been given at least 7 days notification either by email or by post and the meeting had been publicised on the web site and on social media. Notably, apologies had been received from two of our older members (in their 90s) both of whom had been active when younger and both of whom expressed a view that they hope the Branch does not close.

The reason for the SGM was **to determine the future of the Branch**. There are now only 6 committee members so the Branch is no longer compliant. We have been struggling to generate support at meetings with an average of 4-6 persons attending each month for many months, despite changing the style, having guest speakers and /or social evening and even trialling online meetings. When we have asked for support for events, or for members to step-up and join the committee, none have been forthcoming. Notwithstanding that lack of engagement, the Branch has increased its influence in the community. We have recently affiliated with the Sea Cadets and we have strong links with the District Council and NHS care providers.

JD outlined 4 options for consideration and explained the legal and practical implications for each. Options were:

1. Retain the status quo and try to recruit a further committee member.
2. Seek to amalgamate with another Branch
3. Request that County accept us changing status to become a County Supported Branch
4. Apply for the Branch to be closed.

3 Discussion and Vote

All attendees were given the opportunity to air their personal views; consensus for each option was unanimous:

1. Continuing as we have been is not really helping the Branch to grow; indeed it is dying a slow death! There was a sense that, even if we recruited another committee member, we would only delay the inevitable. This was especially so given that DB has moved away from the Basingstoke area, making his input minimal.
2. It was considered unlikely that another Branch would wish to amalgamate at this point in time. Moreover, there was a strong view that retaining the Branch's identity and footprint in the local area was essential.
3. CSB status was seen as a good compromise that would allow us to re-energise and to find additional members with the right drive to bolster those committee members who are keen to see the Branch flourish. MC was able to give encouragement citing the recent reforming of the New Milton Branch after having been a CSB.



4. Closure of the Branch was dismissed out of hand, whilst recognising that this could be an eventual outcome if all other efforts to reinvigorate the Branch failed

It was proposed MB and seconded SH that we seek CSB status: Carried unanimously

4 Next Steps

The following points were covered:

4.1 Seek approval for CSB status.

Action: JD to request that County accept the Branch changing to CSB status. All other actions assume County approval

4.2 Branch PoCs

Branch will require 2 x PoCs who will act as interface between Membership or County and members.

Proposed TW, seconded DW that JD and MB be designated PoCs: carried unanimously

4.3 Charity Funds

The Branch funds, currently standing at £2572.95p will require to be transferred to the County account where they will be held in a restricted fund, earmarked for the use of the Branch to meet Legion objectives. It was noted that, depending on timing, that amount may change slightly.

Action: MB to close the Lloyds Account, transfer funds to the County and provide the County Treasurer with a net zero balance statement

4.4 Branch Standard

4.4.1 Planned Events

The Branch Standard is scheduled to be paraded for VE day events in May. Those events have been programmed and DB has been authorised to travel.

4.4.2 Remembrance

It is likely that DB may not be available for the Remembrance parades in November but it is essential that our Standard is present at the Civic event.

Action: PoCs to request support through County

4.4.3 Resignation of Standard Bearer

Possible that DB will wish to concentrate effort in Havant Area where he now lives; he is Standard Bearer for that Branch too. Should that occur, the Standard, Pennants and tassels will be recovered to the Branch. Other items that are on our asset register but which were bought to be used by DB in that role (eg shoes, gauntlets, suit) have no value.

Proposed MB, seconded SH that such equipment be transferred to the Havant Branch as a gift and be written off from our asset register: Carried unanimously

4.5 Social Fund

MB briefed that we currently had £541.28 in our Veteran's Social Fund. This money is not RBL charitable money. It was raised by members for the sole purpose of paying for or subsidising social functions and trips. Whilst it may



not be RBL money, we apply the same stringent rules for managing the monies. We discussed options. The signatories opined that the lack of a full committee would not give us the necessary level of independent oversight. It was also considered that it would be impractical to return the monies to the members. Members present were keen that the money be used in a way that benefited beneficiaries. After discussion, it was agreed to donate the funds. Whilst we are a CSB, any social events should be fully funded by those taking part.

Proposed JD and seconded MB that the monies be gifted from the members to the County Welfare fund with the codicil that it be used for the benefit of persons in the Basingstoke & Deane area: Carried unanimously.

5 Future Meetings

As a CSB, we will be required to hold a minimum of 2 meetings per year, one of which must be the AGM. It was agreed that we would wait until CSB status was confirmed and we would then plan the next meeting where we can then discuss how we intend re-energising the Branch

The AGM will be on Tuesday 21st October.

6 Closure

Business being concluded; the President closed the meeting with the Kohima Epitaph at 2025 hrs.

Signed by:



POC 1

Name:

JOHN DAVIES

Dated:

14TH OCTOBER 2025

