

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

23 July 2026 – Memorial Hall

<u>Attendees</u>	<u>Post</u>
Richard Balding	Chairman
Keith Urch	Deputy Chair, BCS Rep, Youth Liaison and Membership
Graham Barton	Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer
Helen Axon	Treasurer
Pat Phillips	Deputy Padre
John Price	
Elaine Balding	
Terry Weaver	
Tom Heseltine	

1. Act of Remembrance.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1900 hours and asked everyone to think of the people who couldn't be with us due to ill health or for any other reason. He then read out the names of the members of the Parish of Newent who lost their lives in WW1 and WW2 for the month of August. He concluded with the Act of Remembrance.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Jon Miles, Viv Miles, Adrian Dover, Simon Mason, Sue Urch, Pat Price, Jim Payne, Jim Gardiner and David Pollock.

3. Chairman's Report

Introduction

Good evening, everyone. It's been a very quiet time since the last meeting, but herewith the highlights:

County Newsletter for July

The Branch's submission that I mentioned last month to July's County Newsletter about the Armed Forces Week Flag Raising was published, with pictures. If you haven't already seen it take a look.

Newent Compass

Newent Town Council (NTC) sent out the details for the revamped Forest Compass, which has been split in to 4 distinct areas: Lydney, Newent, Cinderford and Coleford. On behalf of the Branch I have taken the liberty of promoting both the Branch and the Veteran's Coffee Mornings. I look forward to seeing the new publications when they appear; obviously, I will keep you informed on any progress.

Remembrancetide 2026

The initial meeting for this year's Parade and Service for 8 November 2026 took place on 9 July 2026. The meeting was hosted by NTC with the Branch Padre, Vice Chair, Parade Marshall and myself from the Branch, plus the Town Mayor, Veterans Representative and Administrator from NTC. The overall structure for this year's Parade & Service was agreed by those present and several actions were given out.

The final timings for this year's event will be distributed nearer the time; I will of course keep you informed of any changes.

Veteran's Coffee Morning

The next Veteran's Coffee Morning will take place in the Red Lion on Tuesday 28 July 2026 starting at 10am. This is an excellent venue with a lovely outside space, which we used at the last gathering, great Coffee and a good breakfast. We've had a good start with this new venue but I would love to see more people turning up. It's a great opportunity to get out of the house and meet some new people over a coffee, so if you know anyone who might benefit from this type of casual event please let them know.

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

The Minutes of the June meeting had been circulated. There were two amendments: Item 5.1 heading should read June not May; item 7, typo corrected. Subject to these, TH proposed and HA seconded that they be accepted as a true record of the meeting. Passed unanimously.

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising.

5. Reports by Officers

5.1 Branch Community Support (BCS) Report for July 2026

Dear Branch Members, Veterans, Families and Supporters of the Newent & District Branch of the Royal British Legion.

We have pleasure in presenting this month's BCS Report as follows:

5.1.1. General Information

Welcome to our July Meeting and TRBL Update.

As this exceptionally hot weather continues we start wondering about when the deluge will arrive, which it surely will. In the meantime we cannot stress the importance of keeping hydrated and as cool as you are able,

It is vitally important that we seek out and support our elderly Veterans and neighbours, looking out to those in need of help and support.

5.1.2. Branch Remembrance

At this time we remember those unable to be present at our meeting due to varying reasons and offer our support to those in need.

5.1.3. Branch Welfare, Membership and Statistics.

This reporting period has been exceptionally quiet, no requests for support so time has been spent telephoning and generally keeping a watching brief on our Members health and welfare matters.

Branch Welfare

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

Branch Membership

The current Branch Membership totals 41 persons: new Members are always welcome.

Branch Statistics

We continue to be supportive of our local Veterans, their families and others within our surrounding area.

Various levels of Branch Community Support (BCS) are available from signposting, personal visits or via the Telephone Buddy Network. Please note that all communications are confidential.

Branch Statistics for this period are therefore as follows:

Total Number of Welfare visits	2
How many beneficiaries visited	3
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 Branch Members and local Veterans this period: 16

5.1.4. Branch Community Support, Youth Liaison and Community Activities.

Community Support and Youth Liaison

Your Branch BCS representative(s) has received a further request seeking information on behalf of an elderly female veteran who has recently suffered a stroke: the Branch was able to signpost them to the appropriate local support organisation.

The date for the Service of Dedication of the Newent AC Standard continues to be progressed.

In the meantime we continue to liaise with the many varied groups, schools and youth organisations within our community.

The John Edward Whitehorn Trophy - Nominations

As yet, apart from the one nomination received from the Gloucestershire Army Cadet Force, no further nominations have been received, the one submission was discussed in some detail and it was decided that the Branch needed further information about any community work the nominee had completed.

Newent & District Branch Centenary Celebrations 2027

We are pleased to support next year's planned Branch Centenary Event as we move ever closer with an air of anticipation. Recent updates are included within the Minutes of the June meeting.

Representatives of The Lieutenancy will attend, together with hopefully, other local dignitaries, marking this very special occasion for Newent.

5.1.5. Forthcoming Dates for TRBL Branch Diary

Members and colleagues are invited to note the following planned events:

Please note that the Veteran's Breakfast and Coffee Morning are now being held in the Red Lion on the last Tuesday of the month, commencing 10 am; everyone welcome.

For further information please see the reports issued by our Branch Chairman, Branch Officers and Standard Bearer.

Take care, keep safe, and we will look forward to hearing from you all in due course.

5.2 Treasurer's Report

There has been only 1 transaction this month; 48 pence from HMCts. (Poppy box payment)

Current Account Balance: £1,790.40.

5.3 Parade Marshal/Standard Bearer Report

On Thursday 9 July I attended the Remembrance Day planning meeting at Newent Town Council's offices.

On Sunday 12 July the Branch Standard was paraded at the Violet Szabo Remembrance event at Wormelow, Herefordshire. The Parade Marshal gave a short briefing on the event for all those present.

On Wednesday 22 July the Branch Standard was present for the burial of Elizabeth Powell's ashes in Newent Cemetery.

There were no other reports.

6. Branch Centenary, 18 February 2027

RB has been sourcing ticket printing and showed Members a draft version of the ticket. Cost would be £25.00 + VAT for 1,000. GB proposed and EB seconded that RB should go ahead with this. **Passed unanimously.**

KU is visiting local schools at the beginning of the September term to ask them to participate in a poster competition. There was a brief discussion re. possible incentives – to be discussed fully at the August Branch Meeting.

Other options still under consideration include:

- Slide show of Branch activities over the last 100 years, Newent History Society have been asked for their advice.
- Providing a case in which to permanently exhibit the original Minutes book
- Possibly involving students from NCS to digitalise the names of Branch Members from the Branch's founding in 1927.

Members were asked to keep coming up with ideas.

7. Any Other Business

7.1. RB informed Members that the Newent Civic Carol Service will be on Wednesday 9 December at Saint Mary's.

7.2. There was a discussion re. the one nomination received for the JEW Trophy. KU was asked to contact Andrew Barraclough for more details about the nominee – particularly in relation to community involvement.

7.3. GB showed Members the certificate that had been presented to Gertrude Clifford to mark her 25 years of service as Vice-Chair of the Women's section of the Branch. Her Grandson and his Family have donated this to the Branch and it was agreed that it should be framed and put on permanent display. RB offered to get this done.

7.4. HA asked RB to sign-off the year end forms.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 27 August 2026 in the Memorial Hall starting at 1900.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 1945.

Agenda for the Newent & District Branch Royal British Legion Meeting 27 August 2026 at the Memorial Hall

1. Act of Remembrance.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Chairman's Opening Remarks.
4. Adoption of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising
5. Reports by Officers.
6. Branch Centenary, 18 February 2027.
7. Any Other Business.
8. Date of Next Meeting.