

**Royal British Legion
Basingstoke, Overton & District Branch
Branch Meeting**

Tuesday 21st January 2025, 19.30 pm, Basingstoke Labour Club

MINUTES

Committee Present		Members & Guests Present
Dudley Wall (DW)	President	Tom Wall (TW)
John Davies (JD)	Chairman	
	Secretary	
Malcolm Blunsdon (MB)	Treasurer	
	Standard Bearer	
	Events	
	Committee	
	Committee	

AGENDA

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Item 1. | Exhortation |
| Item 2 | Welcome, Introduction and Apologies |
| Item 3 | Previous minutes |
| Item 4 | Matters Arising (not on the Agenda) |
| | a. Remembrance Wash-Up |
| | b. Gifts donated by Chris & Cath Parsons |
| Item 5 | Branch Reports |
| | • Chairman |
| | • Treasurer |
| | • Membership |
| | • Standard Bearer |
| | • Events |
| | • Youth |
| Item 6 | AOB |
| | a. Future Meetings |
| | b. Events |
| Item 7 | Date of next Meeting |
| Item 8 | Closure & Kohima |



1 Exhortation

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

2 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

JD welcomed everyone to the meeting

Apologies were recoded from Chris Davies, David Barton, Rob Souter, Olive Wall and Ann Wall.

3 Adoption of Previous Minutes

The draft minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated to all attendees. No comments / amendments had been received. Proposed MB, seconded TW that they be entered as a true record. Carried

4 Matters Arising (not on the agenda)

JD briefed:

4.1 The remembrance wash-up meeting had been rescheduled for 28th Jan.

Action: JD will raise the issue of respecting the silence at that meeting.

4.2 The equipment gifted by Chris and Cath Parsons had been collected by members of the Southern Veteran's Hub and will be stored until they can be issued to a veteran. **Closed NFA**

5 Branch Reports

The following Branch reports were provided:

5.1 Chairman

Chairman's report is attached at Annex A. Key points

5.1.1 December Branch Social.

Was not well attended.

5.1.2 Welfare

JD and MD either visited or telephoned members aged over 80 in the run-up to Christmas. Beneficiaries were given a 'Panettone' and a card from the Branch and we checked to ensure that they were well and had appropriate support from family, friends or the Legion. The visits were extremely well received.

This is the kind of work we should have been doing previously!

5.1.3 Committee

Steve Day has had to resign due to ill health. David Barton has moved from Basingstoke and, although still on the committee and registered as our Standard Bearer, his situation is not really good for the Branch. The committee is no longer compliant and this, along with member engagement (or lack of it) really questions the viability of the Branch



5.1.4 County Conference

The report provides an update on the recent County Conference

5.2 Secretary

NSTR

5.3 Treasurer

MB confirmed that accounts remain healthy. Balances are:

- General Account (charitable monies) £2650.12
- Social account £541.28

MB provided the Q2 reconciliation which confirmed the above figures.

MB confirmed that there were some minor claims outstanding which will show in the next finance report. We have an issue with the Social Account in that Metro Bank require two signatories to attend the bank to authorise and approve a transaction. With DB no longer living in the area, it is difficult to action any claims raised by the Chairman as he cannot self-authorise.

Proposed DW, Seconded MB that CD be added as a signatory. Recognised that even this would be a potential conflict of interest. Carried

Proposed DW, Seconded MB that we recognise but accept conflict of interest for the social fund. This does not apply to charitable monies as transactions can be completed remotely by two independent signatories. Carried

5.4 Membership Secretary

Membership has decreased and now stands at 97.

We have one new member – Gordon Holdcroft

Action. JD to welcome Gordon

We have lost 5 members: Bahandur Chand, Simon Jones, Alex Dawes and Lindon Black.

5.5 Standard Bearer

NSTR

5.6 Event Coordinator

This post is currently vacant. Events covered under AOB

5.7 Youth Officer

NSTR.

6 Any Other Business

6.1 Future Branch Meetings

6.1.1 JD suggested that we should try something different and proposed that the next meeting be on teams and that we have an online quiz. All agreed

6.1.2 Discussed viability of Branch. Consensus was that the current level of support is such that we need to seriously consider options.



Proposed JD, Seconded DW that the Committee review after the February Branch Meeting with a view to holding an SGM in March to determine the future of the Branch.

6.2 Upcoming Events

6.2.1 Holocaust Memorial. Reminder that the Holocaust Memorial Service will take place on Monday 27th Jan at 10 am. People should be at the Basingstoke Memorial NLT 09.45. JD will attend, representing both RBL and RAFA. MB intends to be present too.

6.2.2 VE Day. JD briefed that it is intended to have an event, run from Milestones and involving the Memorial Convoy. The first planning meeting is on 29th January. It is intended that local RBL branches will work together on this to raise the profile of the RBL. JD is also attending the Oldf Basing Events Cttee Meeting on 4 Feb to ensure full cooperation and collaboration.

6.2.3 RBL Representatives Operating in Basingstoke. It was noted that HQ representatives are in Morrisons all week. They are not recruiting but are signing people up to the poppy lottery! They have no knowledge of Branch contact details or activities. When asked questions by the public they are unable to answer. This potentially undermines the credibility of the RBL in the area. It also reduces our capability because Morrisons / Festival Place etc will only allow so many visitations and they are taken up by HQ! Additionally, Branch were unaware of this activity.

Action. JD to raise at County

7 Next Meeting

The next meeting, on Tuesday 18th February will be in a quiz night on teams.

8 Closure

Business being concluded, the President closed the meeting with the Kohima Epitaph.

Annex:

A. Chairman's Report

Signed by:



Chair

Name:

John Davies

Dated:

18 February 2025



**ANNEX A TO
BRANCH MINUTES
DATED 21 JAN 25**

**Royal British Legion Basingstoke, Overton & District Branch
Branch Meeting – Chairmans Report – 21st January 2025**

Welcome to this first meeting of 2025 and, although it is a little late in the month, Happy New Year.

Our last Branch meeting was on 26th November and we were then scheduled to have a Branch Social and Christmas Quiz on 17th December.

Branch Social.

Well, that came and went with 5 members present. Perhaps it was a little optimistic planning a meeting so close to Christmas! Nevertheless, we enjoyed the mince pies and mulled wine and, in the spirit of Christmas, we shared them with the few people in the bar area.

Welfare

As agreed at our last meeting, Malcolm and I visited or telephone called our members and other beneficiaries who were aged over 80. We took them a 'panettone' and a card from the Branch and ensured that they were well and properly catered for in the run-up to Christmas.

To be frank, this is why we exist as an organisation and, it was a privilege to do something that is really simple and which we should have been doing for years!

The feedback at the door and subsequently was one of initial surprise and then one of gratitude that the Legion is actually concerned about it's members welfare

Committee

Sadly, committee member and events coordinator Steve Day has had to resign from the committee and step back from supporting the poppy appeal because of health reasons. Both Wayne Stent (PAO) and myself are saddened at this loss as Steve was one of our more proactive members. We understand that recovery will be a slow and possibly long period and we wish him well on that journey.

What that does mean is that, once again we are non-compliant as a committee. We are required to have 7 committee members of which, 3 are Branch Officers. We currently have 6 committee members. Add to that equation that our Standard Bearer, who is also a committee member has moved to the south of the county. In reality, although still a member on paper, this does make him ineffective. He will stay as the Standard Bearer in the short term but does need replacing.



As a consequence, we are once again questioning the viability of the Branch. This is something we can cover later in the meeting under AOD.

Branch Bulletin

I intend publishing a further Branch round-up on SWAY in the coming week.

County Conference

County Conference was on the 18th. Although David Barton and I were present, we could not vote as we are on the county Committee. Our Branch delegate should have been Steve Day but, as previously reported, he was not able to attend.

Conference was attended by the National Vice Chair Linda Atkins who faced some difficult questions with aplomb. Headlines:

- The speed of response to requests for assistance has improved but needs to improve further.
- There has been a significant rise in the numbers of people coming forward for assistance.
 - In part due to cost-of-living crisis
 - In the last 3 months, £135K was spent on cases in Hampshire.
- The programmes for helping, such as the comedy club initiative, have been successful.
- RBL managed to recover £10M in benefits for beneficiaries that they either hadn't claimed for or had been underpaid.
- Going through a period of change. Their new strategy will use a Target Operating Model.
- They will be working on strengthening governance.

The guest speaker was Lt Col Davidson – Army Cadets. Interesting presentation on the ACF activities in the region and, importantly, advocated greater affiliation with RBL. This is in line with our aspirations.

I was re-elected to the Committee and will be continuing as County Training Officer

Happy to take questions

