

The Royal British
Legion
Harwell Branch
BR1805

Monthly Branch Meeting
Held on 26th November 2019
In the Branch Headquarters at Westfield
At 20.00 Hours.

ATTENDANCE:

R.C. East - President
R.J. White - Chairman
P. Davies - Vice Chairman, Ceremonial Officer and Deputy Standard Bearer
P. A. Cox - Secretary, Harwell Poppy Appeal Organiser and Welfare Representative
Mrs S. E. Pateman - Membership Secretary
S. T. Haycox - Treasurer

COMMITTEE: G Street, J Belton

MEMBERS: A. Bailey

1. EXHORTATION AND KOHIMA EPITAPH

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all present; he asked those present to bear in mind all who had died or were injured in the service of our County.

This was followed by the exhortation and silent tribute; he ended with the Kohima Epitaph.

2. APOLOGIES: Mrs. H. Benton C.S East, B. Mulford.

3. MINUTES OF OCTOBER 2019 MEETING

All present apart from Mr. Bailey had seen the Minutes which were distributed before the meeting. There were the following corrections:

Item 19.1 Club Disaffiliation

" a Club" changed to "another RBL Club in the South East"

"which is owned by the Parish Council" changed to "which was owned by the RBL Club then the Harwellian Club"

On acceptance as a true record they were duly signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman said that all Matters Arising would come up in the reports on the agenda.

5. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AND ARMISTICE 2019

5.1 Remembrance Sunday

The Ceremonial Officer reported:

The commemorations went very well, it is the first year of working with the Parish Council following the guidance from Legion headquarters to engage with the local civic authorities. The Council completed all of the tasks we asked them to including the road closures, all with a very quick turn-around. They kept us very well informed with a number of updates. We hope to build on this for next year.

The Chairman congratulated the Ceremonial Officer and Secretary on their liaison with the Council.

Poppy Appeal Collection

New volunteer Evelyn Davies helped the Chilton Poppy Appeal Organiser collect at Townsend, High Street and outside the Church, which helped take the pressure off the Harwell Poppy Appeal Organiser.

Attendance

Attendance was very good, all of the groups and representatives we were expecting attended and the numbers in the groups and congregation were high due to the good weather.

Photographs

Plenty of photographs were taken by the Treasurer and Bob Girling, they have been distributed widely.

5.2 Ceremony at the Commonwealth War Graves Harwell

15 people were in attendance including Harwell Branch members. There were a few more villages than previous years and a Guides Standard Bearer attended as well as the Branch Standard Bearer.

5.3 Armistice Day Ceremony 11th November 2019

The Secretary reported:

This was the first Armistice Ceremony for two years as the 11th November was Remembrance Sunday last year.

About 20 people attended, together with about 25 Harwell School children and teachers. The High Street was closed by the Parish Council Chair and grounds staff.

Branch President Reginald East conducted the ceremony. The Last Post was sounded by Dr. Tony Hughes, the Two Minutes Silence was observed, and the Standard was dipped by Branch Standard Bearer

Due to a communication error, the road was closed at 10:55 and the ceremony started a bit early and the School children just arrived in time for Last Post. Two busses had to wait.

A wreath made by children from Little Pippins Pre School was laid at the War Memorial at the end of the service by the School Secretary. As the wreath was fragile it was not left in place.

The President said that the High Street was crowded from one end to the other on Sunday. There were not as many for Armistice, he thought that it was year 5 from Harwell School who attended.

The President and Chairman said that it all went very well.

5.4 Letters of Thanks

Letters have been written by the Ceremonial Officer to the Scouts (including First Aider), Guides, Air Training Corps, Army Cadet Force, Harwellian Club, the Harwell Parish History Group and the District Councillors. They have been approved by the Parish Council and Chairman and sent.

There were lots of favourable comments on the day, and on facebook, about the young Beaver who laid the Scout's wreath at the War Memorial. The Ceremonial Officer has also written a letter to him, to be signed by the Chair of the Parish Council, Ceremonial Officer and Chairman, it will be sent this week.

The Secretary suggested that a letter is also written to the Guides Standard Bearer who attended the Ceremony at the Commonwealth War Graves, it was very unusual for another Standard Bearer to attend.

No Objections.

The Secretary will write to thank Harwell School (for Armistice Day) and the Parish Council, the Bugler, Harwell Gardeners Club, Photographers and the Church.

5.5 Road Closures

The Road Closure orders for Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day were received by the Parish Council. They put the orders up at various points along Wantage Road and the High Street and took them down afterwards, and provided Traffic Marshals.

Thames Travel displayed service amendment notices for Remembrance Sunday on all bus stops in the village.

5.6 Final Instructions

The Ceremonial Officer sent a Final Instructions Brief to representatives, leaders of parading groups and other participants.

5.7 Service Sheets

700 sheets were provided by the Church, the Secretary divided out 260 for the parading groups, and gave them out at Townsend. The Chilton Poppy Appeal Organiser and Mike Pepper from the Church gave sheets out to the congregation. About 100 were not used, so the congregation was about 360.

The Church Administrator asked if the service sheets could be collected after the War Memorial service (she had collected some in 2018). The Secretary asked the larger groups to collect theirs back. The Secretary, the Chilton Poppy Appeal Organiser and Evelyn Davies collected more from the congregation afterwards. The Guides returned some and some were collected at the Village Hall from those attending the children's activity there. In total about 300 were collected and available for next year.

5.8 Publicity

The Parish Council and Secretary put up posters in and outside the Harwellian Club, local shops, High Street and Council notice boards.

The Ceremonial Officer wrote an article which has been sent to the Harwell News and will be posted on the Web page

A photograph taken by Bob Girling was published in the Didcot Herald and Oxford times.

5.9 Timetable

The Secretary has composed and distributed first version of timetable of tasks, the second version will be distributed shortly.

6. ENROLLMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

There were two new members this month on the MAP system and no applications.

The Chairman introduced new member Mr A. Bailey, and welcomed him to the Branch.

He is also a member of the Rider's Branch so his £21 fee is in addition to the Rider's Branch fees. They do not charge an administration fee, so it costs £42 per year for both, which does not encourage membership of more than one Branch.

7. SECRETARY'S REPORT:

7.1 Harwell RBL Club and Branch Archives at Club

The Membership Secretary has returned the Poppy Appeal Certificate to the former PAO Wendy Clarke.

Old Harwell RBL Club documents - Nothing to report, the Secretary hopes to meet Graham Davies shortly. The Secretary explained that Mr Davies had asked him to go through some of the Club records with him as they were from the Legion club days. There is a small amount of historical information in them.

Branch Archive Boxes – Move of old documents to County Record Office is in hand

7.2 Web Page Updates

- The Meetings page has been updated with post AGM details.
- The years of office on the Committee page has been updated to read 2019-20.
- The Poppy Appeal page needs updating to include the new venue for the Poppy Walk and new totals.
- The Remembrance page will be updated with this year's report.

7.3 Awards

Ongoing.

7.4 Distribution of Branch Minutes

The October 2019 Minutes were distributed to Officers and Committee Members via email and printed copies. A copy of the Minutes has been put in the Club folder. David Marsh has put the Minutes on the Branch web page. (No County Circular this month).

The Secretary met the daughter of the Branch Officer whose email address is rejecting emails at a recent funeral. He is no longer able to read emails. Any important information can be emailed to her.

7.5 Printing Volumes and Costs

October Minutes approximately 56 sheets

Other printing approximately 63 sheets

The Secretary will get the empty large black cartridge refilled next.

7.6 2019 AGM Follow-up

MS1 form

The Committee members who were not at the AGM to sign the Declaration of Acknowledgement of Responsibilities section of the form, and the Deputy Standard Bearer's signed the Physical Fitness Confirmation form – the Standard Bearer has already supplied a signed form. The new Deputy Standard Bearer will sign the form in due course.

County Conference Forms

The Delegate form has been completed, payment is needed with the lunch order, £10 or £12 with dessert.

The Secretary continues to back up minutes to Onedrive, hard disc and the MAP.

Other actions are in hand, including the Letter of Thanks to David Marsh, the AGM Minutes and the back-up of older minutes and files to the MAP.

7.7 Branch Courses

The County Training Officer has confirmed that the Branch Management course will be on November 30th at 9am. It is an all-day course, lunch provided. The Secretary will attend.

7.8 Agenda Order

In hand.

7.9 Branch Community Support - Welfare

No cases.

The Secretary and Chairman attended Roland Puffett's funeral (Member and ex-Forces). The Secretary, Standard Bearer and President attended Ted Ireson's funeral (ex-Forces).

The Welfare Representative will attend the half-day County Welfare update meeting, now at Hanney RBL on 3rd December.

A member may be interested in becoming a Case Worker, the Welfare Representative asked if he could follow this up.

No Objections.

8. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

CURRENT PAID UP MEMBERSHIP: stands at 73

8.1 New Members and Renewals

73 members have renewed, there are two new members and 12 members have not yet renewed. 9 members have disappeared from the system – possibly they have decided not to renew.

9. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The Treasurer reported that accounts stood as follows as of 13 November 2019:

HARWELL BRANCH

Current Account:	£ 310.65
B.F.I. Account	£ 815.79
<u>Total:</u>	<u>£ 1126.44</u>

9.1 Receipts

£128 has been received to the current account. There is no indication of what this is, it may be membership fees.

10. CORRESPONDENCE:

Items indicated as “printed” or “by post” will be filed in the “County Circulars” folder in the Club. Other items can be printed on request.

Correspondence from Legion County Office and National Headquarters:

The October/November 2019 County Circular was distributed last month.

10.1 Membership Newsletter November 2019

- Focused on Remembrance. Including stories about how branches engage their communities to Remember Together and our partners who raise funds for the Legion
- Upcoming events and activities.
- A poll about how you're choosing to remember all those who served and sacrificed.

10.2 Weekly Site Briefings of Pitches for Poppy Lottery and Regular Giving Sales Team

Nearest location was Banbury in the second week of November.

10.3 Legion General Election Guidance

Charities must remain politically neutral at all times.

10.4 Legion Campaigning Guidance and General election Manifesto (Received this afternoon)

Promote messages to candidates in your area. But any campaigning must be in an individual capacity not on behalf of the Legion. Five points:

1. Provide a new deal for personnel recruited from overseas and their families and “Stop the service charge”.
2. Ensure the future of the Veterans Medical Fund due to stop next year – provides hearing aids and mobility devices to veterans from the LIBOR fund.
3. Ensure a question concerning military service and membership of the Armed Forces community features in the next national census in 2010
4. Safeguard Compensation for injured veterans within statutory means tests
5. Invest in Research into “what Works” treating Veterans with Gulf War illnesses and set up formal communications channels to convey the results of US research developments to those individuals.

10.5 Mince Pies and Mulled Wine 5th December 2019 County HQ

One or two Branch representatives invited.

10.6 Afternoon Concert by Astor Band – Glenn Miller Music

Reading Hexagon 2nd February 2020. Proceeds to Poppy Appeal, Tickets £23.

10.7 Request for Remembrance Event Photos for November E- Newsletter

10.8 Strategic Review – Message from Director-General Charles Bryne

The Armed forces community is changing so the Legion needs to change as well, e.g. campaigning for the Armed Forces Community more locally as well as nationally. Welfare spend can be increased to focus on each individual's needs, also elderly care which is getting more complex, and to make bigger grants to external organisations that help our beneficiaries in a way that the Legion does not. To fund this the Legion is considering stopping the Handvans service and Poppy Break centres

10.9 Strategic Review – November 2019 Update with Question and Answer Sheet

Invest more in casework and collaborations, reinvigorate our care model for with older veterans. Consultation until early next year on changes and what could be stopped.

10.10 MAP Portal or Yammer Updates

- Online National Conference Application form is now live.
- Membership Management Handbook not yet available on MAP.
- Promotion of Yammer Legion's social network conversations.

Correspondence from Other Organisations

10.11 November 2019 Chilton Chronicle

10.12 Home-Start Oxfordshire Children's Charity Name-the-Bus competition

10.13 Didcot Mayor's Charity Dinner 7th March 2020

In aid of the Mayor's Charities: Make A Wish UK and Secret Santa 365. Tickets £45. Theme James Bond.

10.14 Marketing Emails to the Branch Website Email Address

5 Items since the last meeting (4 weeks) and an email from Filton Brewery Products – forwarded to the Harwellian Club.

11. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER (PAO) REPORT:

11.1 Poppy Appeal 2019

Harwell Collections

Due to the late arrival of some merchandise, as mentioned last month, most collecting boxes and merchandise trays were distributed in the first week of the appeal (ending 1st November), the last one on Monday 4th November.

Harwell Village

The President and Secretary distributed 9 boxes to local shops, restaurants and the school.

House to House

The 4 collectors did very well, given the poor weather and other commitments.

Harwell Campus

The Harwell PAO distributed 30 boxes to the Campus.

The boxes have been collected except 12 boxes at one Campus organisation. These are mainly inside a secure compound, their security staff collect them and let us know when they are available. The Harwell PAO chased up at end of last week.

In addition to their collecting box, Ricardo donated profits from their tuck shop - about £130, total to be confirmed once paid in. The Harwell PAO asked if he could give them an A4 thankyou poster as well as the usual thank you postcard.

Agreed by the Committee

The Harwell PAO had a report of someone unknown collecting in Orchard Way, he has not been able to track down who it was.

We had an offer of more 2019 pins from the another PAO who lives in Chilton, which were not required.

11.2 Chilton Collections

The Harwell PAO reported on behalf of the Chilton PAO: She had 8 house to house collectors, one box in Chilton School and 8 in the Curie Avenue shops and businesses.

11.3 Count

The Chilton and Harwell PAOs and the Treasurer counted the collecting boxes received so far. The totals are:

Chilton Village and Curie Avenue Shops: £1,664.15

Harwell Village and Campus: £1,561.86

The Chilton total is slightly up on last year and the Harwell total is only to date.

The Harwell PAO thanked all of the collectors, the Harwellian Club who provided Poppy Room to count the donations, especially Graham Davies and Rebecca. Also, Clare Oldfield Abingdon PAO who provided the Coin Counter and the Treasurer for spreadsheet wrangling.

11.4 Remembrance Sunday Parade Collection

As stated earlier, Evelyn Davies and the Chilton PAO collected in the High Street before and after the War Memorial Service. Ms Davies also collected (unplanned) at the Church door while we were waiting to go to the War Graves, collecting a fantastic total of £212.26. **Total £322.89**

The Ceremonial Officer said that Ms. Davies collection included £120 Poppy Walk donations.

11.5 Crosses on Commonwealth War Graves

The Harwell PAO liaised with Geoff Richardson War Graves gardener) when he had finished preparing the gardens. The Harwell PAO put out 67 crosses on the graves - one grave already had a cross.

Discussion of a donation to the appeal in respect of the crosses was held over.

11.6 Remembrance Sunday 2019 Wreaths Order

The wreaths were ordered in August and were due to be delivered in mid-October. As of the last meeting the Harwell PAO had phoned Poppy Appeal HQ twice, they said that the wreaths would be here before the parade.

He emailed Poppy HQ and the County Fundraiser on the day of the last meeting. Poppy Appeal HQ replied by email on the evening of Friday 1st November still saying they still could not give a firm delivery date. He phoned Poppy HQ twice on Monday 4th but could not get through.

As it was not clear we would get any wreaths, he contacted the County Office, and Abingdon Branch who had wreaths available. Neither had the small wreath for Chilton Church but Abingdon Branch had a posy. Rev. Mobey and Rev Rolls said that this would be acceptable, then County MSO was able to find a small wreath. Other Branches had similar problems.

The Harwell PAO contacted Poppy HQ again on 5th November, they said that the order should be dispatched the next day. This was confirmed by email on the 6th and the wreaths were received on Thursday 7th. The Harwell PAO informed the County MSO and Abingdon Branch.

This took a lot of time which could have been better spent. The Harwell PAO proposed that next year he requests an earlier delivery date, ordering the usual wreaths and a couple of spares first come first served.

The Harwell PAO delivered wreaths before Remembrance Sunday to the Scouts, Guides, History Group, Parish Council and Branch. The Chilton PAO delivered the wreath to Chilton Church.

The rest of the wreaths were given out at Townsend on Remembrance Sunday to the ATC, ACF and Harwellian Club. He wired the wreaths together round the War Memorial after service. The regular posy was there a day or two later, but no RAOB wreath.

A small wreath was supplied to a widow for her (ex-service) husband's grave.

Donations have been received from all organisations and individuals except the Branch.

Total so far is: £227.

Discussion of a donation to the Poppy Appeal in respect of the wreaths was held over.

11.7 Other Donations

Two anonymous donations received: £10 and £20.

11.8 Long Service Awards

In hand.

11.9 Totals Reported at AGM and October 2019 Meeting

The Harwell PAO has resolved the difference between totals for 2018-19 reported at the AGM and the October meeting:

The October meeting total included a £25 BACS donation for a wreath in November 2018, which Poppy HQ were unable to confirm, so this total should be **£5942.23**.

At the AGM the Harwell PAO incorrectly reported the Harwell November 2018 total as £2866.35, rather than the correct total £2863.94, i.e. £2.41 too high, and did not include £1.26 from the collecting box that was behind the bar at the Harwellian Club, so this too should be **£5942.23**.

The Harwell PAO has not yet resolved the difference with the total on the Annual statement for 2018-19, which is £6,329.23.

Total Collected since 1st October 2019: £ 3805.90.

Thank you to everyone who has helped.

The next steps are to submit the annual return to Poppy Appeal HQ, collect and count the rest of the boxes and send the remaining merchandise and boxes back to the Poppy Appeal warehouse.

12. CERMONIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

12.1 Publicity of Commonwealth War Graves Ceremony

Geoff Richardson, the CWWG gardener, asked the Ceremonial Officer if the Ceremony could be mentioned during the War Memorial Service. This was discussed with Rev. Mobey and it was decided that Rev. Mobey would mention the ceremony at the end of the War Memorial Service.

Since then attendees indicated to the Ceremonial Officer that they were not aware of the War Graves in the village and will visit them in future.

12.2 New Standard Bearer

Mr. Andrew Bailey has volunteered to be Standard Bearer in place of the current Standard Bearer when he steps down next year.

Mr. Bailey said that he had discussed this with the Standard Bearer after the Armistice Ceremony: The Standard Bearer will step down in November 2020, and until then he will learn from him and help out if there is a funeral that he can't attend. He has also talked to County President David Drew after the Armistice Ceremony. He had heard that Harwell Branch was looking for a Standard Bearer via other Legion contacts.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Bailey for stepping forward for this role.

13. STANDARD BEARER REPORT

13.1 Recent Parades

The Ceremonial Officer said that the Standard Bearer has paraded the Standard at all of the Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day Parades, Services and Ceremonies.

13.2 Upcoming Parades

There was discussion of the funerals of members and former members in the coming days that may require the Standard in attendance.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14.1 Missing Plaques from Harwellian Club Bar

The Secretary said that the Club reports that two plaques have gone missing from above the bar recently. Unfortunately, no one at this meeting knew anything about this.

14.2 Legacy

The Treasurer said that as of 7pm this evening, the Branch has not received any money from the Legacy in response to the request we submitted to the Legacy Team.

He distributed a summary of the steps taken to date, and the key problems. The key concerns are:

- The printed BFI statements arrive quarterly and do not reflect our online BFI account.
- The Legacy financial year is believed to be the end of September. The Treasurer has yet to receive any statement. This statement is issued annually.

If the Branch were to be audited tomorrow – we wouldn't have a leg to stand on.

Discussion ensued and the Treasurer answered questions:

- The Legacy cheque and documentation was sent to HQ as required.
- No one person has done anything wrong.
- No one seems to be talking to anyone else, it seems that all have assumed that someone else is informing us and moving the money in the records.

The Treasurer will email a letter to the people at HQ to try and get something done.

Other comments included:

- It seems that HQ are reluctant for us to have the funds. The Treasurer said that we have not received a statement, account number or balance, though we have been told we are getting these things.
- It was stated that we have waited 11 months so far. The Treasurer said that Headquarters state that the requested money has been transferred and is there, but it is not showing on our accounts. The Treasurer has added it manually and is awaiting approval for this from HQ.
- It was stated that the Legion's accounts have been audited since then, and the balance should show up. The Treasurer agreed and said that this is important to him and the Branch, and repeated that if we were audited tomorrow, we would not have the required documentation.
- The Chairman said that this was not our fault. The Treasurer agreed.
- It was stated that we can't say we have the funds as we have no documentation. The Treasurer said that we do have copies of the documents and records regarding the Legacy.

All present agreed that they were not happy with the situation.

The Treasurer said that he hoped to have better news at the January meeting, and we would decide what to donate in respect of the War Grave crosses and the Remembrance Sunday wreaths.

14.3 Expenses

The Treasurer said that expenses should still be submitted for consideration.

14.4 Suggested Price of Poppy Item

The President reported an instance of a high suggested donation of £5 for a snap ruler from a collector at a local supermarket.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 28th January 2019

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:59 hours.