

The Royal British
Legion
Harwell Branch
BR1805

Monthly Branch Meeting
Held on 31st March 2015
In the Branch Headquarters at Westfield
At 20.00 Hours.

ATTENDANCE:

R.C. East	- President
R.J. White	- Chairman
P. A. Cox	- Secretary
Mrs S. E. Pateman	- Membership Secretary
S. T. Haycox	- Treasurer
P. Davies	- Ceremonial Officer and Deputy Standard Bearer
I. Clarke	- Deputy Standard Bearer and Club Secretary

COMMITTEE: G Street, J Belton

MEMBERS: J Fisher Club Management Committee Chairman

1. EXHORTATION AND KOHIMA EPITAPH

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all present. This was followed by the exhortation and silent tribute; he ended with the Kohima Epitaph.

2. APOLOGIES: Mrs W. J. Clarke, C. S. East, J Fleming, B. Mulford

3. MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 2015 MEETING:

The Chairman asked if all present had seen the Minutes. All had, so the minutes were not read out. There were the following corrections:

11.3 “The PAO has not heard from **Aylesbury** (Poppy Appeal HQ)” changed to “...from **Aylesford**....”

7.10 “John Belton said that Didcot Branch continues to meet at **Dalton** Barracks” changed to “...**Vauxhall** Barracks.”

The Chairman asked if they could be accepted as a true record. On acceptance they were duly signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING:

The Chairman said that any matters arising would come up under the various reports.

5. D DAY AND CHILTON FESTIVAL 2015

5.1 Timetable and Liaison

The Ceremonial Officer reported that preparations are coming together. He has met with Chilton Festival Chairman Bob Girling to discuss overlapping aspects. He and the Secretary are composing the timetables for the event which forms a to-do list.

Bob Girling has already asked the Harwell Campus management for the use of the Memorial Stone site and car park and site which they have agreed to. He also suggested that a couple more Poppy Appeal collecting buckets are provided. However last year was a bigger crowd than usual so they may not be needed.

5.2 Flypast

The Ceremonial Officer read out a letter received from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight that the Branch has been unsuccessful in the application for a flypast, but we can apply again. This is the third year we have been unsuccessful. The Chairman said that they would be attending other bigger events.

Bob Girling now works at RAF Benson and he will approach the squadrons stationed there.

5.3 Participating Groups and Contributors

The Ceremonial officer has drafted an invitation to the Officer Commanding 38 Group RAF following their reformation last year. 38 Group flew from RAF Harwell to Normandy so it is appropriate that they attend.

Bob Girling has mentioned that the European Space Agency is moving on to Harwell Campus before June so they could be included and may be informed via the site bulletin on the event.

Ian Clarke reported that the Oxfordshire Rider's Branch is not able to attend as they have another event already booked for the day and some of their members are going to Normandy.

The Ceremonial Officer has also written invitations to: Didcot ATC, Wantage ATC, Chilton Scouts, Chilton School, the Parachute Regiment Association, the Glider Pilot's Regiment Association, the Royal Air Force Association and a general invitation to the Veterans Groups. These have been approved by the Chairman and will be sent shortly.

The Secretary said that he will write invitations to the Didcot Mayor, and the Chilton and Harwell Parish Council Chairmen and requests for help to the Bugler, First Aider and Bag Piper.

5.4 Publicity

The Ceremonial Officer has written an article with details of the event. It has been sent to the Harwell News and is included in the June edition. He will also put details on the Harwell Branch Parades Facebook page. Bob Girling has written an article for the Chilton Chronicle about the Chilton Festival which mentions the parade and service and is writing an internet blog with information.

The Secretary said that he will send the Ceremonial Officer's article to the Parish Council website, Chilton Chronicle and Church Broadsheet, and add details to the Branch Web page.

The Ceremonial Officer said that the estate agents at the new Chilton Fields estate have closed.

5.5 Refreshments

Last year the refreshments after the Service were provided at the Chilton Festival site as it was only 100 yards from the Memorial Stone. This year the Chilton Festival will be held in the Chilton Village Hall which is about a mile from the Stone. He has discussed this with Bob Girling and refreshments can be laid on at the hall. However it is a considerable distance to walk so people will drive there and car parking at the hall is restricted. Also it has no bar (though one could be set up).

The Ceremonial Officer asked if the refreshments should be at the Harwell Village RBL Club instead. Discussion ensued:

- The Chairman agreed.
- The Club Chairman said that there would be no problem with this as long as they knew how many people to expect. The bar would be fine; if light refreshments were required the cost would vary depending on how many were expected.
- The Chairman asked the Treasurer if sufficient funds are available.
- The Treasurer replied that because the Membership fees direct debit has been moved back this year to the first week in May, there is a degree of uncertainty on the exact balances in the accounts but we will have the funds available.
- The Ceremonial Officer asked how much it would cost.
- The Club Chairman said that he should talk to Yvonne Hinchliffe, she and her team will do a fantastic spread. The key concern is that the Branch does not specify catering for 100 then only 10 attend or vice versa.
- The Ceremonial Officer said that the last time the refreshments were here two years ago the Branch catered for 50 people but only 20 turned up. He suggested an estimate of 30 people.

The Chairman suggested that this is left in abeyance pending discussions about attendees and pricing. The Treasurer agreed as it would allow the direct debit to be taken and the available funds to be clear.

Agreed by the Committee

The Club Chairman asked if he should book the date for this. The Ceremonial Officer said that he should.

Agreed by the Committee.

5.6 Chilton Festival

Bob Girling is keeping the Ceremonial Officer informed via regular updates and discussion. There is a selection of Festival Committee roles available if anyone is interested in helping. They meet at the Rose and Crown. They have submitted a number of requests for funding.

6. ENROLLMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

There were no applications this month.

7. SECRETARY'S REPORT:

7.1 Storage of Branch Documents

The Secretary had made some progress on disposal of correspondence. Movement of signed minutes to the archive boxes is in hand.

7.2 Archive Boxes in club

A further sort of the boxes, disposal of old items and production of a new contents list is in hand.

7.3 Lending Minutes to Harwell History Group and Moving to Oxfordshire Records Office.

Reply awaited from HQ / County. The Secretary will chase this up again.

7.4 Branch Web Page

The Secretary suggested he continues to monitor and log differences for another month then gather some statistics.

The Secretary has yet to get a name to use as acknowledgement from the Chilton Community Facebook page on their D Day photo. He suggested using "Chilton Community Facebook Page".

Agreed by the Committee.

The Secretary has replied to David Marsh that his wording on membership renewal was discussed but we will leave any changes in abeyance pending the new membership procedures from HQ.

The Secretary suggested that he adds details of the Poppy Walk to the Poppy Appeal page with the registration instructions and sponsor form.

Agreed by the Committee.

7.5 Distribution of Branch Minutes and County Circular.

The Secretary thanked those who checked sections of the minutes and replying so quickly. He distributed the March 2014 County Circular and February 2015 Minutes to Committee Members and put copies in the Club folder. David Marsh has put the minutes on the web site.

Approximate Cost: £ 5.70.

Approximate cost of other printing: £ 5.60.

The Branch is now has only 1/2 black cartridge in the printer.

7.6 HP Printing

The Secretary has not looked into this any further.

7.7 Recruitment of New Members - Extract from Royal Charter

Following the agreement at the last meeting the Secretary will no longer record that new members sign the charter extract. There are some leaflets on the Legion's national website; the Secretary will print a few copies or obtain some from HQ.

7.8 War Memorial (See also item 13.3)

The Secretary has replied to the Parish Clerk and Chairman mentioning their previous correspondence about the plaque requiring repair.

7.9 2014 AGM Follow Up

The AGM Minutes are in hand.

7.10 Stephen Freeman School Fete.

The Secretary has replied to the school PTA that the Committee feels that Didcot Branch should be given the opportunity to attend first and gave the contact details for Didcot, if not we would be happy to make arrangements. They replied that they will keep us informed.

Ian Clarke said that the Vice Chairman followed this up with a phone call to the Didcot Branch Chairman. The Oxfordshire Rider's Branch has also been in touch.

Arrangements are in hand to get a link from the Legion National web site to the Branch web site.

7.11 First Names Read at War Memorial Service (See also item 13.1).

Following agreement at last month's meeting the Secretary replied to Jane Woolley, Secretary of Harwell Church PCC that we agreed to this and that the President had a list of names.

7.12 Membership Council Elections

Ballot paper sent straight after the February Meeting.

7.13 Voice Recorder.

The Secretary suggested that he can store this item.

No Objections.

7.14 Insult to Injury Petition

The Secretary read out the letter and proposed that he sign and send it on behalf of the Branch.

Agreed by the Committee.

Individuals can also send in a letter. Copies are available from the Secretary.

8. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

CURRENT PAID UP MEMBERSHIP: stands at 268

9. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer reported that accounts stood as follows as of 3rd March 2015:

HARWELL BRANCH

Current Account:	£ 3650.65
B.F.I. Account	<u>£ 1170.12</u>
<u>Total:</u>	<u>£ 4820.77</u>

9.1 Direct Debit of National Membership Fees to Headquarters

Because of the introduction of the new membership procedures and database, this will now be taken in the first week in May rather than February, so there is a longer interval between receiving the money and HQ taking it.

If the amount taken is the same as last year, then the Branch will be £251 down on last year (though less should be taken as there are fewer members). The Membership Secretary said that the Branch has 100 fewer members than last year, dropping from 360 members to 260. The Treasurer said that in this case there will be a lot less taken out, but he is not certain of the actual amount. The accounts are still healthy so there will be enough to pay for refreshments if we decide to provide them.

The Chairman asked if there were any questions.

No questions.

10. CORRESPONDENCE:

The Chairman received the following two items:

10.1 VE Day Celebrations National Information.

The message is to put the Legion at the heart of the celebrations which will take place over 8th-10th May. Guidance for Branches holding events is included.

10.2 Visitor Volunteer Role Guidelines

This is a framework to strengthen and grow the role across the Branch network to offer comradeship. They are looking for volunteers to visit beneficiaries and their families. Our Branch does not currently have any Visitors. The Secretary will make copies as required.

Other Items:

10.3 County Circular March 2015

10.4 Legion Update March 2015

10.5 National Conference Special Circular (postal)

Including: Provisional Agenda and programme, decisions on excluded items, CVs of candidates for Conference Committee and delegate forms (due back by 10th April).

10.6 Important Membership Information

There will be a change to new database, no membership applications will be accepted from March 27th until May. Branches retain any applications. The new system to join on line should be available from 18th May. Discussion ensued:

- Ian Clarke said that he had heard unconfirmed reports that there will no longer be any cash payments to Branches, cash renewal payments will be made at Post Offices. Once HQ receives the money they send the membership card back. The 6 membership databases that are currently used that do not talk to each other will be rationalised into one database. People will make their own changes to their details going forward. It should be simpler but it will be up to members to renew rather than Branches chasing them.
- The Membership Secretary asked about older Branch members that are not on line.
- Ian Clarke said that there were some objections going back to HQ hence the new method of paying cash at Post Offices else a lot of members would be lost.
- The Treasurer said that it is not as personal.

10.7 Normandy 2015 Remembrance Travel

Funded by LIBOR fines, includes itinerary and dates.

10.8 County Bowls Competition 2015

Details including poster, rules and entry form. The Secretary contacted member John Pigott (who completed the form) and the Chairman who gave permission for the form to be signed by the Secretary. The Secretary signed the form today and Mr. Pigott will send it.

10.9 Afghanistan Service of Thanksgiving 13th March – received 2nd March.

10.10 Membership Administration Portal

Branch Officers and up to 3 Committee members can have a Legion email address, access to Microsoft Office applications “Office 365”, secure document storage and access to the new membership database. All provided by Microsoft. If an Officer resigns the email address and emails are passed on to the next incumbent. Details are due back by 10th April.

10.11 VE Day Celebrations

The Legion is to participate in the Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph on 8th May, Concert at Horse Guards on 9th May and Service at Westminster Abbey on 10th May.

Veterans are invited to attend. Advice on organising local events is available. There may be requests to help civic events.

Veterans and those who attended the original celebrations are asked to submit stories for broadcast or publication.

10.12 Kartforce March Updates – Motor racing for limbless Veterans.

10.13 Legassee March Update Veterans interview website

10.14 Emails on Branch Web Site Usual special events and business courses - 90 items.

11. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER REPORT:

11.1 D Day 2014 Wreath Donation

Ian Clarke reported on behalf of the Poppy Appeal Organiser that the outstanding donation has now been received.

12. STANDARD BEARER REPORT

The President reported that he and the Standard Bearer had attended Peter McConville's funeral. The hearse was pulled by two horses. His widow said that he had not renewed his membership as he had become bedridden.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

13.1 List of Names on War Memorial for Harwell Church PCC (See also item 7.11)

The President had brought in a list of full names of the fallen with where they were buried. He was prepared to lend it temporarily to the Rector. He read details of some of the fallen. There were three servicemen from the Royal Berkshire Regiment. The list includes the fallen from World War 1 and 2. The Secretary said that he would make a copy for the PCC.

13.2 List of Fallen Buried in Harwell War Graves and Grove Airfield History

The President had also brought a list of the fallen who are buried in Harwell War Graves in the Cemetery including where they died and details of the accidents and crashes that had cost them their lives, all around this area. He remembers very well a plane that flew over his house then crashed near Ardington. They came from all over the Country; some were buried elsewhere. Some were as young as 18 years old.

The President had also brought a book titled "Grove Airfield 1941-1996" by Don Summers.

13.3 Harwell War Memorial Repairs. (See also item 7.8)

John Belton asked if anything more had been heard from the Parish Council as his grandson had not heard anything.

Mr Belton said that one stone was cracked. His grandson had asked if the Council wanted two new stones carved and fitted so they are the same. We have been waiting for nearly a year and it will be on again before the repair is done.

The Secretary said that he will contact the Parish Clerk.

13.4 Gold Badge for Branch Member X

John Belton proposed that the Branch recommends a particular member for a Gold Badge to recognise the amount of work he had contributed to the Legion. It could be left too late. He proposed that the Secretary obtain the appropriate form to put his name forward to the

County Awards Committee. The Branch would buy the badge but the County Awards Committee reviews the recommendation.

The President said that the County Awards Committee review the Branch's recommendation to ensure that awards were given to the right people.

Proposal: The Branch recommends member X for a Gold Badge.

Proposed: John Belton Seconded: Treasurer Carried Unanimously.

The Secretary said that we should enquire about the cost of the Badge. The meeting discussed various ways of meeting the cost.

The President said that we should look at other members so that members receive the awards that they deserve. Others have missed out in the past.

13.5 Club Bar Opening for Meeting

John Belton thanked the Club Chairman for opening the bar for the meeting as it was good to have some refreshments. There was general agreement.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 28th April 2015

There being no further business the Chairman wished all present a Happy Easter and closed the meeting at 20:59 hours.