

The Royal British
Legion
Harwell Branch
BR1805

Monthly Branch Meeting
Held on 28th July 2015
In the Branch Headquarters at Westfield
At 20.00 Hours.

ATTENDANCE:

R.C. East	- President
B. Mulford	- Vice 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

COMMITTEE: G Street, J Belton

MEMBERS: None

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, I. Clarke, J Fleming.

3. MINUTES OF THE JUNE 2015 MEETING:

The Chairman asked if all present had seen the Minutes. All had, so the minutes were not read out. There were no corrections. 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 be covered in the reports.

5. D DAY AND CHILTON FESTIVAL 2015

The Ceremonial Officer said that the Secretary would report on the remaining items:

5.1 Publicity

The Ceremonial Officer has written a report which the Secretary has sent to the editors of the Harwell News, Chilton Chronicle and County Circular. This has been acknowledged by editors Martin Ricketts and Liz Morris. David Marsh has added it to the Remembrance page of the Branch website with an update to the rest of page.

5.2 Thank you letters

These have been sent to: Didcot and Wantage ATCs, Chilton Scouts, Vale District Council Chair, GPRA, PRA, Duncan Rogers, Rev. Pam Rolls, RAFA, Chilton Festival, Chilton School (Written by the Ceremonial Officer).

Didcot Mayor, Chilton Parish Council, Harwell Parish Council, Bugler, Bag Piper, and Harwell Club. (Written by the Secretary)

Replies have been received from: the GPRA thanking us for organising the event, Wantage ATC who will display the letter, Rev. Pam Rolls and Tony Hughes also stating he has the future dates in his diary.

John McFarlane-Horgan the Bag Piper has also replied that he may be relocating as his father has passed on so he may not be available for Remembrance Sunday.

The Secretary suggested that he could also write to thank 999EMC for first aid cover and Frank Dumbleton for photography.

Agreed by the Committee.

5.3 Service Sheets.

The 51 service sheets that were collected are now stored in the archive boxes for next year.

5.4 Timetable

The Secretary will compose and distribute version 3 shortly once the final actions are complete. This is mainly distributed by email.

6. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AND ARMISTICE DAY SERVICES (ROAD CLOSURES)

The Secretary said that he usually applies for the road closure orders from the Vale of the White Horse District Council for both events during August. He suggested that he apply for the same lengths of roads and times as last year.

PROPOSAL: The Secretary applies for Road Closures for the Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Services.

PROPOSED: Ceremonial Officer SECONDED Treasurer

CARRIED

7. ENROLLMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

There was 1 application this month, the applicant was not present:

J Joyce

Agreed by Committee

The Club application form has been passed to Club Committee.

8. SECRETARY'S REPORT

8.1 Storage of Branch Documents

Disposal of items listed last month is ongoing.

8.2 Archive Boxes in club

The Secretary has had a further look through these boxes and sort while doing the research

for the awards. He thanked the Club Secretary for arranging the long term loan of a store cupboard key. Disposal of the items listed last month is in hand.

There is also a presentation book in a box called "The Legion Book" containing poetry and other writing. It appears to have been donated to the Branch some years ago (possibly via Jock Cowie whose name is on the packing). It is in very good condition and may be worth something. The Secretary asked if the Branch should continue to store it or dispose of it for the Poppy Appeal.

The Chairman suggested that the Secretary bring the book to the next Branch meeting for inspection. It was stated that Jock Cowie died in 1989.

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

No replies from County or HQ

8.4 Branch Web Page

David Marsh has now disconnected the AOL address from the branch@harwellrbl.co.uk address. The Secretary will keep the account active for now as there is still some ongoing correspondence that is being sent through it. He will use the gmail account in future.

David Marsh has added the update to the Poppy Appeal page about the Sponsored Walk and Feast stand and the D Day update. Mr. Marsh has suggested that this page is split into Remembrance: Armistice and Remembrance: June D Day with funerals moved to Welfare and Other Parades on the introduction with the introduction rewritten. This is because the page is quite long and people may not read all of the way down.

The Ceremonial Officer said that this makes sense.

No objections.

The Secretary said that an update to the Membership Page is required now the changes to the renewal and new member's procedures have been announced, to outline the renewal methods and letter and that you can no longer renew via the Branch or Club.

No objections.

The Branch has received an enquiry from Rhiannon Rogers of Counselling Directory website (it contains lists of Counsellors by area) asking to put a link from the Branch Welfare page to their website. The Secretary has replied referring them to the National Website. He thinks that we cannot have a link to our website as this would effectively recommending it and we are not in a position to assess if their website is suitable. There was general agreement to this.

Agreed by the Committee.

8.5 Distribution of Branch Minutes and County Circular.

The Secretary thanked those who checked sections of the minutes. He distributed the July and August 2015 County Circular and June 2015 Minutes to Committee Members and put copies in the Club folder. David Marsh has put the minutes on the web site.

Approximate Cost: £ 8.10 (long Minutes and County Circular)

Other printing approximate cost: £ 6.30

8.6 Hewlett Packard Printing Instant Ink

No news from County or Headquarters on Direct Debits from Branch Accounts.

The Secretary has visited the Cartridge UK shop in Didcot that was suggested by the Treasurer: They charge £10 for refilling the large black Cartridges we use compared with £17 for a new one from HP or £21 from Staples (price for 3 or more). They rinse the cartridges with distilled water, fill them under vacuum and test them thoroughly.

There is no guarantee how permanent or long lasting their ink is, but there is no guarantee with the ink we use now or have used in the past. Other prices are £8 for the small cartridges and £10 for colour small and large colour cartridges.

The Secretary has an empty large black and colour cartridges so he suggested trying this. There was general agreement to this.

The Secretary has just started a new colour cartridge so he suggested that he tries a refill of the black cartridge first.

Agreed by the Meeting.

8.7 Recruitment of New Members - Extract from Royal Charter

The Secretary has ordered some general and welfare leaflets.

8.8 War Memorial,

No news. John Belton's has passed his grandson's phone number to the Secretary to pass on to the Parish Council.

8.9 Membership Portal and Legion Emails addresses. (See also 9.2)

The Secretary has logged in and sent a test email.

8.10 2014 AGM Follow Up

The AGM Minutes are in hand.

8.11 Link to National Web Site (Stephen Freeman School Fete enquiry).

The Secretary has emailed the webmaster of the National Website to have a link to our web site. He replied asking the Secretary to fill in a request form for one of their standard websites. The Secretary suggested that as we already have an extensive website this is left in abeyance.

Agreed by the Committee.

8.12 First Names Read at War Memorial Service

The Secretary has replied to Jane Woolley that we have no further information on the names and to try the Imperial War Museum. Kath Luker has also done some research:

“I have progressed a little further with your questions. I have just had a 20 minute conversation with Ross Viner in Canada who has confirmed what I said. The Rice on the memorial was Geoffrey Howard Rice and the memorial was wrongly engraved. G and H in old style writing was often wrongly interpreted as C and N.

I am struggling with the name Busby as too many appear on the CWGC graves lists. The nearest so far is someone living in Wallingford. I will continue looking. My guess is that he was the nephew or grandson of someone living in the village and would have been included out of respect for that family. Can I assume that the PCC records have been searched because the Vicar would have read the names out on instruction. Kath Luker”.

8.13 Visitor Volunteer Return

The Secretary has sent the June return (0 Volunteers and 0 visits). The returns will be quarterly from now on so the next one is due on the 5th October for July-September.

8.14 Membership Badges

The Secretary has sent an enquiry to Wantage Branch if they have any badges to avoid paying the £4 delivery charged by Poppy Shop. Otherwise he will contact Bridie Spinks at Hanney. The Ceremonial Officer said that he would be visiting Hanney Branch the next day as part of his County Committee role and would ask there too.

8.15 Name of Person Who Maintains War Graves

The Secretary has drafted a letter for the Chairman's approval.

8.16 Awards

The Secretary has obtained the remaining required information from the minutes and other documents (back to the late 1970s!) from the archive boxes and made some enquiries with Branch Members.

Some more awards applications have been investigated, one was not possible as the person already had the award. A couple of application forms (including the award discussed at previous meetings) have been approved and signed by the Chairman and sent to County. They are under consideration by the County Awards Committee. To maintain confidentiality and in case the awards do not get approved the Secretary can not say any more.

9. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

CURRENT PAID UP MEMBERSHIP: stands at 276 (Unchanged from last month)

9.1 Last Month's New Member

The new member last month had not signed his application form so the Membership Secretary has sent it to him to sign but he has not returned it yet. A lot of new members are mistakenly signing the Gift Aid section of the form.

9.2 Membership Application Portal (MAP)

The Treasurer reported that this is a central website for accessing accounts, memberships, forms and other information. Harwell Branch has its own section containing membership lists: current paid up members, members who have not paid and grades of membership held (including Ordinary and Life Members).

Committee Members who have MAP accounts can access the lists via the "Berkshire County" link then clicking Harwell at the top right corner.

Secretary's Note: Other Committee Members that require a MAP account can contact the Secretary.

10. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The Treasurer reported that accounts stood as follows as of 9th July 2015:

HARWELL BRANCH

Current Account:	£ 461.73
B.F.I. Account	£ 1181.67
<u>Total:</u>	<u>£ 1643.40</u>

10.1 Year End Accounts Sign-Off

The Treasurer said that as the accounting year end has passed, the annual accounts now need signing off. He showed printouts of the accounts from LOMAS and the Receipts and Payments form around the room and answered questions. He explained that as well as the LOMAS on line system he has also maintained the written accounts ledger which he also showed around the meeting. The opening and closing balances of the BFI and current account on the ledger matched those on the LOMAS printouts.

The Branch is 73p down on last year and about £22 up on the BFI but there are some more memberships to go through.

PROPOSAL: The accounts are accepted by the Branch Committee

PROPOSED: Geoff Street SECONDED John Belton CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer signed the three copies of the 2014-2015 Receipts and Payments form and the other required forms. The Vice Chairman should sign at the next meeting. The Treasurer will create more copies as required and further review may take place at next month's meeting if needed.

10.2 Auditing of Accounts

The Treasurer said that the next task is to get the accounts audited by an independent examiner. It is proving difficult to get an auditor this year: The bank is unable to help. He has asked some local financial advisers, telling them we are a charity. They quoted £250 for two hours work. He has emailed the County Membership Support Officer Jennifer Strange to inform her of the situation and ask her if the remaining Reading based Legion Independent Examiner can come over to sign the accounts.

The Vice President suggested that the Treasurer ask the Club Treasurer Ron Haley as he is a retired accountant. The Treasurer said he would ask. He has also asked Didcot Branch.

11. CORRESPONDENCE:

11.1 Letter from National Chairman on Legion National Trustees

The Chairman and Secretary have received copies of this letter. The Chairman explained that there was a motion at the latest National Conference proposing that the National Board of Trustees goes back to elected rather than appointed trustees. The vote was very close but not carried.

The National Chairman has stated that the Legion started appointing trustees 10 years ago on the advice of the Charities Commission. The elected trustees would have agreed to this at the time. The current trustees were very hurt by the vote. The National Chairman would never countenance going back to appointed trustees. He gave biographies of the current trustees at National Conference to show the wide spectrum of skills they have.

The letter asks that all Branch members are made aware of this. The Chairman asked the Secretary to place a copy of the letter in the folder in the Club so all members have the opportunity to read it.

11.2 County Circular July / August 2015 (Distributed)

11.3 Cash Payment Preference Letters Questions and Answers

Questions and Answers on the available options.

11.4 Update Between Circulars

- 2015 County Handbook 3 copies to Branches (received)
- County Festival of Remembrance is 31 October 2015 at Wiangels College Reading. Tickets via Secretary.
- Copy of letter sent to cash paying members requesting their preferred payment option. If the member does not reply, a further reminder to be sent with 3 options: cheque, Pay Point and Credit/debit card. The preferred option will be set to the method that is used.

11.5 Kartforce July Updates – Motor racing for limbless Veterans

Results and upcoming races and events. Interviews on BBC radio and TV and Sky.

11.6 Emails on Branch Web Site

Usual special events and business courses - 73 items.

12. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER REPORT:

No report.

13. STANDARD BEARER REPORT

The Ceremonial Officer reported that the Standard had not been paraded and he was not aware of any future parades.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

14.1 Club Meeting 3rd July 2015

The President, Standard Bearer, Ceremonial Officer, Membership Secretary and Secretary attended this meeting.

The Secretary said that the meeting was called to inform the membership that the Club Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and some Club committee members will stand down at the Club AGM in January. There was a call for more volunteers to take over before then. They could be from the sports clubs and other organisations associated with the Club. Since then the Club Secretary has informed the Secretary that this is being progressed. Discussion ensued:

- The Chairman said that this was all of the Club Officers stepping down and asked if the Club would close.
- The Ceremonial Officer said that the Club Committee did not want it to close. They also want to determine under what name it would continue under. The Membership Secretary said that it could be called a Legion or Village Club.
- John Belton said that the Club wants to break away from the Legion.
- The Chairman said that the Club has already promised that the Branch will always be able to meet here every month and undertake necessary Poppy Appeal work. The Ceremonial Officer said that this had also been stated at the meeting.
- John Belton said that the Branch would lose members and membership fees if the Club stops being a Legion Club.
- The Membership Secretary said that the Branch is going to lose members anyway.
- The Chairman said that disassociation has always been possible.
- John Belton said that the Club Committee should contact the Parish Council regarding the rental arrangements which could be changed with a new Club.
- The Vice President said that when this building was completed he thought that the Club would run for 25-30 years. It has run for 28 years so far. It would have come to an end

more quickly had it not been for the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts. It was not expected to last the whole 50 years of the lease as a Legion Club. That is why the Club was put under Parish Council ownership from the beginning so it could be taken over by the Parish Council for local benefit.

- Geoff Street said that this was a good idea.
- The Vice President said that he understands that the Club Committee has already discussed possible new rental arrangements with the Parish Council and they have agreed. The new Club Committee members will also need a new set of rules for the local magistrates.
- The Chairman thanked the Vice President for this and said that a lot of Legion Clubs are closing in Oxfordshire. It was said that Winnersh, Botley and Headington Clubs have closed.
- John Belton said that the Oxford County Officer said that there are many Branches local to Oxford are closing though it is a City. Harwell Branch has got the Club. Didcot Branch used to have 100 members but there are now only a handful of members though Didcot is a big town.
- The Vice President said that a lot of work has been taken away from the Branches though there is a lot of work that can be done if Branches want to.

14.2 Union Flag used Outside the Club.

The President reported that the dry cleaners in Didcot have dry cleaned the flag at a cost of £10.50. He did not want reimbursing for this.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 25th August 2015

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:52 hours.