

The Royal British Legion  
Harwell Branch  
BR1805

**Branch Annual General Meeting**  
**Held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015**  
**In the Branch Headquarters at Westfield**  
**At 20.00 Hours.**

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**ATTENDANCE:**

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

**COMMITTEE:** J Belton

**MEMBERS:** None

**1. EXHORTATION AND KOHIMA EPITAPH (ACT OF REMEMBRANCE):**

The President opened the meeting by welcoming all present; he asked the Committee bear in mind the members who passed on during the last year and their wives, all of whom were staunch Branch members.

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

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies received from: J. Fisher, J Fleming, B. Mulford, Mrs. S.E. Pateman, G. Street.

**3. MINUTES OF THE 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:**

All present had seen the minutes so they were not read out. There were no corrections. The President asked if they could be accepted as a true record. On acceptance they were duly signed by the President.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM 2014 AGM MINUTES**

None.

## **5. PRESIDENTS REPORT:**

The President opened by saying that he currently considers that this will be his last year as President. His term of office comes up for renewal in 2016 and he currently intends to stand down at the next AGM. He has had a good run and he is not getting any younger. He will not leave the Legion unless they close it down and will still turn up to meetings.

He thanked the Branch Officers and Committee:

The President thanked the Chairman who took the job on temporarily 20 years ago. It is very seldom that he misses a meeting, only once this year when the Vice Chairman stood in. The Chairman has been a good servant to this place and the President hopes he gets the honours he deserves for this in the not too distant future.

The Secretary keeps us well informed, possibly too well informed. He is always present to do the job. The President thanked him for his work.

The Treasurer is also always present. It is a pity that headquarters do not realise how valuable the Treasurer is to a Branch and it sometimes seems like they do not trust us which is also a pity considering the amount of time the Branches have been running. There have been one or two dishonest ones though not many. Thank you Simon, long may you continue.

The President thanked the Standard Bearers who attend all of the Branch events. People sometimes ask why there is no Standard Bearer present he replies that we may not have been informed about the event in advance as time off work is required. If you are aware of an event that may require a Standard Bearer let us know and we can pay our respects. He also thanked the Deputies as if one Standard Bearer can't attend an event another may be able to.

The Poppy Appeal Organiser is going to retire shortly. This is a big shame because over the past couple of years she has put in a lot of good work for us. It is not easy to do this coupled with the welfare work and visits she has also undertaken. The Poppy Appeal total is up every year despite the fact that there are very few Poppy Collectors especially in Harwell itself. There are a couple of people that have collected for many years have had to stop last year. We should try to get more collectors but you can't make people do it.

The President concluded by saying that whoever takes over from him should not be like those Presidents who turn up now and again or not at all and you only see them at an AGM. The President is there to sit and listen and give his opinion when required; if he thinks the Branch is going wrong he should mention it. Thank you all very much indeed.

## **6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**

The Chairman said that the President has left him nothing to say except to express his thanks. He had written to the Poppy Appeal Organiser to thank her for her work and for the way she got the Poppy Appeal Organiser job growing, she has done an excellent job; really brilliant. Thank you again.

He thanked all who put in the effort to the Branch. He thanked the Secretary is so quick and efficient he doesn't understand how he keeps up.

He thanked the Treasurer for keeping us in order with the finances.

He thanked the Ceremonial Officer who does a brilliant job. He is of a high standard reminiscent of the military.

He thanked the Standard Bearer for carrying the Standard when required.

The Chairman said that he was sorry that the President was standing down. It will be very strange after all these years. He hopes we find someone who can do as good a job as Reginald East as President and Wendy Clarke as Poppy Appeal Organiser. Otherwise he would be concerned as no candidates have come forward so far. If no one comes forward over the next few months the Poppy Appeal may go into abeyance. He thanked Mrs. Clarke for doing the Remembrancetide Collection this year so that we have time to look for a successor.

The Chairman concluded by saying that he wished to reiterate what the President had said.

## **7. SECRETARY'S REPORT**

### **7.1 Distribution of Minutes and County Circular**

The Secretary continues to distribute the Minutes, County Circular and other documents in advance of the meeting and hope members still find this useful.

He thanked the Committee members for their prompt replies when he asks them to check sections prior to distribution, and for their prompt corrections to any errors in the initial minutes.

### **7.2 Printing Costs**

County and Headquarters continue to email almost all correspondence, with the resulting high volume of printing. Only County and National Conference and Election documents are sent by post.

In the 11 months since the last AGM the Secretary has printed about 1735 sheets at a very rough cost estimate of £122 on black ink cartridges and paper and he expects to reach the 2014 totals by the end of next month.(2014 was 1800/ £127).

The cartridges used were: about 5 large and 2 small black cartridges and also about 1.5 colour cartridges. It's difficult to be accurate as the cartridges do not usually run at year end and there is an overlap.

Because the Secretary uses the printer for other organisations he has donated 1.5 of the small cartridges (other 0.5 covered by a loyalty voucher) and all of the paper used this year.

The Secretary and the Treasurer have researched cheaper supplies and the Secretary has brought cartridges direct from Hewlett Packard for a £5 saving on each cartridge and has just started getting the cartridges refilled at Cartridge UK for a further £5 saving. So next year's printing should be cheaper.

The printing arranged by the Treasurer and other officers at no charge is a big saving for the Branch and the Secretary thanked them for this.

The Secretary will try to cut printing further, using email for correspondence and only sending paper copies where there is no alternative and checking before printing long documents.

### **7.3 Branch Web Page**

The Branch Web page is essential to publicise the Branch itself and Branch events and publish Branch documents such as the minutes and the Poppy Appeal Organiser's tables.

The Treasurer and Ceremonial Officer also do an important job running the “Branch Parades” Facebook page with news updates and albums of pictures. It is very useful for publicity and as a single storage point for these materials. The Secretary will ask David Marsh to put a link to it from the Branch pages – unfinished business from last year’s AGM.

The Secretary had obtained web site viewing statistics from Branch webmaster David Marsh.

Mr. Marsh’s comments:

- Traffic peaks in October - November
- There is a marginal increase in traffic in 2015 compared with 2014.
- Average per month is 316 visitors viewing 922 pages, approx. 3 per visit.

The Secretary summarised the rest of the statistics:

- The Branch root page is read 379 times
- The Branch Committee Remembrance and Poppy Appeal pages were read over 300 times.
- The minutes were downloaded 167 times.
- The new Remembrance and D Day pages (which have only been up for a couple of weeks) have already been downloaded 6 times each.

It is a well used resource.

The Branch is fortunate to have an excellent website designed and hosted by a professional web designer in David Marsh. He puts in a large amount of unpaid work on our behalf maintaining the site and implementing the updates the Secretary sends him and suggesting and implementing improvements. The Secretary proposed that he writes him a letter of thanks.

**Agreed by the Committee.**

#### **7.4 Branch Email Address**

The Secretary checks this most days. Since the last AGM it has received some external enquiries and D Day emails and about 70 marketing emails a month. Following completion of the trial with AOL and Gmail the Secretary has switched to Gmail to receive these. It is better at filtering out spam emails and saves some time.

#### **7.5 Branch Procedures**

The Membership Handbook and Royal Charter have had a couple of minor amendments this year. The Secretary continues to review and monitor these documents for any changes to Branch Procedures.

The Branch should consider requirements such as a Branch three year plan and Branch General Meetings with a guest speaker. Though some requirements may not be practical or necessary for a Village Branch with a low budget, or may require far more work for no gain in effectiveness.

#### **7.6 Training Courses**

Unfortunately the Secretary still has not attended any courses since the general Branch Management course five years ago. He will investigate further courses.

#### **7.7 Branch Archives and Stored Documents**

The Secretary still uses Microsoft “Onedrive” to back up all Branch documents. He has also made some backup DVDs – a work in progress.

He continues to sort through and dispose of old and superseded documents and duplicates as authorised by the Committee. It made it a lot easier to find information required during the year and the boxes are a bit lighter and easier to move about.

He is grateful for the help given by the Club Secretary in accessing the archive boxes and for loan of a key to the Store Cupboard so he can access the boxes and the Branch meeting regalia (table front etc.) when required.

### **7.8 Thanks to Club Committee, Bar Staff and Branch Committee**

The Secretary thanked all on the Club Management Committee and bar staff for their continued co-operation and support this year. This includes providing storage space for the Branch documents archive and pictures, the shelving display, notice board space, arranging the Poppy Room for our meetings, attending events and entertaining guests. Thanks in particular to the Club Secretary for arranging the opening of the building when the bar is shut.

He appreciates the efforts and enthusiasm of the Ceremonial Officer who puts a lot of time and work into the preparations for the Branch's commemoration ceremonies even though he has increased commitments since his election to the County Committee. This includes attending the liaison meetings for the Chilton Festival and D Day through to arranging for the new Public Address speakers for the service, maintaining the contacts with the many Scout, Guide, School and cadet groups that attend – they change leaders and addresses fairly regularly. He continues researching the flypast and if we get one it will be down to his diligent efforts.

The Secretary thanked all the hard working Branch Committee for the help, advice, co-operation and encouragement in the year; it encourages him to do more, though there is a limit to the time and effort he can contribute and roles he can take on given his personal circumstances.

Doing the bucket collections at the D Day service was a highlight as always this year as the Secretary saw the generosity of the public towards the Legion cause first hand.

Reading the articles in Legion Magazine, talking to the Veterans and Committee members, and helping at the D Day and Remembrance Ceremonies he continues to consider it is an honour to work as a Secretary for the Royal British Legion. Thank you all.

## **8. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The Secretary read out the following on behalf of the Membership Secretary:

### **Membership stands at 279**

#### **8.1 New Membership Numbers**

I have finally heard back from the County Membership Support Officer and am informed that everyone now has a new membership number so presume when you get your new card you will get your new number.

#### **8.2 New Members**

The County Membership Support Officer has contacted Novacraft about the two members that cannot sign their names because of illness and is still awaiting a reply. Also awaiting a reply about a lady who according to my records joined July 2015 but they have no record.

They also have no record of a member who according to me joined with his wife in October 2014, she is on the list but he isn't and the County MSO has advised me to send him another

application form, which I have done. The two applications were sent off together so how come they received one and not the other.

Another member, apparently they say the database was amended back in August that he had died, yet I saw him alive and well at Pat Connolly's funeral.

There are considerable problems with the new system.

She enclosed a donation to be passed on to the Poppy Appeal Organiser.

## **9. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

### **9.1 Annual Accounts**

The Treasurer said that all present would have already seen the annual accounts forms and signed them and they have been audited successfully. They now need further signatures at this AGM. Anyone is welcome to examine them.

**Proposal: That the accounts are adopted.**

**Proposed: Ceremonial Officer**

**Seconded: Poppy Appeal Organiser**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

The Receipt and Payments form and LOMAS reports were duly signed by the Secretary.

### **9.2 Income**

We have not yet received any Branch membership fee monies from Novacraft so there is no income at the moment. The Treasurer is trying to find out when they will be received but currently does not know when they will be paid. The Club Secretary said that the Club will be in the same situation.

### **9.3 Treasurer's Paying limit**

The Treasurer said that as the Branch no longer collects the Club membership fees and he no longer makes a bulk payment of the fees to the Club. He therefore suggested that his paying limit is reduced from the current level of £1000. Discussion ensued and the Treasurer answered questions:

- The largest cheque made recently other than membership fees was for about £100.
- The Treasurer could always come to the Committee to get approval for bigger amounts if required.
- The Ceremonial Officer and Treasurer suggested a limit of £200.

**Proposal: The Treasurer's paying limit without Committee approval is reduced from £1000 to £200**

**Proposed: Ceremonial Officer**

**Seconded: Secretary**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **9.4 Club Poppy Room Hire Fee**

Normally the Branch pays one year's hire fees in advance, but as times are difficult the Treasurer suggested to the Club Secretary that we pay monthly as we use the room. The hire fee is currently paid up to the November 2015 meeting (payment made last year). The Club Secretary said that in his opinion this would be acceptable.

There was general agreement to this because of the changes that may take place to the Club management and the lack of membership income to the Branch.

The Treasurer asked how much the Club would charge under this arrangement. The Club Secretary said he could not answer on behalf of the Club Committee but if the Branch was willing to pay the same as last year he could take that proposal to the Club Management Committee. The Treasurer said that we had been paying £25 up to now. Discussion ensued including:

- The Club Secretary said that he was not aware of any increase to the hire fees and could not think of any objections to keeping the fee the same
- The Standard Bearer asked if we could afford an increase to £30. The Treasurer said that he wanted to play it safe and keep to £25 this year as there are so many unknowns given the current circumstances. We could revert to annual payment when the situation was clearer.

**No Objections.**

### **9.5 Annual Summary Table**

The Treasurer distributed a summary table, attached to these minutes. He said that this is history of the accounts over the last 5 years. The years covered are along the top. There is a gap between 2013 and 2014 as this was when LOMAS came in and he could not produce the figures. He has now restarted records.

He said that the most important figures are in the two highlighted rows which are: Row 2 Total Cash Held – how much we hold as at the end of last year’s financial year in June and Row 18 Net increase / decrease in funds which is the difference between the start of the financial year and the end of the financial year.

Discussion ensued:

- The Standard Bearer said that we are 73p down on the year.
- The Ceremonial Officer said that we are spending what we are getting in.
- The Treasurer said that he thought that this was pretty good, though things may be different next year. The table does not mean much now but would be added to as the years go by.

The Ceremonial Officer said that this is only possible because of the Treasurer’s work, and he thanked him for restricting spending and encouraging outgoings when necessary.

The President asked if all were happy with the accounts and Treasurer’s Report.

**Agreed by the Committee.**

## **10. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER’S REPORT:**

### **10.1 Annual Accounts**

The Poppy Appeal Organiser distributed the accounts from the year that has just finished covering October 2014 to September 2015. (See Secretary’s note after item 10.4).

These have been finalised and a new Poppy Appeal account runs from this month on. The total raised is £4261.25. The Poppy Appeal Organiser talked through the major events of the year and answered questions:

### **10.2 D Day Service**

The D Day Service brings in quite a lot of money including the donations for the wreaths and bucket collection. The Poppy Appeal Organiser thanked the Secretary for doing the bucket collection, £89.53 was collected (this was missing from the table).

Getting the donations in this year for the D Day wreaths was more straightforward than in previous years.

### **10.3 Sponsored Walk**

The Ceremonial Officer asked about Didcot Air Training Corps (ATC) sponsorship money. The Poppy Appeal Organiser said that this cheque goes directly to County for paying in but should show up on the accounts. We received three other donations for the sponsored walk which are listed on the table. Her computer hard drive has broken preventing her from accessing her records. She will check this and the bucket collection as soon as she can.

### **10.4 November Remembrance Collections**

Mr and Mrs Packer stopped collecting last year (and sadly Mrs. Packer has since passed away) so we were down on collectors for November 2014. The Poppy Appeal Organiser thanked Abingdon RBL Branch for lending us the counting machine for the counting the money in the tins. She is now getting ready for this year's Remembrance collections.

The President said that the Poppy tin at the local architects would be collected early as they were leaving the village shortly.

She thanked all who helped with the Poppy Appeal this year especially the Assistant Poppy Appeal Organiser for his help all the way through the year.

The President and Chairman thanked the Poppy Appeal Organiser very much for her report and all her efforts.

**Secretary's Note:** The Poppy Appeal Organiser investigated shortly after the AGM and found that the cash banking on a couple of dates had been left off the table including the ATC and Bucket collection mentioned above. The corrected version of the table is attached to these minutes. This meant that the overall total as announced on the night was too low. **The revised total collected is £4511.68.** The revised accounts are attached to these minutes.

## **11. STANDARD BEARER'S REPORT**

The Standard Bearer reported that he had attended the two remembrance parades as required and funerals as requested including Peter McConville, Ted Blisset and Harold Connolly. It has been quite a quiet year.

The President said that as he said earlier it was a pity that the Standard had not been paraded at some events but if people wanted the Standard present they should let the Branch know. It took a lot of persuading to his employer to give him time off when he was Standard Bearer. The Standard Bearer said that unfortunately his employer won't give him time off work for this; however he had never missed an event as he took annual leave.

The President thanked him for turning up as often as he does and the Deputy Standard Bearers for their commitment. Very few Branches have a Deputy Standard Bearer; most just have one Standard Bearer.

## **12. CEREMONIAL OFFICER'S REPORT**

### **Harwell Branch Ceremonial Officer's report 2014 – Peter Davies**

Given the change in date for our AGM moving from November to October there is only the one event to offer a report back on, that of the Harwell Stone D-Day parade since the last AGM.



The third year the Branch as looked after this and it is building in success each year. Although we did not have the direct influence, of the Chilton Festival as we had in 2014, yet despite its new location and a smaller event, there continues to be strong public support and attendance at the Parade, which does help make all the effort worthwhile.

Following the reformation of 38 Group, AVM Tim Bishop was invited to join us. Initial correspondence was very positive and speaking with his secretary it appeared he was keen to attend. However due to other commitments which could not be moved or rearranged he was unable to attend – I shall try again for 2016.

Our VIPs list however was not short, with representatives from local councils, the onsite businesses and the familiar veterans associations and youth groups.

I did once again apply for a BBMF and then later looked into other flypast options but once again have been unsuccessful, I shall persevere in the hope we shall have a flypast once again. I am somewhat more positive for 2016 with the formation of the History Aircraft Flight Trust, the new civilian operator of the former Army Historical Aircraft Flight who will fly and are managed by the same team who last successfully provided a flypast.

There were however *some* subtle changes to the 2015 parade as I strive to reach a “perfect parade”, with small improvements each year. Most noticeable of which was the PA system from Chilton, thanks to Adrian Maughan and Brian Morris for this and the inclusion of a Bagpiper. John MacFarlane-Horgan was due to join us for the first time in 2014 but was unable to in the days leading up to the parade, but was a welcome addition this year and added a welcome musical note during the wreath laying.

In total 23 wreaths are recorded to have been laid, and **£89.53** was collected for the Poppy Appeal, thanks to Wendy Clarke, Peter Cox and Hazel King for walking around with collection buckets as they handed out service sheets.

Away from the Parade, the Standard was requested and attended the funerals mentioned in the Standard Bearer's report.

Nationally there is now a push from RBL HQ, rightly, to ensure that both Ceremonial Officers and Standard Bearers are fit for duty. There are many “old boys” who enjoy getting back on parade and continue on their ceremonial duties under the RBL banner. Some however are reaching an age and level of physical fitness where this is no longer practical. Indeed our own President in recent years has met the Remembrance Parade at the Village memorial in place of marching along the High Street.

I approve of this move, not just for the safety and health of those RBL members wanting to take part but it offers Branches the chance to recruit new, younger members and in turn avoid any “old boy” war veteran stereotype image the members and the RBL is so often known for.

Finally I wish to say it continues to be a privilege and honour to Serve Harwell Branch RBL, it is one of the more public facing roles the Branch has and thank you for your confidence in me not just on my parade presence, joined as I am by Charlie and Ian and thank them now for their efforts, but also in the organisation and coordination of the Parades we as a Branch manage. None of this would be possible without the help of the Branch Secretary, Peter Cox and so wish to take the opportunity to thank him for his support and diligence!

Comments included:

- The President said that it was a pleasure to attend the D Day ceremony. It once was ad-hoc and is now like an RSM parade.

- The President said that a lot of the wives of members had also passed on including Hilda “Scotty” Powell and Pat Connolly whose funeral he had attended.
- The Chairman said that he had never seen the Church so packed as for Pat Connolly’s funeral. The Treasurer said that it was standing room only.

### **13. WELFARE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

The Welfare Representative said that there was little to report. There were a few enquiries but they now go through to the general Legion 0800 number. The Secretary has passed her a few enquiries. She has taken details and passed them on.

Comments included:

- The Chairman agreed that the Branch just passes enquiries along now; it is good that there are not too many.
- The Welfare Representative said that she had a couple of enquiries where she gave them her phone number to report back. None did.

### **14. ELECTION OF OFFICERS and COMMITTEE:**

The President continued in the Chair for the election of a Chairman. There was only one candidate and he was willing to continue in office so Reginald White was elected, the President continued with the remainder of the elections.

### **15. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN, TREASURER, SECRETARY and COMMITTEE:**

The President said that Wendy Clarke was stepping down as Vice Chairman and asked if there were any nominations. John Belton suggested that Peter Davies would be a good candidate. He said that he was willing to take up the office. This nomination was proposed and seconded. There being no other candidate Peter Davies was duly elected Vice Chairman.

There was only one candidate for Secretary and he was willing to continue in the role so Peter Cox was duly elected.

There was only one candidate for Treasurer and he was willing to continue in the role so Simon Haycox was duly elected.

The President read out the names of the candidates, proposers and seconders for all Officers and Committee members:

#### **OFFICERS for a 1 year term**

<b>OFFICE</b>	<b>CANDIDATE</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>	<b>SECONDED</b>
<b>CHAIRMAN</b>	<b>Reginald White</b>	<b>Peter Cox</b>	<b>Simon Haycox</b>
<b>VICE CHAIRMAN</b>	<b>Peter Davies</b>	<b>Reginald White</b>	<b>Simon Haycox</b>
<b>SECRETARY</b>	<b>Peter Cox</b>	<b>Geoffrey Street</b>	<b>Reginald East</b>
<b>TREASURER</b>	<b>Simon Haycox</b>	<b>Reginald White</b>	<b>Peter Davies</b>

## COMMITTEE for a 1 year term

CANDIDATE	PROPOSED	SECONDED
Geoffrey Street	Simon Haycox	Reginald East
Sandra Pateman	Peter Cox	Reginald East
John Fleming	Peter Cox	Simon Haycox
John Belton	Peter Cox	Simon Haycox
Charles East	Peter Cox	Reginald White

**Secretary's Note:** The Secretary circulated the Certificate of Acknowledgment of responsibility (Page 3 of the MS1 form) after the meeting. It was duly signed by all of the above Officers and Committee members and the President and Vice President.

### **16. CONFIRMATION OF DELEGATE TO COUNTY CONFERENCE**

Delegate to attend County Conference at Tilehurst RBL Club on Saturday 16 Jan 2016.

**Delegate:** Peter Davies

**Proposed:** Peter Cox

**Seconded:** Wendy Clarke

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **17. DELEGATE TO NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Delegate to attend National Conference at Eastbourne on Sat 21 / Sun 22 May 2016

**Delegate None**

The President said that this would be left open as there is more time for a delegate to be agreed.

### **18. BRANCH ADMINISTRATION AND JOINING FEES:**

The President said that it is easy to put the fees up. It is more difficult to balance the books with the fees kept the same but it can be done if you try hard. He asked if we should put the fees up and discussion ensued:

- The Treasurer said that we should keep the fees the same for now; we have savings to fall back on.
- The Ceremonial Officer said that we should see how the change in the Club membership works out, we should take one step at a time, the change in renewal procedures may put people off joining and we should not increase the fees as well.

Administration fee: £ 2.00

Joining fee: £ 2.00

**Proposed:** Ceremonial Officer

**Seconded:** Chairman

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

The President said that matters raised at this point would not be considered again until the next AGM. There would be a Branch meeting shortly after this meeting was closed.

### **19.1 Membership Renewal Problems**

John Belton raised the problems he had with renewal. He chose to renew via Pay Point which did not work and he spent a long time phoning the helpline firstly waiting on hold and explaining this problem to the operator. He has heard nothing since. These calls and extra mailing would be costing the Legion a lot of money.

The President said that as he had said at the last Branch meeting, the last time the renewal system had been changed did not work well and Headquarters had not learned anything from it.

The Standard Bearer said that he sent his membership fee in 6 weeks ago, and had heard nothing back, was he a member? As he could not carry the Standard if he was not a member. The Secretary said that he understood that the deadline had been extended to the end of the year.

### **19.2 Future of Harwell Branch**

The Standard Bearer asked the meeting if Harwell Branch has a future. He asked for the following reasons:

#### **1) Possible Disaffiliation of the Club from the Legion:**

If this does go ahead we would lose he would say 90-95% of members. People who are not ex service will not remain members as they will not receive any benefit as they are not Legion beneficiaries - he is a Branch member as it is a requirement to be a Standard Bearer. Most people join the Branch and Legion so they can use the Club. We would lose a lot of members.

#### **2) Membership Renewal Problems:**

This gives no enthusiasm to anyone to carry on being members so they become disinterested.

#### **3) No Poppy Appeal Organiser:**

If we don't get a replacement once Wendy Clarke stands down then we cannot run the Poppy Appeal next year. This would leave only the D Day and Remembrance Ceremonies as the remaining Branch activities.

We may end up with only 20-30 members. He apologised for sounding pessimistic but these are the facts as he sees them.

Discussion ensued including:

- The Chairman said that membership of the old Club owns the fixtures and fittings, not the new Club so any proceeds may pass back to the Branch. It was the Branch members that started the Club.
- The Standard Bearer said that only a few people turn up to meetings.
- The Poppy Appeal Organiser said that the majority of Committee Members don't live in the village.
- The Chairman said that we may well lay up the Standard.
- The President said that he could see this happening. If there are continued problems renewing membership a lot of members will not bother renewing. We have 279 members and 9 are at this meeting. Not a very good turn out.

- The Standard Bearer said that it always been the case that the meetings are badly attended; the majority of members join the Legion to use the Club. We want the Club to be used though.
- The Club Secretary said that a lot of the older membership that used the Club in years past no longer do and may now leave due to the new renewal procedures.
- The Standard Bearer said that we do this because we enjoy doing it.
- The Chairman asked if the Club did disassociate what would happen to those who had paid the membership for the coming year. The Club Secretary said that he could not speak on behalf of the Club but believes that if the vote was to disaffiliate then there would be a lot to do to set up the new Club it would not start until the summer, which would be close to the October renewal date. The new Club may honour memberships of the old Club up to the renewal date.
- The Standard Bearer said that not enough members support the Club as it is now so it has to change. Not enough members may then support the Branch. It may be a year or two down the line for these problems to become significant.
- The Chairman said that he had been thinking the same thing for months. The way things are going the Branch may possibly lay up its Standard and the members transfer to another local Branch.
- The Standard Bearer said that if it was not for the goodwill and enthusiasm of the non service Committee Members willing to do their job the Branch would have folded 6-7 years ago. There was general agreement to this.
- John Belton said that a lot of Branches are no stronger that we are here. There were 96 Branches in the Berkshire County when he joined the Legion and there are only 39 Branches now. Most operate on a shoestring; for example Didcot Branch never had more than 100 members though there many ex service people live there. Only half a dozen people keep the Branches going. Some people he has talked to in the Club are keen to be in the Legion as well. Though the new Club would be likely to put the membership fees up so it would be perhaps £40 for both.
- The Club Secretary said that the Club membership may vote to stay as a RBL Club.
- The Chairman asked about the state of the Club finances. The Club Secretary said that the finances are currently in a good state. The Club Committee is aiming to be debt free by the AGM in January but the financial situation ongoing depends on usage.

The Chairman said that there was much to be aware of and consider.

### **19.3 County Certificate for a Member**

John Belton asked about this. The Secretary said that the application is ongoing; we may have to make other arrangements for the presentation other than at the County Conference. The Vice Chairman said that he would be at the County Conference to pick up any awards. It was said that the County Chairman may visit the Branch to present it.

### **19.4 Branch Award for Wendy Clarke**

The President said that he had one more pleasant task to do, for a person who was stepping down. He presented a Branch Award to Poppy Appeal Organiser Wendy Clarke in appreciation of all of her work. The members present gave her a round of applause. She thanked all present.

The President said that a Branch meeting would follow this meeting.

There being no further business the President declared the meeting closed at 21:19 hours

# Harwell Receipts and Payments Form 2014 - 2015

	2009 - 2010 (12 months)	2010 - 2011 (12 months)	2011 - 2012 (12 months)	2012 - 2013 (8 months)	2014 - 2015 (12 months)
1. Bank and Cash Balances					
a. Cash	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
b. Lloyds Bank Current Account	£587	£202	£469	£752	£737
c. BFI investments	£905	£1335	£1377	£1408	£1176
<b>2. Total cash held</b>	<b>£1492</b>	<b>£1538</b>	<b>£1846</b>	<b>£2161</b>	<b>£1913</b>
3. Total movements on accounts	£367	£45	£309	£315	<b>-£0.73</b>
4. Other assets held	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
5. Gross subs collected					
a. Receipts	£5636	£5189	£5342	£5119	£4745
b. Membership fees / Club subs	£4710	£4411	£4330	£4163	£3835
6. Branch Poppy Appeal events	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
7. Branch fundraising events	£0	£0	£70	£0	£0
8. Branch entertainment	£18	£135	£150	£0	£0
9. Monetary gifts and donations	£0	£0	£0	£30	£20
10. Interest received	£6	£30	£42	£31	£17
11. Benevolent expenditure	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
12. Branch ceremonial events	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
13. Management expenses	£381	£375	£292	£618	£763
14. Purchases – badges, wreaths etc.	£31	£137	£119	£75	£0
15. Other income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
16. Other payments					
a. Food for group meetings	£0	£40	£40	£0	£0
b. County Conf. lunches	£10	£10	£10	£9	£10
c. RBL bowls Club competition	£18	£18	£0	£0	£0
d. To Poppy Appeal	£125	£47	£64	£0	£175
17. TOTAL					
a. Receipts	£6542	£5218	£5384	£5180	£4782
b. Payments	£6175	£5173	£5075	£4685	£4783
<b>18. Net increase / decrease in funds</b>	<b>£367</b>	<b>£45</b>	<b>£309</b>	<b>£315</b>	<b>-£0.73</b>

Green = Receipt    Red = Payment

All figures rounded to the nearest pound

HARWELL ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL ACCOUNT

OCTOBER 2014 - SEPTEMBER 2015

DATE	DETAILS	AMOUNT	
21/11/2014	SMALL WREATH FOR REMEMBRANCE - CHILTON CHURCH	£	12.00
21/11/2014	2X WREATHS FOR REMEMBRANCE	£	50.00
21/11/2014	1 X WREATH FOR REMEMBRANCE	£	25.00
24/11/2015	POPPY TINS	£	3,036.00
27/11/2014	2 X WREATHS AND 70 X CROSSES	£	150.00
27/11/2015	DONATED BY CHILTON FESTIVAL	£	100.00
19/01/2015	ADDITIONAL MONEY COLLECTED AT SAINSBURY'S OXFORD	£	18.77
19/01/2015	1 X WREATH FOR REMEMBRANCE	£	25.00
01/04/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2014	£	30.00
27/05/2015	WREATH DONATION	£	30.00
27/05/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	25.00
27/05/2015	DONATION FOR POPPY PINS	£	9.10
27/05/2015	FEAST DONATIONS	£	62.18
31/05/2015	WREATH DONATION	£	59.00
11/06/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	25.00
11/06/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	25.00
11/06/2015	SPONSORED WALK	£	140.00
11/06/2015	SUBS DONATION	£	25.10
11/06/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	30.00
11/06/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	25.00
11/06/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	30.00
11/06/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	25.00
11/06/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	25.00
11/06/2015	D DAY BUCKET COLLECTION	£	89.53
09/07/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	30.00
09/07/2015	SPONSORED WALK	£	250.00
09/07/2015	SPONSORED WALK	£	60.00
09/07/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	25.00
06/08/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	25.00
17/08/2015	1X WREATH FOR D DAY SERVICE 2015	£	25.00
17/09/2015	HOLLAND WREATH	£	25.00
		£	4,511.68