

The Royal British
Legion
Harwell Branch
BR1805

Monthly Branch Meeting
Held on 23rd February 2016
In the Branch Headquarters at Westfield
At 20.00 Hours.

ATTENDANCE:

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

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: R.C. East, B. Mulford, C. S. East, I. Clarke, J Fleming.

3. MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 2016 MEETING:

All present had seen the minutes prior to the meeting. There were no corrections. The minutes were duly signed as a correct record by the Chairman

4. MATTERS ARISING:

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

5. D DAY SERVICE 2016

5.1 Start of Preparations

The Ceremonial Officer requested permission from the Committee to start preparations for this year's commemorations with the assistance of the Secretary.

Agreed by the Committee.

5.2 Flypast

The Ceremonial Officer said that he had received a letter from the RAF Air Events Team informing him that his request for participation of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) was unsuccessful. He will continue investigating other possibilities.

5.3 Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Regimental Association

John Belton suggested that we invite this association who meet at Dalton Barracks. The regiment left from RAF Harwell in Gliders. They have attended the ceremony in years past. They have a Territorial Army band.

6. ENROLLMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

There were no new members and no applications this month.

7. SECRETARY'S REPORT:

7.1 Storage of Branch Documents

All of the documents listed at the last meeting have been disposed of. The Secretary suggested that he disposes of last year's County Conference Delegate's Pack in order to maintain the 12 month retention of records.

Agreed by the Committee

7.2 Archive Boxes in Club

Disposal of the old Branch Management Handbook and new contents list is in hand.

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

The County Membership Support Officer said that the membership department at headquarters would deal with this but they are very busy the moment with the membership changes which is possibly be why there has been no reply.

7.4 Branch Web Page

The Membership page has been updated with the new renewal deadline (31st March 2016). The details of last year's increase in National Membership Fee have been removed. A couple of minor changes have been made to other pages.

David Marsh has accumulated an online archive of minutes and other Branch documents that have been on the web site since 2011. The Secretary will email access details to Committee Members.

7.5 Distribution of Branch Minutes and County Circular.

The Secretary thanked those who checked sections of the minutes. He distributed the January 2016 Minutes and February 2016 County Circular to Committee Members and put copies in the Club folder. David Marsh has put the minutes on the web site.

Approximate cost for printing minutes and County Circular: £4.60 for 92.5 sheets

Other printing approximate cost: £1.12 for 22.5 sheets. This lower cost is due to a printer failure meaning most of the February correspondence has yet to be printed.

Cartridge UK made a second attempt at filling the second cartridge which was successful. The other cartridge ran out again and has been refilled again. Total cost £24 for two refills.

7.6 2015 AGM Follow Up

The minutes are in hand.

7.7 Thanks for Stone Improvements

The Secretary had written a letter which he read to the meeting. He proposed a minor change which was agreed. The Secretary will print it and get signatures shortly.

8. War Graves Tree Pruning

The Secretary replied to Parish Clerk that the Branch has no objections to the pruning and thanked her for consulting us.

9. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

CURRENT PAID UP MEMBERSHIP: stands at 270. 188 Renewals to date.

9.1 Membership Renewal Query

A query has been received over a person who had sent in a cheque for £16 to renew. The cheque has been cashed by Novacraft but the person had not received a new card. The Membership Secretary investigated and found that the person was not on the Membership Administration Portal (MAP) database, and had in fact lapsed two years ago. The County Membership Support Officer will investigate further.

10. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The Treasurer reported that accounts stood as follows as of 20th January 2016:

HARWELL BRANCH

Current Account:	£ 561.84
B.F.I. Account	<u>£ 1193.52</u>
<u>Total:</u>	<u>£ 1755.36</u>

The BFI account is unchanged from last month.

10.1 Income

The Branch has received £347 from Whitehall for Branch membership joining and renewal fees. This has to be incorrect as it is an odd number and these fees are both £2.

10.2 Outgoings

The Treasurer has written two cheques for £25 for the hire of the Poppy Room for this and January's meetings.

11. CORRESPONDENCE:

11.1 February County Circular (distributed).

Due to the printer fault, the documents attached to the County Circular have not yet been printed for the folder in the Club. Discussion ensued and the following document will be printed:

- South Midlands Area Report (5.5 pages) on Welfare.

The following documents will not be printed:

- Corporate Speech for County Conferences (6.5 pages) – as already reported by the Ceremonial Officer at last month's meeting.
- County Conference Questions and Answers on Changes to Women's Section and Comradeship Service Project (i.e. membership renewal changes) (4.5 pages)
- Berkshire Fundraising Circular (4 pages) - already printed by Club Secretary.

11.2 Future of the RBL Women's Section

The Women's Section will become a District of the National Legion for cost savings.

11.3 Election Documents from Electoral Reform Society

Two packages each containing Candidate's Election Statements and a ballot paper. See AOB items 14.2 and 14.3.

11.4 Clean for the Queen

This is a campaign to clean up the UK for the Queen's 90th Birthday. It is a series of litter picks over March 4th -6th. Volunteers are required but there is no obligation from the Legion to participate. It is also covered on the Harwell Village Facebook page.

The Chairman commented that this was also covered in the Oxford Mail newspaper and a lot of people are involved.

11.5 Invitation to Retirement Evening for Sir Thomas Boyd-Carpenter 22nd Feb

Received 5th February.

11.6 Further Instructions to Access Membership List on MAP

Forwarded to Membership Secretary and Treasurer

11.7 Recreation Ground Pavilion Requirements Update

Spreadsheet of requirements as sent by village organisations to Parish Council

11.8 Emails on Branch Web Site

Usual special events and business courses - 66 items since January meeting.

12. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER REPORT:

The Secretary reported in the absence of a Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO):

12.1 Harwell Feast

Ian Clarke is making arrangements with the Rider's Branch Committee and the Harwell Feast Committee for location of a stand and access with the motorbikes. It is at an early stage. They will discuss it further at their next meeting on 25th February 2016.

12.2 Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) and Collectors Vacancy

The Secretary has checked if a PAO had to be a Legion member so that this could be specified in the advert. The County Membership Support Officer (MSO) states that a PAO does not have to be a member. She also suggested checking with County Fundraiser Samantha Hicton for pre written adverts and suitable text to use. The Secretary has emailed Samantha Hicton about this and asked for advice about Facebook adverts.

12.3 Wreaths for D Day and Funerals

The Secretary said that he had hoped that if no new PAO had been appointed by May then for D Day we could order a batch of wreaths on cash-or-return and return the surplus.

However the County MSO has said that there has been a change in the Legion rules and her understanding is that only PAOs can order wreaths on cash-or-return, everyone else must pay when ordering.

We could ask the attending organisations to order their own wreath but there could be a problem for late or forgotten orders.

Discussion ensued:

- The Ceremonial Officer stated that wreaths cost £17 for blank wreaths or £18.50 for those with specific logos e.g. ATC or Scouts logos. Approximately 20 would be required for D Day. Some organisations supply their own wreath but the Branch usually supplies about 15 wreaths.
- The Treasurer said that the Branch could not necessarily donate this amount and we would need assurances that the money would come back in from the organisations.
- The Secretary said that he would contact Samantha Hickton to confirm the new rules.
- The Ceremonial Officer suggested that we ask a PAO from the local area to supply the wreaths on our behalf. He will check with Wendy Clarke which organisations require wreaths.
- John Belton said that it was unfortunate that the Branch has no longer has any stock of wreaths as they may be needed for funerals.

13. STANDARD BEARER REPORT

The Ceremonial Officer said that the Standard had not been paraded and there were no upcoming parades.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

14.1 Club AGM and Disaffiliation Vote

The Secretary read the following results as announced at the Club AGM which were supplied by the previous Club Secretary Ian Clarke.

Independent count carried out by Tony Hughes and verified by Pauline Swann (RBL Area Club Advisor) on 26/01/16:

198 members were eligible to vote.

24 did not return their vote (counts as no/disagree).

5 no /disagree.

1 spoilt paper (invalid)

168 yes/agree

Therefore = Yes to disaffiliation (85% of eligible members)

75% (148) yes/agree were required in order to disaffiliate

Pauline Swann has taken away the voting slips and list of eligible members for retention by the RBL

14.2 Election of Membership Council 2016: South East Midlands

The Chairman read details of the two candidates for the Membership Council. The meeting discussed their merits and agreed which candidate should receive the Branch's vote. The Chairman marked the ballot paper as appropriate and signed it for return to the Electoral Reform Society.

14.3 Elections for National Vice Chairman and National Council

The Chairman read details of the six candidates for National Vice Chairman. The meeting discussed their merits and agreed which candidate should receive the Branch's vote.

He then read details of the six candidates for the National Council. The meeting discussed their merits and agreed which three candidates should receive the Branch's votes.

The Chairman duly marked the ballot paper as appropriate and signed it for return to the Electoral Reform Society

14.4 War Memorial Maintenance

John Belton reported that his grandson has contacted the Harwell Parish Council and quoted a price for the required work. His is awaiting a reply.

John Belton added that he had paid for the new stone plaque to K. Seacole to be added to the memorial. The Chairman thanked him for this generous act and all present said that they appreciated it.

14.5 Award

The meeting discussed the possibility of a Gold Badge award for a Branch Member. All present were in favour. The Treasurer said that we could afford it at an approximate cost of £200. The Secretary said that he would make informal enquiries with the County Awards Committee.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 29th March 2016

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:22 hours.