

KILMINGTON BRANCH NO. 2346

**MINUTES OF THE NINETY-FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD VIA ZOOM
ON FRIDAY, 2nd OCTOBER 2020**

PRESENT: Cdr (Ret'd) S. Seward (Chairman), Messrs. P. Wood (Vice-Chairman), J. Watts, Brigadier (Ret'd) R. Giles, Messrs, P. Grimmett, P. Guy, M. Cumbers, Pastor D. Holmes, Mesdames J. Falconer (Secretary) and S. Ingles.

1. **ACT OF REMEMBRANCE:** The Chairman led the meeting in the Act of Remembrance, recalling members who had died during the year. They were: Pat Foster and Elisabeth Foster. He also highlighted those who are ill or in care.
2. **APOLOGIES:**
Mesdames G. Easton, C. Dainton, J. Nickolls, D. Seward, Messrs. P. Easton, A. M. Falconer, A. Thompkins, R. Lovegrove.
3. **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS:** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the annual AGM, the 94th in the Kilmington Branch's history and the first by 'Zoom'. He apologised for having to conduct the meeting on line, however, owing to the current COVID 19 restrictions, we had no alternative. He also went on to say that the format would be a little different as certain actions, such as the confirmation of the Officers and Committee, were not required on this occasion and that all personnel had agreed to remain in post.
4. **ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE NINETY-THIRD AGM.**
Proposed by R. Giles, seconded by P. Wood and carried.
5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:**
There were none.
6. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**
2019 was another busy year and the Chairman thanked everyone for their outstanding efforts in finishing the year in such a splendid manner. On Sunday, 10th November, over 150 people attended the Remembrance Service at the Beacon and the act of Remembrance at the War Memorial; later that day, over 60 people enjoyed lunch at Haselbury Mill. On Monday, 11th November, over 30 people attended the Pavilion to witness the 2-minute silence marked by the firing of maroons, well in this instance, one, as the first Maroon did not function!!
The Chairman thanked Peter and Louise Wood and all our Poppy Appeal collectors for conducting such a successful event and he reflected that what we achieve as a village is remarkable.
On Saturday, 30th November over 100 people attended the Christmas Coffee Morning Extravaganza, 'A taste of Christmas' which broke all previous records and was a great success; he thanked everyone who participated and felt that they could all be hugely proud of what they had achieved.
Moving on to 2020: Whoever thought we would witness such a threat and change to our daily lives? As a result, and despite our best efforts, we had to cancel all our programmed events this year, however, just as a reminder we did at least manage to mark two national events. He thanked Roger

(Lovegrove), Richard (Norman), our standard bearer, and all those who attended the War Memorial to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE Day on 8th May and also the 75th anniversary of VJ Day on 16th August. Sadly, we had to cancel our planned event to mark the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain on Sunday, 20th September, but did not forget!

At this point, the Chairman thanked your committee for all their hard work in preparing and then having to cancel the events we had planned, as with all planning, sometimes it can be harder to undo things than set them up. He wished to give his sincere thanks to the committee for nominating him for the National Covid-19 response award - creative fundraising, (the collection of Green waste on VE Day and during the lock down). Stafford was not only nominated, but successfully won the category and was awarded his trophy, on line, by Alastair Stewart the News Reader. Stafford expressed how extremely proud he was to have won such a prestigious award, but as he had no idea of what was happening, he returned the initial notification e-mail from the centre as 'phishing scam'! Stafford showed the attendees the rather splendid trophy.

Moving on, it is to be hoped that all is not lost from our programme; our Poppy Appeal will be launched on Thursday, 22nd October and although there will be no door-to-door collections due to COVID, there are many other ways that members will be able to obtain their poppies (see October's edition of Postscript). On Sunday, 8th November there will be a very short service commencing at 10.45, followed by the Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial and on Wednesday, 11th November, Maroons at 11.00 on the cricket field. Unfortunately, owing to the current restrictions, refreshments will not be provided and social distancing rules will remain in force. We are hoping to continue with our Christmas Coffee Morning on Saturday, 5th December, however, if this happens, it will be in the form of an open-air market and be in the Village Hall Car park, (COVID and weather permitting), so we hope that we see you all there (look out for the posters).

We have not confirmed our programme for next year and will continue to assess the current situation, however, the Chairman said that we have one or two splendid ideas, one of which will be marking the centennial anniversary of the RBL the weekend 15th May. In the meantime, he offered his sincere thanks to the committee, members and everyone who has supported us throughout the last year.

7. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer presented an account summary and commented that there were no similarities to allow meaningful comparisons with last year.

We raised £4044.65 for the Poppy Appeal through street collections and charity tins within the village; in addition, we raised a further £2402.83 for the Poppy Appeal. We have made £1000 donation to the RBL Devon County Welfare Fund. Our small branch can be very proud of their fundraising efforts during the past year despite the Covid 19 restrictions.

Your committee has seen and approved the annual accounts to 30 June 2020 and had the opportunity to view all accounting documents.

The Chairman explained that the accounts had already been sent to County and the Treasurer had been congratulated on being the first to send in the accounts. In addition, Rodney has organised on-line banking for our branch, in anticipation of the move in that direction by RBL.

P. Wood proposed approval of the accounts and J. Falconer seconded the proposal. Passed unanimously. Our thanks go to John Mellows for once again kindly performing the task of Independent Examiner under Royal British Legion Regulations.

8(a) MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Our membership decreased by 2 since last year's AGM. Unfortunately, one new member's application and one membership renewal payment sent by Royal Mail did not reach or was mislaid by the company that manages the Membership applications and renewal for the RBL. John did not become aware of the problem until it was too late to do anything and COVID had started.

In this current year renewal, 3 members will not be renewing for various personal reasons. Current membership is 125 but this will be reduced to 122.

8(b) WELFARE REPORT

Tony Thompkins was unable to attend the meeting but he has been able to provide support to several members of our branch during the year. The Chairman felt that it was good to see that some of the money we have raised for the Devon Welfare Fund has been of benefit to the community and he thanked Tony for taking on the role of Branch Community Support Officer and for all his hard work.

9. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER'S REPORT:

The village raised £6447.52 for the Poppy Appeal last year. £4044.65 was raised during the 2-week period of Remembrance. Thanks to our fabulous team of house-to-house collectors and local businesses (Millers, Starbucks, both pubs, the Pitt Stop and Texaco Garage), both village Churches and the Village Primary School. Not included in this figure is the money claimed back by the Legion for those donations which were offered as Gift Aid. This will have raised a further £221.

You are well aware of the numerous fund-raising events throughout the year and the committee allocated £2402.87 of the money raised at these events directly to the Poppy Appeal.

This year's appeal will be launched on 22nd October and run until 8th November. However, because of the Covid-19 pandemic impact we are presented with huge challenges such as not being permitted to carry out our village house-to-house collection.

However, poppies will be available at major supermarkets and we will also be putting collection tins out with local businesses. Millers Farm Shop have also given us permission to set up a table outside their shop on 23rd/24th October but the Legion have insisted that we must wear PPE and have sanitiser available to ensure both ours and the public's safety.

We know that there will still be people who wish to donate but do not want to visit a shop. We therefore intend to 'post' 2 x poppies to everyone in the village with details of how they can donate by visiting the Legion website or texting their donation or taking their donation to the Baptist Church. Stafford Seward will also be touring the village in his 'gator' on Saturday, 7th November and will happily accept donations.

Peter thanked everyone for supporting the Poppy Appeal.

Stafford again thanked Peter and Louise for all their help and hard work.

Rodney showed some hand-made poppies which have been donated for us to sell and he will pass them on to Peter.

10. ELECTION OF OFFICERS and COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As outlined in the Chairman's opening remarks, owing to the Covid crisis, the Legion has agreed that all officers and committee members may be allowed to stay in post for another year, without the necessity for elections.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- a) Sandra Ingles expressed the fervent hope that next year we would get back to normal. The Chairman thanked Sandra and Martin for attending the meeting.
- (b)- Stafford thanked Darrell for setting up the meeting and agreeing to host it on Zoom.
- (c) Stafford explained that the war memorial was in need of updating as certain errors had come to light. He has spoken to EDDC and discovered that all war memorials were listed in 2015 and he awaits a response concerning what action we can take. The war memorial was placed in its current location because it was approximately a half way point between St. Giles and the old Baptist Church. In addition, the A35 is much busier than it was at that time. We have therefore looked at the possibility of re-siting the memorial between the village hall car park and the Baptist Church where it would be more accessible and more visible to villagers. Of course, villagers would have to agree the plan. The war memorial is owned by the Council. Stafford thanked Peter Huscroft for maintaining the floral displays at the memorial as they make it stand out for passers-by.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 17.45 and thanked everyone for attending.

Chairman