

KILMINGTON BRANCH NO. 2346

**MINUTES OF THE NINETY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN THE NEW INN
ON FRIDAY, 7th SEPTEMBER 2018**

PRESENT: Mr. R. Lovegrove (President), Cdr (Ret'd) S. Seward (Chairman), Messrs. P. Wood (Vice-Chairman), J. Watts, R. Foster, Brigadier (Ret'd) R. Giles, Gp. Capt (RAF Ret'd) B.W. Lavender, Messrs. J. Playford, B. Meadley, D. Ingles, G. Burden, P. Guy, P. Huscroft N. Cromey-Hawke, A. Thompkins, R. Herbert, P. Grimmett, M. Cumbers and Mesdames C. Dainton, G. Gibbs, J. Nickolls, J. Lovegrove, C. Lavender, S. Ingles, D. Seward, J. Giles, L. Wood, A. Playford, J. Falconer.

1. ACT OF REMEMBRANCE: The Chairman led the meeting in the Act of Remembrance, recalling members who had died during the year. They were: Anthony Double and Peter Baulch.
2. APOLOGIES:
Messrs. P. Ball, P. Trumper, R. Norman, Cdr. (Retd.) A. M. Falconer, Rev. S. Holloway, Pastor D. Holmes, Mesdames L. Rew, J. Trumper, H. Cromey-Hawke.
3. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS: The Chairman welcomed everyone to the annual AGM, the 92nd in the Kilmington Branch's history. Owing to the limited time available the Chairman proceeded with the meeting.
4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE NINETY-FIRST AGM.
Proposed by R. Foster, seconded by J. Watts and carried.
5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:
12(b) Richard Norman's offer to become the Branch's standard bearer has been taken up and Richard has been undergoing training and we hope that he will be able to present our standard for remembrance in 2018.
6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
The Chairman reviewed another outstanding and successful year, highlighting in particular:

2017

- On Saturday, 16th September, the WWI Commemoration dinner with a talk given by Angus Falconer '1917 – A year of dramatic events'.
- The Annual Lecture on Friday, 20th October, given by Martin Pelling, who provided an excellent overview of the battle of Passchendaele.
- Remembrance in Kilmington with over 50 members attending the cricket pavilion to observe the two-minute silence signalled by the firing of maroons. Over 160 people gathered for the service led by the Branch Chaplain, Pastor Darrell Holmes at the Beacon Baptist Church followed by the two-minute silence at the War Memorial, returning afterwards to the Beacon for refreshments. Over 60 members went on to Haselbury Mill for a Remembrance lunch and in the evening residents and members packed the New Inn for a Quiz conducted by Clive Garner on behalf of the Poppy Appeal.
- The Annual Autumn Coffee Morning 'A taste of Christmas' on Saturday, 25th November, raised an incredible **£1,400**, giving us a grand total of

£5,400 for the Poppy Appeal – an amazing achievement from ‘a Very Special Village’. The Chairman thanked Peter and Louise Wood, all the collectors and everyone who helped to raise such a fantastic amount.

2018

- In January, our President, Roger Lovegrove, Secretary, Jean Falconer, and the Chairman attended the Devon Annual County Conference in Plymouth. The Chairman thanked all those who helped and attended the RBL Spring Fair and Coffee Morning on Saturday, 17th March. The generosity and support of our community continues to amaze us.
- 23rd-26th March over 30 members joined the Devon County RBL visit to France (Arras) and thoroughly enjoyed four days of visits and social events. For Kilmington it was the first event in our calendar marking the centenary anniversary of the end of WWI.
- On Wednesday, 13th June, 34 members of the Kilmington Branch undertook a day trip to the Tank Museum at Bovington. After a fascinating and thoroughly enjoyable three hours the group adjourned to the pre-arranged lunch at the Martyrs Inn. The Chairman thanked Tony Thompkins for arranging a very interesting and enjoyable deployment.
- 23rd and 24th June saw us supporting the Axminster Ladies branch of the RBL at the Axe Vale Show. When visitors stopped to view the stand, they were asked their view of the Royal British Legion and in the main the view was favourable but there was a clear message that the RBL needs to update its image and has to do more to appeal to the younger generation. The Chairman believes that this needs to start in schools where our history should be taught and understood. We have a heritage that we should all be proud of.
- Saturday, 28th July, our busy team supported the Kilmington Village Fayre and Flower Show, by supplying over 150 burgers, sausages and bacon baps to visitors who braved the showers to enjoy a fun-filled family afternoon.
- After nearly a year of planning and preparation Kilmington RBL staged its ‘Greatest Thank You’ over the weekend 3rd-5th August, starting with a concert on the Friday evening (3rd) at the Beacon. Under the Musical Director, Rachel Smith, the ladies of the choir entertained a sell-out audience of over 200 and encouraged lively audience participation. On Saturday morning (4th) Kilmington’s children were treated to a party in the decorated Village Hall, with food, a bouncy castle, face painting and a very entertaining clown/magician. Later the Village Hall was again the venue for a family BBQ followed by a disco and incredible solo performance by the international singer Gemma Louise Doyle. On Sunday (5th) a service was held on Kilmington Common to dedicate an oak tree planted to honour the men of Kilmington who gave their lives in WWI. The service was led by Simon d’Albertanson, a Royal Navy chaplain based at Lympstone, and included a roll call of the fallen read by Branch President, Roger Lovegrove. After the service many of those present repaired to the New Inn to reflect on the events of an incredibly successful weekend.

The Chairman thanked everyone involved in the organisation of all the year’s events.

The Chairman informed the meeting that we are looking for a Treasurer as Peter Guy, wished to take a break from the post but would remain on the committee. The Chairman thanked Peter for looking after us extremely well. Sandra Ingles had also indicated that she wished to stand down from the committee and the Chairman

thanked her for covering all our events and providing reports to the local press.

The Chairman then outlined forthcoming events being planned by the Kilmington branch:

- Saturday, 15th September, 7.30pm: Annual Lecture by Jonathan Walker.
- Friday, 5th October, 6pm: Monthly get-together at the Old Inn, Kilmington.
- Friday, 2nd November, 6pm: Monthly get-together at the New Inn, Kilmington
- Sunday, 11th November: Remembrance Sunday, St. Giles' Church followed by the Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial. On completion, lunch at Haselbury Mill with transport arranged from the Village Hall car park.
- Saturday, 24th November: Kilmington Village Hall 'End of WWI celebration dinner with music and sing-song.
- Friday, 7th December, 6pm: Monthly get-together, venue TBC
- Saturday, 8th December: RBL Christmas Coffee Morning Extravaganza, Kilmington Village Hall.

The Chairman explained that we had received many directives from the Centre and County on what we should do and how we should do it but he made the point that Committee members are volunteers who give up their time voluntarily and he had asked central office to remember the crucial role of volunteers in the success of the RBL.

The Chairman thanked everyone on the committee who have worked extremely hard and achieved more in Kilmington than many towns and cities and he felt that everyone should be very proud of their achievements.

7. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer presented the accounts for the year which had been independently examined by John Mellows. The Treasurer thanked the membership who continue to be very generous. During the year we sent £2,500 to the Poppy Appeal and £1,500 to Devon Welfare. Adoption of the accounts was proposed by John Watts, seconded by Peter Wood and carried. Currently just over £5,500 is in the bank and the Committee will decide at the next meeting how best to disburse the funds. The Chairman thanked John Mellows for examining the accounts and he thanked Peter Guy for fulfilling the role of Treasurer so well since 2016.

8. SECRETARY AND MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

We continue to be a more than active branch of the Royal British Legion and we seem to be bucking the trend as far as membership goes, with many branches having to close both regionally and nationally. The events organised throughout the year had been remarkably successful thanks largely to the incredibly hard work and enthusiasm of the committee and the wonderful support our members.

The committee had met on eight occasions since the last AGM. At the meetings we discussed our objectives and planned events to raise funds for the Legion, as well as ensuring as best we can the welfare of the more vulnerable members in the village and beyond. The objectives of the Royal British Legion – remembrance, welfare and fund-raising – are thus key to everything we do, but raising the profile of the Legion had also been an important objective this year – and the Secretary felt that we had certainly done that with the Greatest Thank You weekend.

John Watts had continued to wrestle with the Legion's membership system and in addition had to ensure that the branch conformed to the recent GDPR directives issued by Head Office, and it hadn't been easy! The Secretary expressed the committee's gratitude to John for his perseverance in licking the membership system into shape.

The Secretary thanked the members for their unstinting support for the Royal British Legion. The Legion promotes the welfare and interests of current and former members of the British Armed Forces, supporting nearly 36,000 War Disablement Pension cases for war veterans and makes around 300,000 welfare and friendship visits every year. These are just dry statistics and they may seem remote, but at a local level we can see that our Branch contributed in no small way to the Legion's efforts. By keeping this branch strong, we continue to make an important contribution to that work while contributing to the social life of the village.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT. The membership had held steady at 124 (although the central system acknowledges 125). John emphasised that the earlier insistence by the central office on people paying membership by Direct Debit had been relaxed and it was hoped that it would result in some members, who objected to Direct Debit, re-joining. Indeed, a few were already coming back.

9. POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER'S REPORT:

The 2017 Kilmington annual Poppy Appeal collection raised an incredible **£3763.12**. This was up £819.19 from the previous year and does not include the money raised on the November quiz night. Our village total contributed to the national total of **£49.2M**. This is a fantastic amount raised and our sincere thanks go to everyone involved for their continued support of the Poppy Appeal.

The 2018 Poppy Appeal is to run from 27th October to 10th November. The traditional Coffee Morning for Poppy Collectors is scheduled for Monday 22nd October at The Cricket Pavilion from 1000 hours. Peter Wood explained that he and Louise were actively looking for new people to join the team and were presently down 1 collector. At this point Joan Lovegrove volunteered to take over the round and the Chairman thanked her.

The 2018 Poppy order had been placed and this year the RBL have produced a centenary paper poppy to mark the end of WW1 - the leaf has 1918 - 2018 printed in gold.

As a new initiative, this year we hope to 'man' a static collection point at Miller's Farm Shop on the first Saturday of Remembrancetide. We will also encourage people to complete a gift aid form as this contributed over £200 to last year's total. Hopefully both these initiatives will help increase our 2018 total in this centenary year.

10. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The President opened his address by commenting that 2018 had been another very successful year for the Kilmington Branch of the Royal British

Legion; 2018 being the centenary of the ending of the Great War.

The Royal British Legion has been making serious efforts to commemorate the important events of 100 years ago and has been encouraging branches to do their bit.

Aby led by Stafford, the committee had risen to the challenge and had organised a series of events and placed around the village the haunting Silent Soldiers which had made us all **Remember Them**. Those who sacrificed their lives so that we can live in peace, or even to live at all.

These events, with more still to come, had included the Big Thank You to that generation as well as Commemoration and to complete the year a Celebration Supper was planned.

In addition to the serious Remembrance, we had had successful Social gatherings and serious money raising for the Welfare of those in need. This would become more apparent in the current year's accounts as the Big Thankyou Weekend was not included in the Branch Accounts presented at the meeting.

The President thanked the Chairman, Branch Committee and all the members who had made the year such an outstanding one.

11. ELECTION OF OFFICERS and COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The President took the chair. Peter Guy had indicated that he wished to stand down as Treasurer but wished to remain on the Committee. A replacement Treasurer was still being sought and Rodney Giles indicated that he would be prepared to stand. It was agreed that he should liaise with Peter Guy to find out what was involved.

Dealing first with the Officers: the Chairman, Commander Stafford Seward, Vice Chairman, Peter Wood, Secretary, Jean Falconer and Membership Secretary, John Watts had agreed to stand again for re-election. The President asked for a proposer and seconder to vote them in en bloc. Proposed by Brian Lavender, seconded by Tony Thompkins and carried. Turning to the election of Committee members, Sandra Ingles had indicated that she wished to stand down but Claire Dainton, Ron Foster, Peter Guy and Lesley Rew had all agreed to stand again. The President asked for a proposer and seconder to vote them in en bloc. Proposed by Jennie Giles, seconded by Rodney Giles and carried.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- Stafford Seward took the chair and thanked the President for his address and thanked the members for their support, which he felt exemplified the spirit of our amazing village.
- David Ingles raised the subject of the County trips to Belgium and France (all but one to the WWI battlefields). He and Sandra had participated in all the visits and found them to be both interesting and thoroughly enjoyable. He asked if we could do something in future with a focus on a different aspect of war outside WWI. The Chairman has asked County to start thinking about WWII and will keep members informed of any progress.

- Brian Lavender expressed his gratitude to the Committee and congratulated them on all their hard work. He asked that thought be given to ways of trying to attract new members.
- The Chairman agreed and felt it important to involve younger people and that was an area of focus.
- Rodney Giles had noted that there was a 'Branch Subscription Fee' mentioned on his membership renewal letter and although it was '0.00', he enquired what it was. The Chairman explained that it is often for those Branches which have a Clubhouse to maintain and that the Committee had decided not to add a Branch fee.
- The Chairman informed the meeting that the Committee had decided to ask the Parish Council to produce a list of events for 2019 to try to avoid future clashing of events in the village.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 17.55 with thanks to all for attending.

Chairman