



**WEST DEREHAM BRANCH
THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
BR 3689**

Chairman: Peter Starling

**Minutes of the General Meeting of West Dereham Branch held at the Village Hall
Sunday 18 March 2018 at 12.00 midday**

Members present (16):

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| Peter Starling (PS) | - Chairman |
| Claire Cann (CC) | |
| Nick Cann (NC) | - Secretary |
| Pearl Dossett (PDo) | |
| Tom Foy (TF) | - Std Bearer |
| Heather Foy (HF) | |
| Richard French (RF) | |
| Paula Kellingray (PK) | |
| June Kellingray (JK) | |
| Doug Lawson (DL) | |
| Fred Lucas (FL) | - Downham Market & District 0635 |
| Fran McMenemy (FM) | |
| Michael McMenemy (MM) | |
| Jack Walker (JW) | |
| Pam Walker (PW) | |
| Claire Williams (CW) | |

Also present: Phyllis French and Richard Dossett

Minutes

The Chairman opened the meeting with the words of the fourth verse of Robert Binyon's poem 'For the Fallen'.

1. Apologies for absence. Apologies for absence had been received from: Danny Adams, David & Pam Bullas, Alexander Cann, Mary Darton, Peter Darton (hospital), Dick & Maureen Elmer, Lorraine Hunt (Treas), Judith Lawson, Judy & Lol Moon, Jean Starling (hospital), Alice Warby (14) (no communication from Gary Younge).
2. Minutes of Last Meeting, 10 September 2017. The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2017 had been circulated previously. The Secretary said no comments had been received. The Chairman asked that the minutes be accepted as a true record. This was proposed by JW, seconded by MM and approved unanimously. The Chairman signed the minutes. No minutes are provided for the Remembrance Sunday meeting/ gathering.
3. Matters Arising from 10 September 2017 Meeting. Item 3– The Battle's Over – Lights of Hope. "A beacon brazier will be a permanent fixture in a village. Manufactured by local craftsmen it will be a lasting memorial to commemorate this important moment in our history on 11 November 2018, the centenary of the guns falling silent on the Western Front." In WD we remember our village's sons whose names are recorded on our memorial. And of course the site chosen for our beacon is adjacent to our memorial. The Ironwork brazier – "a beacon of light" - has still to be commissioned with Bonnett's. Objections to its erection received by the Parish Council were dealt with at the Parish Council Meeting held 1st March 2018 and all was now in order to proceed. The Fire Marshal had approved design and siting. The risk assessment gave no reason for concern over hazard to church, crops, farm buildings or residences. The height of the beacon recommended nationally was a post of height 4.25 metres topped by a brazier of 1.23 metres. In total, 5.48 m = 18 feet. Should the height of any structure exceed 4.0 m (or 13 feet) then planning permission would be required from BCKLWN. Such a height as recommended would present lighting problems. The planned height above ground for the West Dereham beacon was 11.5 feet (3.5 m). There was no need for planning consent. Approval was given at serial 4 of 11 June 2017 meeting. The Secretary was asked to take action with Bonnetts. Beacons will be lit at 7.00 pm on 11 November. St Nicholas Church in Lynn will ring its bells and all Churches in West Norfolk will endeavour to follow suit.
4. Secretary's Report. Membership now stood at 31 (plus Fred L). The annual accounts (EofY 30 Jun 17) had been externally audited and submitted to County HQ by 30 Sep 17. The Branch annual return for 2017-18, Form MS1, had been submitted to Norfolk County as required by 31 Dec 17. The Branch was compliant and qualified for 4 tickets to the Royal Albert Hall Festival of Remembrance in November. We were also entitled to send a representative with voting rights to the Annual Conference in Belfast, NI, 19-20 May. At the Annual County Conference held at County Hall, Norwich on 3 Feb '18, West Dereham Branch received a certificate as runner-up for the CW Jex Cup for Progress and Efficiency in 2016 -17 by a junior branch (won by us last year – much applause). (The winner was Aylsham & District Branch.) The 2017 Poppy Appeal raised

£60m nationally and Norfolk County contributed £700k. NC advised members of the transparent perspex soldiers that could now be purchased from RBL in memory of family members or villagers who died in the Great War. Press cuttings were made available. The 10 inch version costs £29.99, the seated version (eg for a church pew) is £42 while a life size model costs £750.

5. Treasurer's Report (LH). NC spoke on behalf of LH. He advised that their hand over of duties had taken place on 5 March. Copies of the accounts were provided for examination. In sum, Lloyds Bank held funds of £1,942 against the four main cost centres listing 'Events' @ £531, 'Poppy Appeal' @ £773, 'General Fund' @ £569 and 'Creditors' @ £68. The lunch and raffle on Remembrance Sunday had raised £315 against expenditure of £137. St Andrew's Church collection on Remembrance Sunday had raised £117.49 for the Poppy Appeal. A cheque for £500 has been received from HQ Norfolk County as a grant to alleviate our costs of sending our two representatives on GP 90. This money originated from Norwich Branch RBL. NC had requested £350 but this was increased by £150 by HQ as a precaution. After the event in August, NC said our branch should consider repaying some of this funding support. PK was thanked for allocating her £400 charitable donation from 'Music for Country Churches' to WD Branch for the second year running and the 'French' family was thanked for its donation of £133.50 to branch funds. Future expenditure of £1,000 for GP 90 and £570 for the beacon was underwritten. (After note: TF and PK held a fund-raising fish and chip supper in the VH on Friday 30 March for GP 90 which raised £235. Thanks to both TF and PK.)

6. Bye Laws Amendments. (i) New Serial 12: "Fundraising: the Earl Haig Fund and Branch Poppy Appeal Co-Ordinator. The branch will appoint a 'Poppy Appeal Officer' for the year who will co-ordinate fund raising activities. Fund raising and support for the Poppy Appeal is a continuous process throughout each year. However, the period 14 October to 14 November is considered to be a 'closed period' (sacrosanct) and all funds raised during this time must be credited to the Poppy Appeal. The Treasurer will maintain separately in the accounts a record of monies collected for the Poppy Appeal. Instead of being registered by Norfolk County and being issued with a dedicated paying-in book for the Earl Haig Fund, the branch Treasurer will issue a cheque periodically. The Secretary will send this cheque to the Poppy Appeal Co-ordinator at HQ Norfolk County. Fund raising activity must not use the Legion's name if raising funds for other worthy causes, e.g. a local hospice or children's hospital. Nor may Branch funds be used to make donations to other causes." (ii) Additional to serial 13.3. After: "There must be two signatures on each cheque, signed by officers authorised to sign and so registered with Lloyds Bank." Insert: "Any cheque which exceeds £400.00 must have been approved previously at a branch meeting. In any emergency, this action may be retrospective, if approved initially by the Chairman or the Vice Chairman." Proposed by NC this was seconded by PK and approved unanimously.

7. GP 90. NC introduced GP 90. On 8 August 1928, a pilgrimage was made from GB to the Western Front involving veterans and units involved in the Great War. In August 2018, on the 90th Anniversary of this event, the pilgrimage is being repeated. Every RBL Branch has been invited to attend and some 1,000 Standards will be present. Our Branch representatives are TF & HF - Tom as Standard Bearer and Heather as the wreath layer. (After note: NC has now purchased this wreath on behalf of the branch.) Tom briefed members present on GP 90. Travel out by coach from Lynn on 5 August; on 6-7 August, a series of pilgrimages would be made to Ypres & 'Flanders Fields', Tyne Cot CWGC Cemetery (Passchendaele), Messines Ridge, the Somme and the 'Thiepval Memorial'. The main event will be on 8 August in Ypres, at the Menin Gate and on the Town Square. Tom asked for details of where the 16 from WD who died in WW1 were buried or had their names recorded. A suitable message from our village is required for the card provided with the wreath. This message was discussed. PW recommended that junior members of the village be invited to submit their ideas for the wording. GP 90 expenditure was approved at serial 2 above.

8. Future Activities. Across the UK, individual centenary commemorations are being held during the period of the last 100 days of WW1. An idea for WD was discussed. The meeting approved a plan in principle to centre an event around the names contained on the WD War memorial. Further consideration was needed to develop such a plan. The recommended date was the branch's autumn meeting, Sunday 9 September, when the beacon could be lit.

9. Diary. (i) A fund raising coffee morning for GP 90 will be held in the VH from 10-12.00 am on Sat 28 April. (ii) The RBL Annual Conference for 2018 will be held in Belfast 19-20 May. (iii) **Our next meeting will be held in the Village Hall on Sunday 10 June 2018 at midday. Lunch afterwards will be held off site in a local hostelry with details to be issued later.** (iv) Armed Forces Day will be celebrated by WD in the VH on Sunday 1st July. A BBQ lunch will be available.

10. Any Other Business. (i) TF gave details of Standard Bearer duties he was attending – on 25 March at the RAF's Centenary celebrations and on 26 March at the funeral of an airman in Cambridge. (ii) TF advised of the 389th Bomb Group Memorial Exhibition at Hethel near Norwich (NR14 8EY) and a Gala Day there on 10 June, including stalls, military vehicles, classic cars, etc. TF said he was licensed to drive a mini bus and could take a group there if there was sufficient interest. (See serial 9 (iii) above relating to a clash of dates.)

Closure. The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting which he closed at 1.15 pm. The sandwich lunch provided was attended by 16 members @ £3.50 each (£56) and the raffle raised £90. Income was £146 with expenditure £103 (Waitrose £68 and VH hire £35) showing a profit of £43.

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Peter Starling, Chairman

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date