



WEST DEREHAM BRANCH
BR 3689
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION



25 April 2018

West Dereham Annual Parish Meeting

West Dereham Branch's first full year was from 1 September 2014 to 31 August 2015 with a membership of 16. In April 2017 I reported that the membership of the Branch had increased to 28. I can now report another increase to 31 and we are now in our fourth year.

We hold 4 meetings annually in the Village Hall, on the 2nd Sundays in March, June, September (AGM) and November (Remembrance). The March and September meetings are followed by a sandwich lunch. After the June meeting we visit a local pub for lunch and last year we dined at the Hare Arms. This year on 10th June it will be the Bedingfeld Arms at Oxborough. On Remembrance Sunday there is always a seated lunch in the Village Hall following the Service of Remembrance. Proceedings start at 10.50 am at the War Memorial and then continue in St Andrew's Church with a Sherry Reception following the service. This Service competes with the Carol Service as the most well-attended service in the Village Church year. Lunch follows in the VH and a few informative notices are given out after lunch. At lunch all are seated at one long table. Attendance is open to any villager or member of the St Andrew's Church congregation attending this service but, of course, notification of attendance must be provided in advance for catering purposes. 26 people attended this lunch on 12 November. A fund-raising raffle is held at each meeting.

Peter Starling has continued his role as Branch Chairman. It was his father who was our former Branch's Secretary, 1955-60. Jack Walker is our Vice Chairman. Nick Cann acts as Branch Secretary and the Treasurer is Lorraine Hunt. Tom Foy is the Standard Bearer and Paula Kellingray is Poppy Appeal Co-ordinator. Richard French fulfills the Membership Support Officer position (Welfare).

Our Branch is small and not rich; but it fulfills its purpose in support of the aims and objectives of the Royal British Legion as contained in its Charter. £700 was paid into the Earl Haig Poppy Appeal Fund last year and there is another £700 available to send off this year. Our new Standard, purchased in 2016 cost £800. The Branch is sending two representatives from our village, Tom and Heather Foy, to act as Standard Bearer and Wreath Bearer at the Grand Pilgrimage taking place in Ypres, Belgium 5-8 August ("GP 90") where over 1,000 Legion Standards will be on display. The Foy's are representing not only the living of today but also those from this village who gave their lives and whose names are recorded on our War Memorial. The cost of this trip is £1,000. Also, the Branch has agreed to a request from the Parish Council to assist the village and a beacon has been commissioned from Bonnetts. It will be sited in the Council Cemetery adjacent to the War Memorial and will be used to commemorate special events, starting with the centenary of the end of World War 1, an event entitled "The Battle's Over – Lights of Hope."

Last year we made front page news in the Royal British Legion's quarterly magazine 'Legion' which ran a feature on Tom Foy our Standard Bearer and our Standard was on parade in front of the Sovereign at the Festival of Remembrance held in the Royal Albert Hall in 2016 and again in 2017. At the RBL Norfolk County Annual Conference in February, West Dereham was runner-up for the CW Lex Cup for Progress and Efficiency by a Junior Branch. We won this cup the year before. We can hold our heads up high.

Any person over 17 years of age who accepts the aims and objectives of the Royal British Legion may become a member and the annual membership subscription is just £17.00.