

**St James's Branch
Annual General Meeting
Held Face to Face and on Teams
At 1400
On Wednesday 11 October 2023**

1. Exhortation.

The Chairman recited the Exhortation

**They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning
We will remember them**

2. Apologies for absence.

No Apologies

3. Chairman's opening remarks.

I would like to welcome all of you to this St James's Branch Annual General Meeting.

4. Adoption of Minutes of previous AGM.

The minutes of the previous AGM have been circulated.

Proposed: Mr Brian Evans

Seconded: Mrs Hilary Meredith-Beckham

5. Matters arising from previous minutes.

There were no matters arising from the minutes and they were signed by the Chairman.

6. Chairmans Report

Attached at Annex A

7. Presentation and adoption of accounts.

An extract of the accounts had been circulated to the membership and 957. There were NO objections to the accounts and therefore, they are adopted. A copy of the extract is at Annex B

8. Membership, Training & Recruiting

The Secretary reported the discussions and actions from the Branch Meeting held earlier that day. The secretary would produce:

- A list of questions for RBL HQ covering their advertising strategy and membership

- Produce a point briefing for poppy sellers to be issued with the poppies and collection boxes.
- Produces an article about the St James’s Branch to be submitted for inclusion in the Legion magazine.
- Draft a letter to RBL HQ recommending that anyone wishing to remain a member when their branch closed should be automatically transferred to the St James’s Branch and not the County Holding Branches.

9. Date and time of Meetings - 2024

Committee meetings during 2024 will be as follows:

- Wednesday 17th January at 1400hrs
- Wednesday 17th April at 1400hrs
- Wednesday 17th July at 1400hrs
- Wednesday 16th October at 1100hrs

The January and April meetings will be held using Teams. The July and October meetings will be face-to-face and will be held in Haig House.

10. Date and time of Annual General Meeting 2024.

The Annual General Meeting will be held in Haig House and also on Teams on Wednesday 16th October at 1400hrs.

11. Update in Support of Claims Against the MoD

Mrs Hilary Meredith – Beckham kindly provided updates on the progress of cases lodged against the MoD covering:

- Larium and its effects
- Gulf War Syndrome
- Hearing Loss Cases

12. Chairman’s Closing Remarks

The Chairman wished all members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year and thanked all those that attended for their time and contributions.

Signed Dated

**J Organ
Chairman**

- Appendix A Chairman’s Report**
- Appendix B Treasurer’s Report**

Chairman's Report

I extend a warm welcome to everyone joining us either on-line or face to face for this 34th Annual General Meeting of the St James's Branch and in starting my report I would like to express my thanks to all the members of the Committee for the support that they have given to ensure that the good governance of the Branch has been maintained.

Membership and Club Membership

Over the last few years, despite the overall decline in Legion membership, our core membership has remained relatively constant now stands at approximately 12,500.

As you can appreciate the administration of a branch this size is extremely difficult for unpaid volunteers, who willingly give their time, and we are reliant on support from Membership Services at Head Office and I am grateful for all the help that we receive from the District Membership Engagement Officer (MEO), Rachel Wilkins.

Annual Conference 2023

This year's Annual Conference of the Royal British Legion was held in Torquay during the weekend 20th/21st May and the branch delegates were myself and Mrs Carole Organ. During the conference Mrs Organ noted that while the conference room was full the number of branches actually being represented was very small with only about 8% of branches having sent delegates. This was extremely disappointing considering that this year branches could attend and vote on-line.

Finance

Not wishing to steal any of the Treasurers' thunder I will only mention that despite on-going problems caused by the interface between the Legion Online Membership Accounting System (LOMAS) and the Branch Funds Initiative (BFI) the Treasurer continues to keep a tight grip on the accounts.

Website

The role of the website has become even more important in keeping our members informed and up-to-date now that the Branch no longer produces a Newsletter. This had increased the workload on the website co-ordinator, Mr Mike Dargan and I would like to thank him for all the work that he has put in.

Benevolence

On a more positive note the Branch continues to provide assistance to the Legion's beneficiaries through the Branch Benevolence Scheme and various projects. You will hear more about the Branch Benevolence Scheme later in the meeting.

E-Voting

The National Branches District has been at the forefront in the development of using e-business to enable members have a greater input in the running of the Branch. We took part in a small trial when we we asked members who would not be attending the AGM to vote on-line for a change in our Bye-laws. This was successful and so this year we have expanded the on-line voting to include Branch Accounts, Branch Benevolence Scheme and Branch Project. There have been some problems, for example, we placed the accounts on the system and asked the members to approve them. Of course having the figures without the underlying explanation was not satisfactory. We have taken this on board and in future a full explanation will be included. We believe that e-business is the way forward for a National Branch with members throughout the world and we will continue to develop and improve the system.

Membership Renewals

The bulk renewals has been a lot smoother this year and this has been reflected in the number of members that have already renewed but there were approximately 2,400 St James's Branch members still to renew.

And finally

With your help and support the St James's Branch will continue to play its part within the Royal British Legion and together we can make a difference.

TREASURERS REPORT
01 July 2022 - 30 Jun 2023

Summary of the accounts is as follows:

Opening Balances (01 Jul 22)

Bank	£ 6,406:33
BFI	£293,686:13

Total Funds: (A) £300,092:46

Receipts (01 Jul 22 - 30 Jun 23)

BFI Interest	£ 2,173:23
Donation (CAF)	£ 200:00
Subscription Fees	£ 1,940:00
Conference Pooled Fares	£ 140:00

Total Receipts: (B) £ 4,453.23

Payments (01 Jul 22 - 30 Jun 23)

Travel Expenses	£ 2,557
NMA Buggy	£ 20,000
Branch Benevolence Scheme	£ 160,000
Welfare	£ 50,000

Total Payments: (C) £232,557:51

Total Funds (A+B-C) £ 71,988.18

Closing Balances (as at 30 Jun 23)

Bank:	£ 5,628:82
BFI	£ 66,359:36

Total £ 71,988.18