

27 January 2019

Dear Residents & Neighbours

Thank you for kindly taking the time to read this letter, which introduces you to us and sets out our proposition to form a new branch of The Royal British Legion here in North Cray.

Nicola Coppen:

Many of you may know me as the Group Scout Leader at 1st North Cray, I have always been a supporter of the Poppy Appeal and have ensured that Scouting provides awareness of the Royal British Legion and their work, preserving a thank you to our Services for not just the first and second world wars, but modern wars too.

Bob Chapman:

I am the Honorary President of 1st North Cray Scout Group, having previously been the Chair of the Executive Committee and chief fundraiser for the Group. I am Standard Bearer for the RBL, Sidcup & Fooks Cray Branch and a Member of the Royal Naval Association.

From us both:

Why do we want to form a new North Cray Branch of the RBL?

Since joining the Scout Group in 2015, both Nicola and Bob have been keen to ensure that our former Assistant Scout Master, Geoffrey Vesey Holt, killed at Passendale in 1917, remains a key part of our Scout Group in the 21st Century. Between them and other Leaders of the Scout Group, a trip to Ypres was arranged and every year we have ensured that The Poppy Appeal and Remembrance Parades are keenly supported by the new generation.

Following our trip to Ypres in 2017, the Scout Group became an Affiliated Unit to The Royal British Legion, Sidcup & Fooks Cray Branch. Cementing our mutual support for our respective organisations, both of which have 'Royal Charter' Status.

In October 2018, 1st North Cray Scout Group marked the centenary of the end of the First World War by holding our 'Thank You' event as part of the wider Royal British Legion commemorations. This was a very special Memorial Unveiling for Geoffrey and Jane Ayre from the Kent County Royal British Legion stated that the event was exactly what the RBL envisaged from their 'Thank You' campaign, the past in consideration of Geoffrey and the fallen, along with the presentation and remembrance by the young Scouters. We felt so honoured to hear these words.

At Church Parade in December, Bob and Nicola got talking about the rested RBL Standard in St James's Church. We wondered whether we could reform the Branch and discussed this on many occasions. Following the RBL Conference and the encouragement for new Branches and Members, Nicola and Bob visited the Kent County RBL on Weds 23 January 2019, to see whether it would be possible to form a new branch, or indeed reform the old.

This is why we are now writing to you! Initial 'feelers' have been favourable about a new Branch and with some amazing comments and people happy to help, we wanted to ensure our community immediately got an invite to provide their feedback, ideas and potential support for the formation of the Branch.

The proposition follows, as a summary, for your thoughts and consideration. Whether you think this is a great idea or have concerns, please get in touch and let us know:

Email: Otter1stnorthcray@outlook.com or chapmanbob@hotmail.com

Or let your local community organisation know your thoughts and they can feed it back!

Please, don't join online just yet – but if you do, please select Kent Invicta as your branch and let us know you have done so – we can then ensure you get transferred to our branch if we are successful in opening it!

With sincere thanks

Nicola Coppen & Bob Chapman

Proposition to form:
The Royal British Legion
North Cray & District Branch



Forming the Branch

Richard Cast, Kent County RBL Chairman, was very positive about the opportunity to bring back a Branch in North Cray and to ensure we have enough eligible members, it was proposed that we should be the 'North Cray & District' Branch – subject to the following:

- Initial Membership of 15 people – annual membership is currently £17 per year (as of 27/01/19)
- Of the 15 people, we must have:
 - Chair(man)
 - Vice Chair(man)
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - 3 additional committee members

Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary & Treasurer are the Branch Officers. Remainder of the Committee shall form a quorum. They shall exercise a controlling oversight and act upon the affairs of the Branch in accordance with the Royal Charter. All Branch Officers and Committee Members are Trustees and this has legal connotations, but both Nicola & Bob commit that all operations, fundraising for Branch, Poppy Appeal Collections, social event payments and any membership fees will be fully transparent in accordance with Charity Commission, Royal Charter and Trustee Requirements. No one shall gain financially or materially from being an Officer, Committee Member or Member of the Branch.

What happens next?

If you are happy to support our formation of a new Branch, then we just need to know that and whether you are happy to be put forward for any of the Branch Officer or Committee Member roles.

Once we have the magic number, we will be able to approach Kent County RBL to formalise an event whereby we get the opportunity to form the 'North Cray & District' Branch of The Royal British Legion. So just confirm you are interested – an email or call so we can arrange a larger meeting for all interested parties.

Why North Cray & District?

We cannot be named the same as a previous Branch, but equally we want to have a more modern offer for the RBL. To be able to use the Scout Hall and other Community Halls will enable us to take the RBL to our residents. North Cray and District enables North Cray to be the focal area for the Branch, but equally the District means an expanded membership network, where there may be no RBL presence.

We hope you like the idea!

Whether you think this is a great idea or have concerns, please get in touch as you are the first people we are asking!

Nicola: 07743 816725 / 07961 781981

Email: Otter1stNorthCray@outlook.com or ChapmanBob@hotmail.com

Or let your local community organisation know your thoughts and they can feed it back!

With thanks from Nicola & Bob