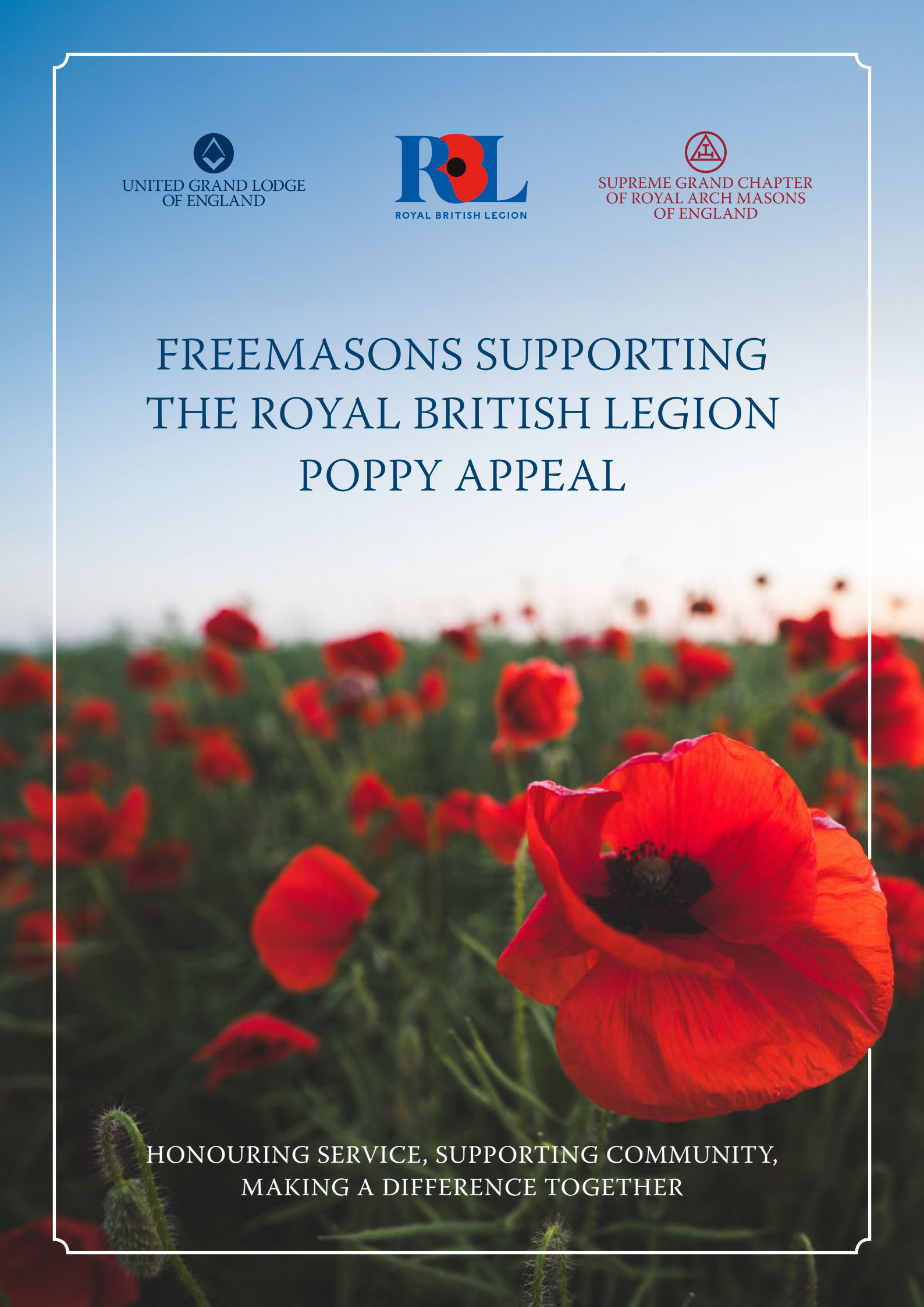
UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

SUPREME GRAND CHAPTER OF ROYAL ARCH MASONS OF ENGLAND

# FREEMASONS SUPPORTING THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL



HONOURING SERVICE, SUPPORTING COMMUNITY,
MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

# Why this matters

The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal is one of the UK's most recognisable and important fundraising campaigns, supporting members of the Armed Forces community, past and present.

Freemasons have long traditions of charitable service and community support and by giving just a small amount of time, we can make a significant contribution to this vital cause.

Freemasons' Hall stands as a lasting memorial to those Freemasons who gave their lives in the First World War. Today, it continues to represent our enduring connection to the Armed Forces community and our shared commitment to service.

It is therefore both fitting and important that we, as Freemasons, support the work of the Royal British Legion and the vital role it plays in caring for those who have served, and their families.

In 2025, London Freemasons demonstrated what can be achieved through collective effort. Following the Festival of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum, Lodges and Chapters came together to support the Poppy Appeal, donating an outstanding £140,000. This is a remarkable achievement and one that should make all involved rightly proud, building on the strong support already shown by Provinces across the country.

However, our support is not only measured in financial contributions. The time we give is equally valuable. Across London, and throughout Provinces nationwide, Freemasons have stepped forward to volunteer during the Poppy Appeal, offering their time, energy and commitment in support of this important cause.

Many within our membership serve in the Armed Forces on a full time basis or as reservists, have served in the past, or have a close family connection to military life. Supporting the Royal British Legion is therefore not only an act of charity, but one of shared understanding and responsibility.

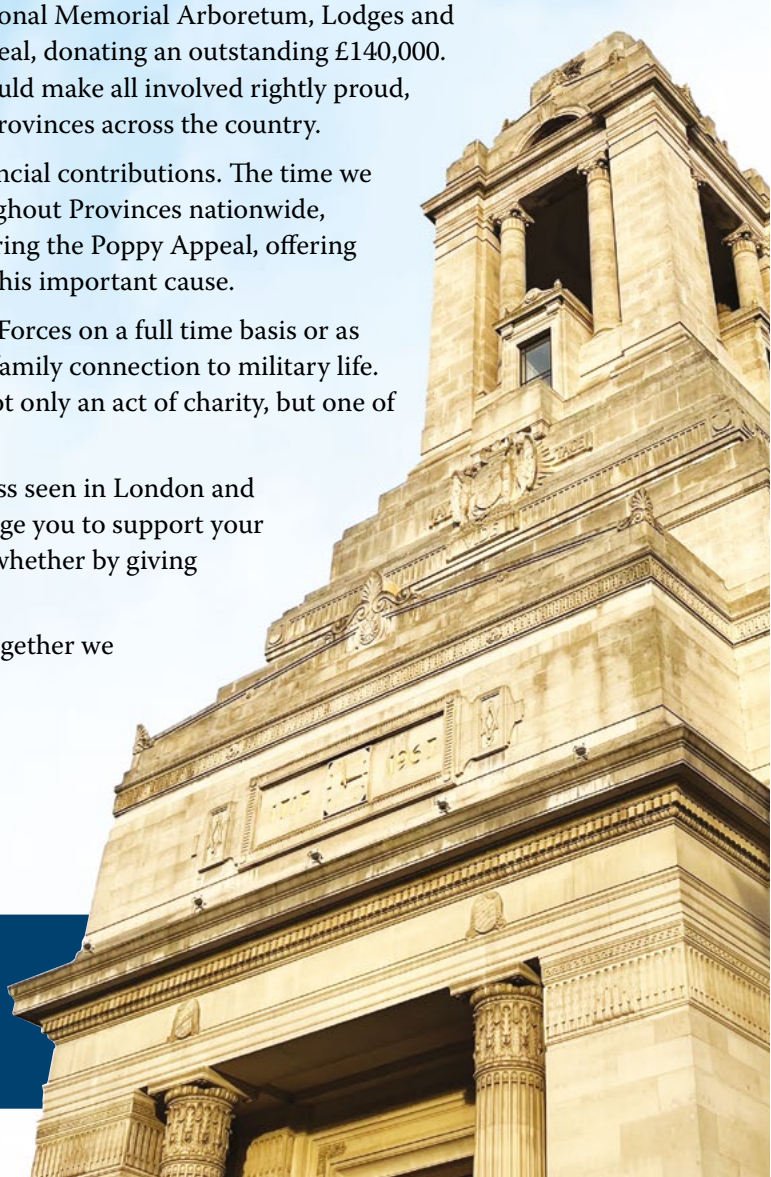
We now have an opportunity to build on the success seen in London and to extend that effort across all Provinces. I encourage you to support your local RBL Poppy Appeal in whatever way you can whether by giving your time, donating, or both.

Together, we can make a meaningful difference. Together we remember. Together we serve.

Thank you for your continued support.

**RW Bro John Thompson**

Assistant Grand Master
United Grand Lodge of England



**By giving just a small amount of time, we can make a significant contribution to this vital cause**

# How Freemasons can help

The United Grand Lodge of England is supporting the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal, encouraging Freemasons across England and Wales to play an active role during the Remembrance period.

Building on the success of recent activity in London, this national initiative provides a clear and coordinated opportunity for Provinces and Lodges to support the Armed Forces community at a local level.

The focus is on practical, visible support within communities across the country. By working alongside local Royal British Legion teams, Freemasons can help strengthen the reach and impact of the Poppy Appeal where it is needed most.

If delivered nationally, this approach has the potential to mobilise thousands of volunteers and generate significant support for the Armed Forces community.

**Would you like to**

- Be a Collecting Volunteer
- Support with Logistics
- Support the Administration
- Count the Donations

## Meet the volunteer

Martin Talbot became a Poppy Appeal volunteer in Hartlepool in 2024. Martin has managed to fit shifts around his job. He said, 'I've always heard about how some people volunteer countless days. I couldn't do that. I could only manage one shift first time. I did more the following year. But the branch was grateful. They worked around my schedule and made sure I was with an experienced poppy seller.' Martin was met by a warm and friendly group and not everyone is a veteran. You just need to care about veteran issues and the appeal. 'I was invited to the local meetings and joined soon after. We meet once a month but have other social activities. And again, I make sure that they fit in with my family, work and Masonic commitments. There's a real sense of belonging and making a difference. Last year I was part of the Hartlepool group that helped to raise the most compared to previous years. I want to be part of a group next year that can raise even more! This is how I can give back to a worthy cause.'

# 1 Collecting volunteers

**Support public collections at:**

- Supermarkets
- Town centres
- Train stations
- Community locations

*Across the UK, every year over 59,000 volunteers play a vital role in collections*

**As a collector you will:**

- Engage with the public
- Receive donations
- Help raise awareness of the Poppy Appeal

***No prior experience is required, full guidance is provided***

# 2 Supporting with logistics

**Behind every successful appeal is a strong network. Freemasons can assist by:**

- Distributing poppies and collection tins to local businesses and offices
- Transporting materials between locations
- Collecting tins and materials after the appeal
- Offering the use of Masonic Halls to assist the local Poppy Appeal, e.g for local storage

# 3 Counting & Administration

**After the Appeal, vital work continues:**

- Counting donations
- Recording and verifying totals
- Supporting local Organisers

## MORE THAN DONATIONS

While financial contributions are always welcome, your time is the most valuable gift you can give.

Every single shift helps ensure the continued success of the Poppy Appeal.

## Meet the volunteer

Marshall Cale became a volunteer for the RBL in April 2023. As a member of the Shropshire Freemasons, he had plenty of experience of charitable work and stepped forward to become responsible for collecting in Shrewsbury Sainsbury's. Since taking the role, Marshall has almost doubled the money raised at the site – from £23,500 in 2023 to £41,800 in 2025. *"I was lucky to have inherited a team of experienced RBL volunteers and have been able to increase our numbers a lot, thanks to enthusiastic support from Shropshire Freemasons and the local community".* His meticulous organisation means that the Sainsbury's collection stand is manned throughout the Poppy Appeal, and his keen adoption of new payment technologies has helped to make sure they raise more each year.

On top of that, his kindness and passion for the cause inspire his team of volunteers to return each year re-energised. *"The practical assistance from Sainsbury's ensures it all runs smoothly,"* he adds. *"The generosity of their customers is truly humbling."*

# Getting involved

## Local coordination and points of contact

Volunteering for the Poppy Appeal is coordinated at a local level by Royal British Legion teams across the country.

Each Province will be supported by a designated Royal British Legion contact, who will be able to:

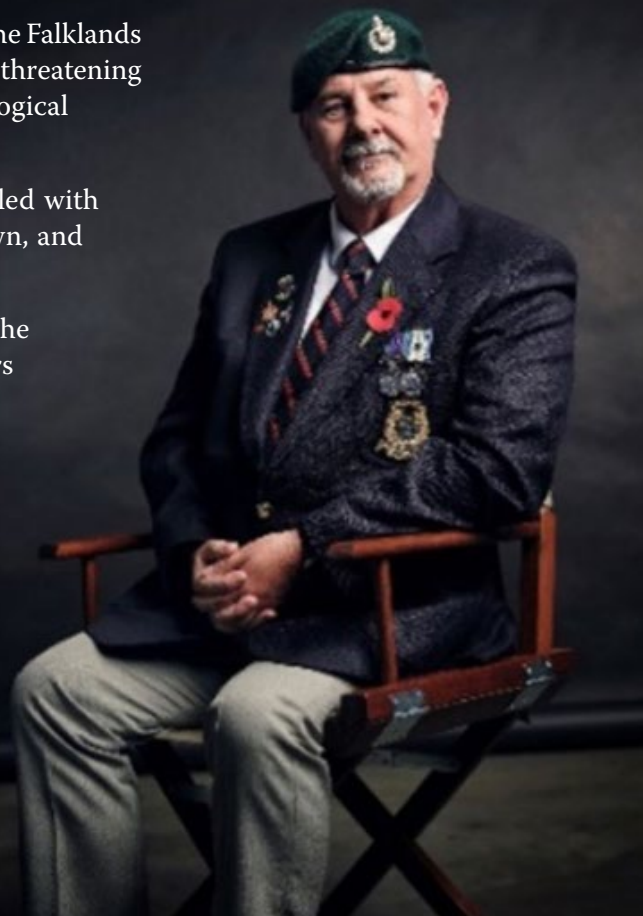
- **Advise on available volunteering opportunities**
- **Help coordinate Lodge/Chapter or Provincial involvement**
- **Signpost to appropriate locations and collections**

We encourage Provinces and Lodges/Chapters to engage with their Provincial contact early to explore how they can best support the Poppy Appeal in their area. This approach allows each Province to shape its involvement in a way that works best locally.

Early engagement is encouraged to help secure preferred opportunities. Lodges/Chapters and Provinces may wish to organise their support collectively. This could include:

- **Coordinating groups of volunteers**
- **Covering multiple collection shifts**
- **Supporting locations where additional volunteers are required**

## *"It all started when I survived the Falklands."*



Colin Waite served as a Royal Marines Commando during the Falklands conflict. He lost close friends and narrowly survived life-threatening situations. While he returned home physically, the psychological impact of what he experienced never left him.

Over time, that trauma began to shape his life. He struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder, his relationships broke down, and he lost his sense of direction and purpose.

Colin's experience is not uncommon. For many veterans, the effects of service are not immediate. They can emerge years later, often at a time when support feels hardest to find.

With the support of the Royal British Legion, Colin received practical help to make his home safe and manageable. Just as importantly, he was given reassurance that he was not alone and that support was there when he needed it. Today, Colin is a passionate advocate for the Legion. His journey is a powerful reminder that however suffering begins, the right support can help bring stability, dignity and hope.

# Donating to the Poppy Appeal

Alongside volunteering, we appreciate that members Lodges/Chapters and Provinces may wish to make a financial contribution to the Poppy Appeal.

Suggested approach: Lodges may wish to consider a modest contribution (e.g. £50–£100) alongside their support. If volunteering is not possible, donating remains a valuable way to contribute.

All donations via the following methods can be tracked by the Relief Chest team and donation totals can be made available to Provincial Charity Stewards upon request.

Provinces may wish to consider the possibility of match funding if Lodges/Chapters wish to donate.

## • Donating by cheque

Cheques should be made payable to: Relief Chest scheme or the Grand Charity.

Write RBL then your Lodge/Chapter number on the reverse of the cheque as a reference and sent to:
The Relief Chest Scheme, Freemasons' Hall, 60 Great Queen Street, London, WC2B 5AZ

## • By bank transfer

There is a Relief Chest in use for donations to the Royal British Legion. It is simply called **RBL**. Donations from Relief Chests may be made directly into this. Or if making payments to the Relief Chest by Bank Transfer use

**Account Name:** The Relief Chest Scheme*
**Account Number:** 02585235
**Sort Code:** 18-00-02
**Ref:** RBL/L1234 (e.g.RBL/L12345 L for Lodge, C for Chapter, followed by the unit Number)

*Please note some banks issue a warning about the account name. The full legal title of the account is **"Freemasons' Grand Charity of the United Grand Lodge of England Relief Chest Scheme account1"** with working names accepted as the Relief Chest Scheme or the Grand Charity.

## • QR code

## • Donate online click here

## • Donations from a Lodge/ Chapter Relief Chest

Complete a Voucher (e-Voucher or Green voucher) using the following info
**Charity Name:** Royal British Legion Appeal
**Charity No:** RBL
**Charity Address:** not required
**Amount:** your donation amount

## • Relief Chest Scheme contact details:

Telephone: 0203 146 3352

Email: reliefchest@mcf.org.uk

Post: Relief Chest Scheme

60 Great Queen Street | London | WC2B 5AZ

# Next steps

We suggest that the following is considered if a Province wishes to support the RBL Poppy Appeal in a coordinated way.

## Consider a Provincial Lead

- This could be a member of the community engagement team or the armed forces team or whoever the Province feels will be ideally suited to this role. This person would be the primary contact with the RBL Poppy Appeal Manager.

## Contact the RBL Poppy Appeal Manager

- We recommend early engagement with the RBL Poppy Appeal Manager, to build a relationship and determine how best your Province / members can support the local appeal.
- If support can be determined early on, then it will help the local branches to identify additional donation locations. This could be a large, coordinated effort or as simple as identifying volunteers and connecting them directly with a local RBL branch. The province can determine their level of engagement.

## Identify members interested in supporting the Appeal

- Canvass your members
- Encourage family members to support
- Determine how members wish to help, collecting donations on stalls, logistics, administration etc. Discuss opportunities with the Poppy Appeal Manager. This will vary depending on local Appeals.

## Coordinate volunteering activity locally

- Determine how support can be provided. This will vary depending on local Appeal commitment.
- If members don't wish to volunteer on stalls, other opportunities are available behind the scenes prior and post Poppy Appeal.
- Consider the possibility of a Province covering all shifts in a particular location.

## Making Donations

- We know some Lodges/Chapters and members will wish to make donations, please encourage them to follow the instructions provided in this document. This will allow us to monitor the support we have given as an organisation.

## Share this Information

- Please share this information with your Lodges and Chapters interested in supporting the RBL Poppy Appeal.

## Notes

- Although we welcome support to the RBL, this engagement is not mandatory, and we understand Provinces also have other priorities.
- Many Provinces have provided support over many years to the RBL, and we encourage them to continue as they see fit. We also encourage them to share good practices with the UGLE Poppy Appeal Coordinator.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

The Royal British Legion exists to ensure that no member of the Armed Forces community faces hardship alone. This work is only possible because of the generosity and commitment of supporters such as the Masonic community.

Every day, lives begin to unravel. Sometimes slowly, sometimes suddenly. Injury, trauma, bereavement, financial pressure or caring responsibilities can push veterans and their families to breaking point.

In 2023 to 2024, the Royal British Legion responded to 128,268 requests for help. That is an average of 351 calls every day from individuals and families in need. Behind each call is a real person.

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