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Gurkhas save Wembley branch of Royal British Legion from closure

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Geraldine Cook, vice president with two Gurkhas who helped save Wembley's Royal British Legion

A group of Gurkhas have saved the Wembley branch of the Royal British Legion from imminent oblivion.

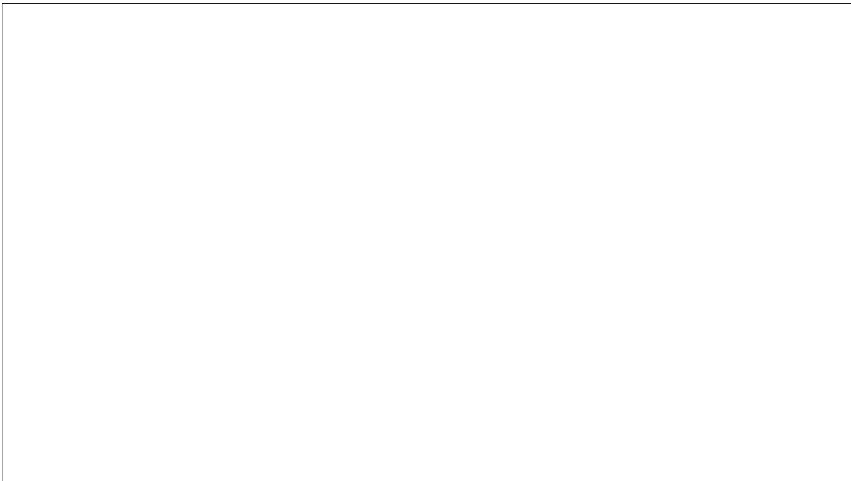




Gurkhas at Wembley's Asda where they collected for the British Legion seven hours a day

The tiny premises of the 78th Squadron Air Cadets opposite Barham Park had only five members turn up for meetings or raise funds last year, not enough to keep going.

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However despite their small numbers this active branch raised £62,000 in 2015, one of the highest totals in the country.

In May, on the brink of closure, a meeting with some Gurkha's changed the situation and the legion is now back to full membership and reforming.

Geraldine Cook, vice chairwoman of the Wembley RBL said: "It's amazing what has happened. The Gurkhas rode into the rescue as they have done on fields of battle so often in history. I call our legion story – The Branch that Refused to Die."

Members of the Gurkha community known to Ms Cook came to see her in May and asked about joining the legion.

She said: "I told them because we only had five members and the RBL needs a minimum of 15, we were forced to close. They asked 'how many of us do you want?'"

"At the next meeting you couldn't get through the doors, they were sitting in three rows, all squashed in. They are eager to learn and shadow us. In the run up to Remembrance Day they led the poppy appeal outside Asda on the Wembley High Road. Nearly 50 of them led the Brent parade of Army, Sea, Air and Police behind them on Sunday. It was incredible."

The West Kilburn's RBL held their last service on Sunday as the council wishes to redevelop the land.

Attempts to get in touch with volunteers have been unsuccessful.

Ms Cook said: "Maybe they can get together with the Wembley branch. It's so vital to bring communities together."

The Royal British Legion has been approached for information.



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