

Paul Harris QGM



Personal Statement

You will note that I have two election statements for 2022, this one for re-election as a Trustee and the other for election as your National Vice Chairman. I seek your vote for both roles. By May 2022, I will have served on the Board of Trustees for four years 3 months, initially by co-option in 2018 and then by election in 2019. As a Trustee I have experienced the challenges of recent years, been part of the extremely difficult decision making that has to take place, often disputed by those perhaps not in possession of the full facts. The changes that were implemented late 2019, early 2020 saw the RBL come out of the pandemic in mid-2021 in a much stronger position than its contemporaries, able to help a wider range of beneficiaries in a much more cohesive manner. The role requires absolute personal integrity. I acknowledge that there is always more to do and I believe communication is key, particularly where change is concerned, but always within the legal constraints which the Trustees and the Charity are subject to. Along with overseeing the strategic direction of the Charity, continuing the implementation of our One Legion Strategy and executing the results of the Governance Review, there are three things that I wish, as a Trustee, to address in the next three years:

1. Ensure that the RBL remains relevant in the minds of the public which leads to retaining their moral and financial support.
2. Increase the attraction of the Charity to all generations by exploring individual membership running alongside the current requirement to be a Branch member. The younger generations think and act in a different manner and require a different membership or volunteer experience and
3. Embrace diversity and inclusion; ensuring that the RBL meets the needs of, and understands, the whole veteran community.

RBL Experience

Like many of you, I have been an RBL member for many years. My motivation to become involved with the RBL centres on “giving back” to those who need help after, or because of, their Service. My own Service was generally overseas where the opportunity to join in was limited, either due to location or to pace of work. However, on settling back in the UK, my RBL journey began with my local branch. I now have substantial leadership and management experience within TRBL covering all levels of TRBL from Branch, through County Chairmanship, Membership Council Representative to the Board of Trustees. I have experience in dealing with most RBL activities including welfare, finance, membership, Remembrance, Legion clubs, understanding issues related to complaints, property lease issues and the implementation of specialist policies. I have been a member of five of the seven major committees of the Board of Trustees; previously on Finance, Governance and Membership Council (as a Trustee I was appointed vice chair); currently on Audit & Risk plus Property (purchase and sale of commercial buildings). During the co-option period of my Trusteeship I took up the role of strategic adviser to the Directorate for Membership and Volunteering, the RBL

Project Management Office and the Veterans Gateway. I have experience of subsidiaries of the RBL Group; previously a Trustee and director of the National Memorial Arboretum and currently Chairman of the RBL- Republic of Ireland (and chair of its related company) plus Chairman of the Irish Ex Servicemen's Trust which is a Foreign & Commonwealth Office funded Trust, managed through the RBL. I have successfully conducted informal resolutions at both Branch and County level and, as a Trustee, been both a member and chairman of Investigation Panels on behalf of the Legion Complaints Committee. All of these roles result from being a Trustee; all require time to carry out and therefore my current commitment to the charity is significant and I willingly give that time.

Board and Leadership experience

My most recent board experience has been the 4 years 3 months that I have served with the RBL with the roles and responsibilities identified above. Simultaneously I am currently the Mayor and leader of my local Council. This comprises objective councillors with no political affiliations. Councillors are strong and independently minded, some with robust and successful business backgrounds. I have led this Council through the recent difficult times. It requires significant people skills to get individuals to work together for the common good and we have been successful. I have overseen a review of all of the Councils governing documents and policies, ensuring that the Local Government code of conduct was adopted by the Council for the first time, the equality and diversity policy was fit for purpose and that a third party expert company was engaged to deliver our health and safety, data protection and information security support. I was deputy mayor and deputy Council leader during the early part of the pandemic and led over 100 of the Towns community resilience response volunteers, ensuring that every one of the over 12,000 residents had the support they required. In the latter part of my military career I was the armed forces representative on the National Council of the Institute of Explosives Engineers 2002-2006; after returning from the USA, I was elected back to the Council for the period Apr 2009-2016. I chaired the legal & procedural, education and training committees at various times and was vice president of the Institute for two and a half years Dec 13-Apr 16. I was a board member of the UK Standards Setting Body for Explosives, Munitions and Search occupations 2003-06 and 2009-16, being board chairman 2009-11. I am a graduate of the RBL National Leadership Course

Career Highlights

I completed 32 years commissioned service deploying on Operations in the Middle East, Africa and Northern Ireland. My Counter-IED skills have been well recognised. I have experience working in the Joint Service and International arenas. I have served an exchange tour with the Canadian Forces, including the African operational experience; three years as a liaison officer in the Pentagon (being present during the 9/11 attack); been a specialist adviser to the Governor of Bermuda; worked on the UK Joint Staff and as a specialist advisor to the Multinational Corps Commanding General in Iraq. I was head hunted to be a civilian advisor to NATO, based in the USA. Subsequently I became a Director for a multinational Defence Sector company; finally owning and running a successful management consultancy business. I hold the Queens Gallantry Medal, a mention in despatches and the US Army Commendation Medal.

Before retirement I held fellowships with the Chartered Management Institute, Institute of Leadership and Management and membership of the Institute of Explosives Engineers.

I have the experience for the role and seek your support for re-election as a Trustee for our charity.