

Paul Harris QGM



Personal Statement

You will note that I have two election statements for 2022, this one for election as your National Vice Chairman and the other for re-election as a Trustee. I believe I have the experience and knowledge to take on the second most senior leadership role in the RBL. I do seek your vote for both roles. By May 2022, I will have served on the Board of Trustees for four years 3 months. As a Trustee I have experienced the challenges of recent years. I have been part of the extremely difficult decision making that has to take place to ensure that we remain relevant into the middle of the 21st Century and beyond. You may expect me to pledge to work with the Board to advance the Legions mission, values and reputation as a national charity, to maintain confidentiality where appropriate and to constructively challenge change as a necessity. This, of course, I do but the key throughout my service to the RBL is ensuring there is no compromise to my personal integrity. The changes that were implemented in late 2019 and throughout 2020 were necessary and have set the RBL up to succeed following the pandemic. Beneficiary needs continue to change as our beneficiaries experiences change. The One Legion strategy will see us transform over time in order to remain relevant to our beneficiaries. We need to embrace this and never forget that our duty is to those that rely on our support. The Legion always requires strong leadership and I believe I can provide that. I do not profess to be an expert in all areas, indeed the structure of the Board is such that the true experts in their field are appointed to the Board, not elected. My experience is about bringing the experts together, ensuring that we can work through the challenges that we face to get consensus on the right way ahead. For any change we must always ask ourselves “does this provide additional benefit for our beneficiaries” and answer “yes” before we implement any change. In addition to the role as a Trustee and the overall accountabilities ascribed to the Board as the charity’s governing body, I see the role of the National Vice Chairman as:

1. Supporting the National Chairman in the totality of their role; leading, supporting, representing and ceremonial.
2. Working with, and being a sounding board for, the Trustees, Director General and the Executive Board in the delivery of our charitable objectives.
3. With the Trustees, ensuring we remain relevant in the wider world through implementing our strong strategic plan, having a robust financial foundation, working within the structure of the Royal Charter, the law and the appropriate regulatory frameworks and executing the results of the recent Governance Review.

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.

In addition to having experience with the Board and its immediate responsibilities, I have experience of the wider RBL Group and its subsidiaries. This is essential for the National Vice Chairman as the RBL Group is complex, with much out of the view of members. Few members or Trustees will have experienced, or held responsibilities in, parts of the RBL Group outside of the main charity. I have previously been a Trustee and director of the National Memorial Arboretum. This is a separate charity to the RBL but is part of the Group. The NMA charity has its own company associated with it; hence I was also a director of that company. Currently I am Chairman of the RBL- Republic of Ireland (and chair of its related company). This is a separate charity undergoing registration in the Republic of Ireland. I am also Chairman of the Irish Ex Servicemen's Trust. This is a Foreign & Commonwealth Office funded Trust, so outside of the RBL, but its management has been delegated to the RBL. This Trust has other army, navy and air force charity representatives on its Board and we ensure the distribution of funds to beneficiaries on the island of Ireland.

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. I have led this Council through the recent difficult times and demonstrated the people skills required to get consensus between many strong willed individuals. I have chaired the UK Standards Setting Body for Explosives, Munitions and Search occupations and held the Vice President (ie vice chairman) role at the Institute of Explosives Engineers. I have been the UK Board member of the European Explosive Certification Board. I have chaired various NATO development and training events. 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. I have experience working in the Joint Service and International arenas, having served two years with the Canadian Forces, three years with the US Forces; been a specialist adviser to the Governor of Bermuda and to the Multinational Corps Commanding General in Iraq. I was a civilian advisor to NATO, Director for a multinational Defence Sector company and owned my own management consultancy business.

I have the experience and seek your support for election as the National Vice Chairman.