



**FROM: NATIONAL CHAIR'S OFFICE**

Date: 13 April 2023

Address Box

Dear Member

Throughout the Royal British Legion's 100-year history, the organisation has remained steadfast to its original guiding principles – support for 'all those who serve or have served' and their families, campaigning, and leading Remembrance for the Nation. I am proud to be a Member and to serve at the highest level within our Charity.

Our Membership is an integral part of our Charity, providing service in so many ways, be that providing comradeship locally, vital fundraising, and through Remembrance, with a strong ceremonial tradition dating back to 1921.

We live in a time of significant change in both society and technology. While this provides new ways to deliver RBL's purpose, this means the services we deliver from care homes to debt advice, to domiciliary care, to fundraising and lobbying necessarily operate within complex rules and structures with a level of intense regulation and scrutiny designed to ensure that we collect and spend money in the right way and keep those who rely on us safe.

The fulfilment of our mission has always required all of us in RBL to adapt. Trustees are required to ensure that they have the appropriate skills and experience, and to act in the Charity's best interests. It was for this reason that we have been engaging with our Membership on proposed changes to our Royal Charter. These changes relate to the size of our Board and the appointment of a Chair, replacing the elected National Chair, opening up this critical role to a wider field of expertise and experience.

We have been listening to our Membership and noted the concerns raised. In response we have revisited these proposals. As it is the Board who are ultimately accountable for the Legion in law and to the Charity Commission it is the Board who must act as the 'guiding mind of the charity'. So the Board should select their Chair through an open process, that will include Members and also go wider, to find the most suitable candidate with the breadth of skills and depth of experience needed. We are also proposing to replace the National Vice Chair with a new elected National Officer.

Having engaged with our membership, and reflected on the valuable feedback given, we propose to create the role of National Chair of Membership who will be elected by Membership and will be Chair of both the Membership Council and Annual Conference Committee.

It also remains our intention over time to reduce the size of the Trustee Board, we have decided not to put this to Annual Conference this year. To provide our Membership with more detail on this proposal, we will firstly undertake the necessary work to establish the optimum number of Trustees, given the size and complexity of our Charity.

Further information about how we will appoint the Chair of the Board and involve our Members in this is enclosed and further information about the National Chair of Membership available through the magazine, newsletter, and online meetings for our Membership. If approved by Annual Conference this year, these changes would come into place in 2025.

To ensure you are provided with the opportunity to ask questions around these proposed changes, I am delighted to invite you to attend one of the following online LIVE Q & A sessions for Branch Chairs and Secretaries on **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April, from 5.30pm – 7pm** or **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, from 9.30am – 11am.**

Access to the event links will be shared with you via email at the beginning of the week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> April.

Should you wish to pre-submit a comment or question for these sessions could you please direct these to the following email: [trusteeelections@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:trusteeelections@britishlegion.org.uk)

I remain committed to finding the best governance structure for RBL, and while we do this, I will oversee the development of a programme of succession planning and leadership training which will be open to all Members who wish to serve on the Board. Work for this is underway and expected to launch later this year. I expect to bring forward proposals in future years to reduce the number of Trustees.

Our engagement with Membership since January has strengthened our thinking and our proposals. The new National Officer roles of Chair of the Board and National Chair of Membership make us absolutely fit for the future with the right people in the right leadership positions, which is ultimately the aim of changes to strengthen our governance. I strongly believe that these proposals provide a balance between the need to evolve to meet future governance requirements, while maintaining and preserving the core role of our Membership and the proud heritage represented by them.

Our proposals demonstrate that the voice of our Membership is heard by those of us who govern. At the same time, we need to make sure that RBL's leadership evolves and adapts to the changes and challenges we face in our work to support the Armed Forces Community.

I urge you to consider this motion and support it at Annual Conference, as I believe that it truly is in the best interests of RBL, our Charity which is vital to so many who continue to serve and sacrifice. It is only through an evolution which both protects our heritage and fits us for the future, that we will continue to thrive and maintain our position as not only the largest military charity, but as part of the fabric of British society.

As ever, thank you for all you do and for your ongoing support.



**Jason Coward**  
**National Chair**



## **Appointed Chair**

### **Duties of Chair**

Lead the Board of Trustees so that it fulfils its responsibilities, ensures good governance, clear direction and achievement of the charity's vision, values and strategic objectives whilst working in partnership with the executive team.

Ensure that the Board and its Committees are effectively exercising their governance responsibilities, reviewing the makeup and structure of the Committees of the Board as appropriate.

Ensure the Board of Trustees incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern the charity effectively.

Chair the Board meetings effectively and work with staff to shape the agenda in advance.

Uphold the values of the charity and lead the Board of Trustees by example.

Be the main point of contact between the Board of Trustees and the Director General.

Conduct annual appraisals of Trustees and Director General.

Working alongside the Trustees and Director General, have ultimate responsibility for ensuring:

- That the charity complies with its objects, charity and company law and associated regulation, including the Charity Governance Code.
- That RBL has a clear strategy for delivering its mission and that there are measures in place to evaluate both short and long-term progress.
- Ensuring that the Board regularly considers the risks facing the organisation and the steps required to mitigate them.
- Ensuring that the organisation has a sustainably financial plan and appropriate controls in place.

Oversight of the health of RBL's external relationships with other Armed Forces charities, the MoD etc.

To represent RBL at Remembrance events as required.

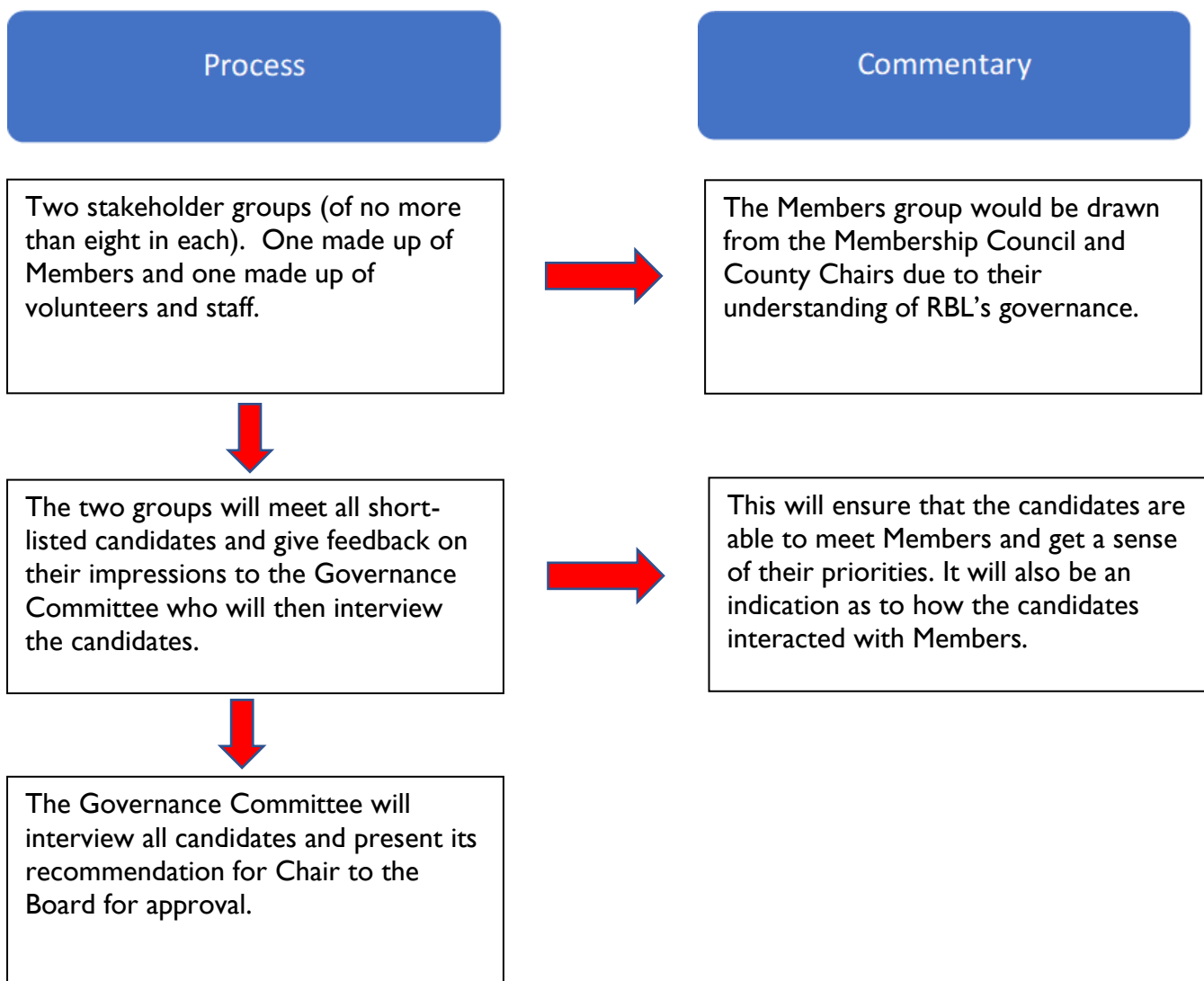
Lead the Board in support of the senior management team to ensure that staff, members, and volunteers are engaged in the mission and work of RBL.

### Requirements for Chair

- Appreciation of the importance of remembrance in national life and a commitment to ensuring that the contribution of the Armed Forces community is properly recognised.
- Significant board and non-executive experience and proven chair expertise.
- A track record of providing strong strategic and leadership direction.
- Excellent influencing and interpersonal skills
- Sound judgement and the ability to navigate sensitive issues.
- Ability to demonstrate strategic thinking.
- Personal commitment to inclusion, equality, and diversity.

### Process for Chair

The Governance Committee will work with a professional search agency to generate a shortlist of candidates based on the job specification and skills that have been produced for the Chair.





## **RBL National Chair of Membership**

The National Chair of Membership will be the lead voice on the Board of Trustees for all matters relating to Membership – the pinnacle of the county, district, and branch network.

The National Chair of Membership will be elected in accordance with the current procedure for elected trustees and national officers: branches will nominate candidates; the candidates will then go through the agreed trustee selection process against the job description. All candidates who pass that selection process will then go forward for election by our Members. The National Chair of Membership will be a member of the Board of Trustees.

All candidates will be required to prove military experience or clear affiliation, such as long-term membership of The Royal British Legion, as part of their application process to ensure an ongoing link to the Armed Forces community we serve.

- The National Chair of Membership will be responsible for:
  - Leading our Membership on behalf of the Board through counties and districts
  - Championing the role of Members within The Royal British Legion and encouraging members to live out our values in every community.
  - Chairing the Membership Council as a committee of the Board of Trustees
  - Chairing the Annual Conference Committee of the Board of Trustees
  - Overseeing the delivery of a successful Annual Conference, where the National Chair of Membership will chair the membership sessions and the Chair of the Board will chair Board of Trustee reporting sessions.
  - Promoting the effective administration of Membership through the Membership Council across counties, districts, and branches in the UK and overseas
  - Leading the Cenotaph march past together with the Chair of the Board
  - Hosting very senior guests at the annual Festival of Remembrance
  - Playing a significant role in representation and events attendance as one of the three national officers of The Royal British Legion. Representing the Board of Trustees at Membership focussed events and at other significant RBL events and occasions, shared with the National President and Chair of the Board