

# Minutes of Annual Conference

The Queen Elizabeth II Centre (QEII Centre), Broad Sanctuary,  
Westminster, London, SW1P 3EE.

on

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Registered charity number: 21927



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

## Present at Annual Conference

### Attendees

National President:	Lt Gen J. Bashall CB CBE
National Vice Chairman:	J. Falzon OSJ BEM
Board of Trustees:	Rod Bedford, Liz Butler, Jason Coward, Tony Goodwin, Paul Harris, Garry Mills, Helen Owen, Anny Reid, Monia Risam, Debbie Sorkin, Helen Spence, David Whimpenny, Patsy Wilkinson  Una Cleminson, Phillip Moore (Apologies)
Director General:	Charles Byrne
Executive:	Daniel Oppenheimer, Antony Baines, Janet Talman, Karen Gill, Gary Ryan
National Chaplain:	The Venerable Martyn Gough
Branch delegates:	255

## Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022 10am

### March on of Standards, Silent Tribute, Exhortation, Prayers and Civic Welcome

Annual Conference opened with the march on of Standards accompanied by The British Army Band Tidworth.

The National President asked for a silent tribute for those that had passed away in the last year and gave the Exhortation:

- Kevin Bovill – Caseworker, who died on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- Colin Hawkins – Suffolk County Chairman, who died on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021.
- Pte Jetro Watson-Pickering – Yorkshire Regiment, who died on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
- Commander David Howard, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Effingham – Former National President, who died on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
- Harry Billinge MBE, D-Day veteran, who died on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

The National Chaplain, the Venerable Martyn Gough, led Conference in Prayer.

The Right Worshipful Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Andrew Smith, welcomed Conference to the QEII Centre and to the London Borough of Westminster.

### Loyal Message

The National President read the following message, which had been sent to Her Majesty the Queen:

I have the honour to inform Her Majesty that, on the occasion of their Annual Conference held at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre London on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022, the National President, trustees and delegates of the Royal British Legion, wish to convey to Her Majesty their loyal greetings and gratitude for Her Majesty's steadfast support as their Patron in safeguarding the welfare, interests and memory of those who are serving or have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces, and their dependents.

On this Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, we have all been most fortunate to have Her Majesty as our Sovereign and as the Head of the Commonwealth, bringing wisdom, stability and continuity.

Lt Gen James Bashall, National President

The following reply was read to Conference:

Please convey my warm thanks to the Trustees and Delegates attending the Royal British Legion's Annual Conference for their loyal greetings. As your Patron, I much appreciate your kind words on the Seventieth Anniversary of my Accession to the Throne and, in return, send my best wishes to all those who are present at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre London for a most successful programme.

Elizabeth R.

## National President's Address

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The National President addressed Conference.

He presented 5 key themes:

- The Legion led the way on National Remembrance, and we should all remember how dearly the nation respects what we do and represent.
- What we all do is critically important to the lives of beneficiaries.
- Modernising the legion means change.
- The whole of the Legion will always be greater than the sum of its parts.
- Unity – moderation and thoughtfulness should be our guiding principles in bringing different parts of the Legion together.

## Welcome

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The National Vice Chairman extended a warm welcome to everyone attending Annual Conference 2022 and gave apologies for The National Chairman, Una Cleminson, who was unable to attend as she was unwell.

The National Vice Chairman introduced:

- The Platform Party - National President, James Bashall, Chair of the Conference Committee Anny Reid, Director General Charles Byrne, Head of Corporate Governance Mike Sims (minutes)
- Guests
  - Moira Kane Chairman War Widows Association
  - Martyn Hawthorn National Chairman Legion Scotland
  - Christopher Warren Secretary General of Royal Commonwealth Ex Servicemen's League
  - Debbie Mills CEO The Poppy Factory
  - Bruce Julian Dominion President The Royal Canadian Legion
  - Steven Clark National Executive Director The Royal Canadian Legion
- The Board of Trustees
- The Executive Board

## Business of Conference and Voting

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The National Vice Chairman explained that the Conference was a hybrid conference with delegates joining virtually who were able to vote online.

## Place of Conference 2026

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The National Vice Chairman reported there had been no nominations from membership and on the recommendation of the Conference Committee the Board of Trustees was proposing Brighton as the venue, subject to inspection.

## **Nominations for membership of the Conference Committee**

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The National Vice Chairman reported that a nomination had been received for John Gilmour and confirmed that John Gilmour was therefore elected.

## **Appointment of Scrutineers**

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Conference appointed the following as scrutineers:

- Kimberley Thornton – Chief Scrutineer
- Michael Challinor
- John Boisson
- Emma Cox
- Kenneth Terry
- Kelly Stark
- Steve Lewis

## **Minutes of Annual Conference Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021**

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The National Vice Chairman asked Conference to approve the Minutes of Annual Conference Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021. Conference approved the minutes by 250 votes to 1 vote.

## **National Vice Chairman's Address**

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The National Vice Chairman read out a message from the outgoing National Chairman, Una Cleminson, to Conference where she explained that it had been an enormous privilege to serve Annual Conference and thanked all members for their hard work.

Following this, the National Vice Chairman said that this Annual Conference would be his own final formal event as a Trustee of the Board and he wished Jason Coward and the new Board the very best for the future.

He thanked the membership for their continued hard work in the community.

## **Director General's Address**

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The Director General began his address by apologising to Conference for difficulties that had arisen through the recent national elections process, explaining an independent review was underway to examine the whole process. He added, however, that despite these issues he was delighted to announce that there had been a 48% turnout from branches which had been the highest for 10 years.

He highlighted:

- The work undertaken with beneficiaries in the last year.
- Key events of remembrance and fundraising.
- Communications with membership.
- The progress being made with the review of corporate governance.

Finally, he paid tribute to Una Cleminson, Joe Falzon and David Whimpenny as outgoing members of the Board of Trustees.

## Director of Membership – The Future of Membership

Janet Talman provided Conference with a presentation current thinking to date on the future of membership.

She explained:

- That the context of the review was based upon the continuing decline of membership.
- That the review sought to define both the future purpose of membership and its role.
- The headline results of the 2022 Membership Engagement Survey.
- The next planned steps for the review.

### Motions

The voting was completed live via a remote voting system for both delegates in the room and online. There were 193 Branch Delegates present in the room and 63 Branch Delegates online (255).

#### Motion 1

Proposer	Staple Hill and District Branch		
Seconder	Cheltenham Branch		
Motion	This Branch requests that the Board of Trustees and Director of Welfare provide clarification on current arrangements for Welfare breaks for beneficiaries. When the decision was taken to close Break Centres the membership was assured that beneficiaries would be able to apply for breaks as before, but that accommodation would be provided within the Private Sector. It has been our experience that the current process is not working as originally suggested and we request clarity.		
Result	<b>Carried</b>	For: 247	Against: 5

#### Motion 2

Proposer	Portugal and Atlantic Islands Branch		
Seconder	Antwerp Branch		
Motion	That Honorary Membership of the Royal British Legion be automatical granted to any member attaining their Centenary.		
Result	<b>Carried</b>	For: 190	Against: 67

### Motion 3

Proposer	Paris Branch		
Seconder	Somme Branch		
Motion	This Conference asks the Board of Trustees to allow proxy voting for branches at AGMs.		
Result	<b>Carried</b>	For: 159	Against: 97

### Motion 4

Proposer	Chesterfield Branch		
Seconder	Chapel-en-le-Frith Branch		
Motion	This Branch requests that, as a matter of priority, the County Conference passes this motion to the Board of Trustees for action. To implement the use of Bank debit cards, if required, by Branches who are finding difficulty in paying bills by cheque.		
Result	<b>Carried</b>	For: 209	Against: 46

### Motion 5

Proposer	Lancaster Branch		
Seconder	Morecambe Branch		
Motion	This Conference requests that the Board of Trustees request that "the printers" revert to using paper-based card for the Legion Membership Cards.		
Result	<b>Not Carried</b>	For: 43	Against: 211

### Motion 6

Proposer	Cheltenham & District Branch		
Seconder	Gloucester City Branch		
Motion	This Conference challenges the current policy of Head Office Finance Department in relation to its actual and planned disbursements from Area		

	Trust Funds (ATFs) and the lack of visibility of such transactions, particularly relating to the South West Midlands (SW Mids) ATF. Finance Department should publish to branches each May, clear details of the annual income and expenditure from the relevant ATFs.		
Result	<b>Carried</b>	For: 241	Against: 11

### Motion 7 – Motion of urgency

Proposer	Cheltenham & District Branch		
Seconder	Staple Hill & District Branch		
Motion	This Conference strongly urges the Board of Trustees to acknowledge the concerns of membership with the process, protocols and management adopted for this round of Elections for National Officers and Trustees. The Board is strongly encouraged to engage with, and seek recommendations from, the Membership Council, on behalf of the wider membership, and to review and revise the Election process into clear and transparent procedures to be promulgated to members in advance of the Conference 2023 elections process.		
Result	<b>Carried</b>	For: 178	Against: 57

### Motion 8 – Appealed Motion

Proposer	Wycombe Marsh Branch		
Seconder	Buckinghamshire County		
Motion	This Conference requests the Introduction of a policy that the Board of Trustees and The Membership Council meetings be held on Saturdays and Sundays thus enabling members that have full time employment to stand for election and play a full part in these formations.		
Result	<b>Carried</b>	For: 208	Against: 31

## Membership Forum

The National Vice Chairman suspended the Annual Conference Standing Orders for the Membership Forum.

The Chair of the Membership Council, Jason Coward, opened the Forum by introducing John Boisson, Emma Cox, Phil Davies, Gerry Nunn, Gordon Barker and Bob Chambers, all representatives from the Membership Council, Janet Talman, Director of Membership and Magda de Lima Santos, Head of Membership Administration Governance and Compliance. Speakers were:



**Robert McDonald Somerset County**

Digital Membership

**Robert Miller (online)**

Election documentation

**John Burns, West Lancs & Merseyside County**

MSOs

**Nick McEntee Southport**

Membership recruitment

Contacting Haig House

**Sarah Jane Hackett (online)**

MSOs

**Andrew Huggins Hertfordshire County**

Digital membership

**Sarah Hennessy Buckinghamshire County**

Young person and veteran award and a membership magazine for younger people

**Mark McLaughlin Ballymoney Branch**

Membership renewal system

**Bob Sharples, Whitchurch and Pensford**

IT system drop down menu for branch location

**David Hawker Rushden**

Publicising RBL through TV media

**Sam Carruthers Old Catton**

Creation of a National Youth Forum

**Samantha Cast Invicta**

Auditing of decisions of Trustees and Executives

**Jackie Barker Featherstone**

Closure of pop in centres.

**Tam Miller Aldridge**

Family membership and serving personnel membership

**Roger Smith Thetford**

Promotional items for events

**Kerry Archer Bishop Stortford**

Support for printing

**John Stewart Northern Ireland**

Membership IT systems

Trustee forum at Conference

**Sarah Marshall Wycombe Marsh**

MSO working hours

**Lee Griffiths Golcar**  
Survey of members 2022

**Jo Morris Ross-on-Wye**  
Membership excel spreadsheet

**Jack Kemp Spain North**  
Access for volunteers to Office 365

**Desiree Niezen Germany**  
Website design for joining as a member

The National Vice Chairman reinstated the Annal Conference Standing Orders.

### **Parade Briefing**

John Thornhill, National Parade Marshal, briefed Conference on the arrangements for the parade on Sunday morning.

*The National Vice Chairman adjourned Conference at 16.50.*

## **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022 11am**

### **Presentation of Cups and Shields**

The National President presented the Cups and Shields assisted by Michael Challinor (Member of the Cups and Shields Committee in the absence of its Chair, David Street, who was unable to attend). The award categories and winners were:

<b>Award</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Winners/Runners Up</b>
<b>Standard Bearers' Awards</b>		
Elms Cup	National Youth Standard Bearer	Cody Cowden
Ken Furniss Shield	Deputy National Standard Bearer	David Folder
Ashwanden Cup	National Standard Bearer	Claire McCabe
<b>Progress and Efficiency Awards</b>		
Haig Cup	Winner	Alicante Branch
	Runner Up	Aldridge Branch
Lister Cup	Winner	Beer Branch
	Runner Up	Dromore Branch
Maurice Challenge Cup	Winner	Buckinghamshire County
	Runner Up	Suffolk County
Churchill Shield	Winner	Riders Branch
	Runner Up	National Memorial Arboretum Branch
McCrea Shield	Winner	Alicante Branch
<b>Branch Community Support Awards</b>		
	Winner	Costessey Branch

Jellicoe Cup	Runner Up	Blyth Branch
Knox Shield	Winner	MABS Cancer Support Foundation (Spain North District)
Downing Shield	Winner	Tam Miller – Aldridge Branch
	Runner Up	Paul Scott – Ilkeston Branch
<b>Individual Inspirational Awards</b>		
Lewis Shield	Winner	Peter Hereford – Weobley Branch
	Runner Up	Anthony Cooper – Riders Branch
<b>RBL Clubs Awards</b>		
Ian Hamilton Cup	Winner	Royal British Legion Club Marlow (Limited)
<b>Poppy Appeal Awards</b>		
Noel Rogers Trophy	Winner	Falkland Islands Branch
	Runner Up	Paphos Branch
Poppy Appeal Trophy	Winner	Isle of Man County
<b>National Chairman's Award</b>		
Announced at Conference By Anny Reid on behalf of the National Chairman	Winners	Bob Perkins Rachel Perkins

Mike Challinor thanked staff for their assistance with organizing the presentation of cups and Shields.

The National Vice Chairman thanked the National President, Michael Challinor, David Street and the Cups and Shields Committee for their hard work as well as the winners and runners up.

He then informed Conference that Ballymoney and Waterside Branches had been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service for their community support work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21**

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The National Vice Chairman introduced Daniel Oppenheimer, Director of Finance & Commercial, who presented the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The Annual Report and Accounts were received by the Annual Conference.

## **Address by Bruce Julian, Dominion President of the Royal Canadian Legion**

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Bruce Julian addressed Conference. The National Vice Chairman thanked him for his address.

## **Falklands 40 Update**

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Bob Chambers, Membership Council member, gave a presentation updating Conference on the plans for the Falklands 40 event taking place in June 2022. The National Vice Chairman thanked him for the presentation.

## **Audit Compliance and Investigations**

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Kate Wildman, Audit Compliance and Investigations Manager, provided Conference with an update on activities over the last year. The National Vice Chairman thanked her for the presentation.

## **Closure of Conference**

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The Omnibus vote of thanks was proposed and seconded.

The Venerable Martyn Gough led the Service.

The National Parade Marshal led the presentation and handover of Standards.

The National Vice Chairman presented the Badge of Office for National Vice-Chairman to Lynda Atkins.

Lynda Atkins handed over the Chain of Office for National Chairman to Jason Coward.

The National Chairman announced that the Annual Conference 2022 was formally closed, thanked all for their attendance and said he looked forward to seeing all in Torquay in 2023.

*The Annual Conference closed at 13.28.*